



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 22 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[91740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress is being made on the development of a covid-19 vaccine.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is leading efforts to find and manufacture a vaccine, working with industry and experts, both here in the UK and internationally to ensure we are in the best position possible to support the discovery, manufacture and mass-deployment of a successful vaccine should a candidate prove successful. A number of agreements to procure millions of doses of vaccines have been made, ensuring the greatest possible chance of securing access to a safe and effective vaccine. The UK has now secured access to 6 different candidates, across 4 different vaccines types, including University of Oxford's vaccine being developed with AstraZeneca and agreements with BioNTech/Pfizer alliance, Valneva, Novavax, Janssen and GSK/Sanofi Pasteur.

Nadia Whittome:

[\[91746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential for (a) job losses and (b) loss of union recognition as a result of the sale of Co-op Insurance to Markerstudy.

Paul Scully:

The details of mergers and takeovers are primarily a commercial matter for the parties concerned.

The Employment Relations Act 1999 introduced a statutory recognition procedure that gave independent trade unions the right to apply to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) to be recognised by an employer for collective bargaining over pay, hours and holidays in respect of a group of workers in a particular bargaining unit.

Where an employer decides not to recognise or to derecognise a trade union, the union can use the statutory recognition procedure. The CAC can award recognition where a clear majority of the bargaining unit want it, and this is established in most cases through a ballot of the workforce.

■ Conditions of Employment: Coronavirus

Layla Moran:

[\[91711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to ensure that employees can not be lawfully dismissed from their job as a result of long term covid-19 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.

Electricity Generation: Carbon Emissions**Ben Lake:**[\[89813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department with Ofgem to attract investment in (a) innovation and (b) development of the electricity network as part of the Government's 2050 net zero commitment.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Monopoly energy network companies, which transport energy to homes and businesses, are regulated by the independent energy regulator, Ofgem, to ensure that they adequately maintain a safe and secure network whilst investing for the future and ensuring a fair price for consumers. In order to do this, Ofgem uses price controls to determine the revenues network companies may recover, the investment they may make and the performance standards they must deliver.

The regulatory price control is by law a matter for Ofgem who ensure, through the regulatory framework, that energy networks are able to deliver our net zero target, and Government will continue to engage with Ofgem on this. Ofgem has also established a Net Zero Advisory Group, with members from across government and the public sector, to advise on how price controls can best enable decarbonisation, including by bringing forward appropriate investment.

Since the start of the current electricity distribution price control (RIIO-ED1) in 2015, around £270m of innovation funding has been allocated to Electricity Distribution Network Operators, which is already supporting the move to net zero. Ofgem has also announced the introduction of a new Strategic Innovation Fund for the upcoming energy network price controls (RIIO-2). This fund, alongside funding to individual companies, will provide £450m for research and development into crucial green energy projects, with the potential to fund more if required.

Ben Lake:[\[89816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will ask Ofgem to include representatives from the electricity network supply chain in their Net Zero Advisory Group.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Ofgem has recently published the Terms of Reference for the Net Zero Advisory Group (link [here](#)). The Group aims to strengthen strategic coordination amongst key

government departments and public sector organisations involved in the energy system transition. Where appropriate, the Group may invite internal or external experts to specific meetings and seek views from these parties outside of the meetings. The Terms of Reference may be reviewed and updated periodically.

■ **Energy: Carbon Emissions**

Ben Lake:

[\[89812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the forthcoming energy white paper is planned to include detailed policy on the next steps of the Government's plans for delivering net zero by 2050.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Energy White Paper will contribute to the delivery of net zero by setting out how we will make the transition to clean energy and support a green economic recovery in the process, while keeping energy bills affordable.

In addition to the White Paper, the Government will publish decarbonisation plans for key sectors such as agriculture and industry as part of its green agenda in the run up to COP26. The Government has already published the first part of its Transport Decarbonisation Plan, setting out an ambitious strategy to drive our transport emissions towards net zero.

■ **Environment Protection: Foreign Investment in UK**

Ben Lake:

[\[89815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking with Ofgem to help ensure that the UK attracts international investment as part of the Government's ongoing work on net zero by 2050.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government's Green Finance Strategy set out our overall approach to accelerating green finance and catalysing private investment to support delivery of the UK's climate objectives.

Ofgem consults widely with industry and others on the methodology for future network investment through its price control process. This process is a matter for Ofgem, and by law Government has no role in network regulation.

With significant investment required going forward, it is essential there is a stable regulatory regime which provides both the sector and investors with the confidence to invest. At the same time, Ofgem has a statutory duty to ensure that value is delivered for consumers, and Government supports Ofgem's core priority to help the UK achieve net zero by 2050, including securing the necessary investment in networks, at the lowest cost to consumers.

■ Environment Protection: Job Creation

Ben Lake:

[89814]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of new jobs that will be created as a result of the Government's commitment to net zero by 2050.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out in his speech on 30 June, we intend to build back greener. Many of the actions we need to take to reach our UK climate targets - net zero - will support our economy to recover from COVID-19, generate new economic opportunities and support new green jobs. The UK has shown that growing our economy and cutting emissions can be achieved at the same time – growing our economy by 75% while cutting emissions by 43% over the past three decades.

There are already 460,000 people employed in the low carbon economy and its supply chains across the UK. By one estimate, the UK low-carbon economy could grow more than four times faster than the rest of the economy by 2030 and support up to 2 million jobs. As one example, the recently announced £2 billion Green Homes Grant will upgrade more than 600,000 homes across the country, save households hundreds of pounds a year on their energy bills and could support up to 80,000 green jobs.

■ Hunting: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[89851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what advice he has given to local authorities on providing financial support for fox hunts from covid-19 funding schemes during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government put forward an unprecedented package of support, including loan schemes, grant funding and wage packages, to help as many individuals and business as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This support package included the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF) which was provided via local authorities to support small businesses and businesses in some of the sectors hardest hit by the measures taken to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The Government also created a Local Authority Discretionary Grants Scheme to ensure that local authorities could use their knowledge and discretion to direct funds to businesses not covered by the SBGF or the RHLGF. In recognition that economic need varied across the country, government set some national criteria for this fund but allowed local authorities to determine which cases to support within those criteria.

The guidance provided to local authorities on all three of these schemes are available on gov.uk. No specific advice in respect of fox hunts was provided to local authorities as part of the guidance around these schemes.

■ Hydrogen: Finance

Alan Brown:

[\[89768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his appearance before the Environmental Audit Committee on 10 September, whether the Government plans to publish a funded UK hydrogen strategy in the first quarter of 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier for the UK. As set out at the Environmental Audit Committee on 10 September 2020, we plan to publish a Hydrogen Strategy in early 2021. The Strategy will include discussion around the costs associated with expansion of the UK hydrogen economy, and how these might be met.

Alan Brown:

[\[89770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the level of funding for hydrogen strategies in other European countries; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We are closely monitoring international hydrogen developments and participate in a range of international fora, including the International Partnership for Hydrogen for Fuel Cells in the Economy, Mission Innovation and Clean Energy Ministerial. These forums offer opportunities to discuss international activity on hydrogen, including strategies put forward by Germany, Denmark, and the European Commission. International strategies, including the level and type of funding committed, inform our own approach to developing hydrogen in the UK context. As we further progress our strategy, we will consider the international innovation and policy landscape and opportunities and challenges for the UK, building on activity to date.

Owen Thompson:

[\[89792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to publish a fully funded hydrogen strategy in the first quarter of 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier for the UK. As set out at the Environmental Audit Committee on 10 September 2020, we plan to publish a Hydrogen Strategy in early 2021. The Strategy will include discussion around the costs associated with expansion of the UK hydrogen economy, and how these might be met.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[89894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his appearance before the Environmental Audit Committee on 10 September, whether the Government plans to publish a funded UK hydrogen strategy in the first quarter of 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier for the UK. As set out at the Environmental Audit Committee on 10 September 2020, we plan to publish a Hydrogen Strategy in early 2021. The Strategy will include discussion around the costs associated with expansion of the UK hydrogen economy, and how these might be met.

■ Hydrogen: Technology

Alan Brown:

[\[89769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on their role in the (a) development and (b) implementation of hydrogen technology.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to exploring the option of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier and works closely with local partnerships across the country. In the course of work to understand the potential role of hydrogen in the wider energy system, my officials and I have met with a range of national, regional and local stakeholders.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[89895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on their role in the (a) development and (b) implementation of hydrogen technology.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to exploring the option of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier and works closely with local partnerships across the country. In the course of work to understand the potential role of hydrogen in the wider energy system, my officials and I have met with a range of national, regional and local stakeholders.

■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus

Seema Malhotra:

[\[91648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional financial support he plans make available for hair and beauty salons during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support including £330bn worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses across the UK, paying the wages of nearly 12 million people and supporting over a million businesses through grants, loans and rates cuts. Some of these funding schemes were open to those operating hair and beauty salons.

■ **Summertime****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[91574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the UK remaining on British Summer Time to (a) encourage travel, (b) extend the tourist season and (c) reduce energy usage as part of the recovery plan from the covid-19 outbreak; and with reference to the European Union's policy on Daylight Saving Time, if he will conduct a review of the time zone most appropriate for the UK to adopt in future years; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Government believes that the current daylight-saving arrangements represent the optimal use of the available daylight across the UK. We do not believe there is sufficient evidence to support changing the current system of clock changes, including for travel, tourism and energy usage.

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Colum Eastwood:**[\[91737\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the contaminated blood inquiry takes evidence at a session in Northern Ireland.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Infected Blood Inquiry is a statutory inquiry, independent of Government, and the procedure and conduct of the Inquiry are a matter for the Chair, Sir Brian Langstaff.

■ **Bank Services: Foreign Nationals and Undocumented Migrants****Dan Carden:**[\[89825\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answers of 21 July 2020 to Questions 75431 and 75432 on Bank Services, 75433 on Bank Services: Foreign Nationals and 75434 on Bank Services: Undocumented Migrants, whether that information is held by another Government department.

Julia Lopez:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ **Children: Health**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[91692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the data collected by the Government relating to children's wellbeing.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Holding response PQ91692 [PQ91692 HR.pdf]

■ **Cobra: Coronavirus**

Neil Coyle:

[\[91062\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the COBRA Civil Contingencies Committee last met to discuss covid-19; and how many times that Committee has met each month in 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by [Chloe Smith MP to PQ 66203](#) on 2 July 2020.

■ **Coronavirus: Advertising**

Naz Shah:

[\[91076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of Government covid-19 advertising spend has been allocated to (a) radio, (b) TV, (c) social media and (d) print media; and how much and what proportion of that spend has been allocated to (i) BAME sources of media and (ii) other media outlets in each category.

Jo Stevens:

[\[91081\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value is of Government covid-19 awareness advertising on (a) a week by week basis for 2020 and (b) for (i) television, (ii) national radio networks, (iii) local radio networks, (iv) national media organisations and (v) for independent community media outlets.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ 46692](#) given on 29 May 2020 and to [PQ 45460](#) on 11 May 2020.

■ Coronavirus: Death

Chris Green:

[\[91075\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) average age and (b) median age is of people who have been reported of dying as a result of covid-19.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ91075 (1).pdf]

■ Covid-19 Operations Committee

Luke Pollard:

[\[89852\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Covid-19 Operations Committee.

Luke Pollard:

[\[89856\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a meeting of the Covid-19 Operations Ministerial committee was scheduled for 12 September 2020.

Luke Pollard:

[\[90239\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a meeting of the covid-19 operations ministerial committee was scheduled for 12 September 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ66203 on 2 July 2020](#).

■ Government Chief Digital Information Officer

Chi Onwurah:

[\[84693\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons there has been a delay in appointing a Government chief digital and information officer; and what assessment he has made of the effect on service delivery of that delay.

Julia Lopez:

In August 2020 the Cabinet Office launched a recruitment campaign for a Government Chief Digital Officer, whose role will be to ensure we can realise the government's ambition to make UK Government digital services the best in the world. Throughout this time the Government Digital Data and Technology function and Government Digital Service have continued to deliver critical services and expert advice.

■ Government Departments: Industrial Health and Safety

Grahame Morris:

[\[87534\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a health and safety committee will be formed for any building shared by two or more Departments, where a request has been made under Regulation 9 of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 by two safety representatives.

Julia Lopez:

Government Departments are committed to meeting their obligations under legislation, and work together to put appropriate arrangements in place where buildings are shared.

Where multiple departments occupy a building, arrangements can be managed at the appropriate Building Committee or User Group, which can include attendance of Trade Unions. Issues identified in these fora are then escalated as appropriate to each department's own Health & Safety Committee.

■ Ports: Personal records

Karen Bradley:

[\[88313\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what financial provision he is making available to ensure that there is adequate (a) infrastructure and (b) staffing in place to enable exit checks to be carried out at all UK ports from 1 January 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

On 12 July, the Government announced a £705 million funding package for border infrastructure, staffing and IT to ensure GB border systems are fully operational when the UK takes back control of its border after the end of the transition period.

The £705 million will be split between £470 million for port and inland infrastructure and £235 million for new staff and IT systems. Further details will be set out in due course.

■ Roads: Freight

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[90959\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Smart Freight system will require verification of completed customs declarations.

Penny Mordaunt:

Smart Freight will enable a driver or haulier to check and confirm that goods they are carrying are accompanied by customs and import/export documentation and are thus ready to cross the border.

■ UK Government Union Capability Independent Review

Anthony Mangnall:

[90271]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress the Government has made on publishing the findings of the Dunlop Review into UK Government Union capability.

Chloe Smith:

As the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office stated to the [Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on 10 September](#), we will publish the Dunlop Review before the end of the year.

We are in the process of implementing many of Lord Dunlop's recommendations and we will set out this work when we publish the report.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[91036]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what assessment the Church of England has made of the effectiveness of its communication strategy during the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Selous:

The most recent assessment of the effectiveness of the Church of England's Communications strategy during the covid-19 outbreak was prepared for the General Synod in June 2020. The full document can be read here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/GS%20Misc%201249%20Covid-19%20Response.pdf>

DEFENCE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Colum Eastwood:

[91736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether (a) people from Northern Ireland and (b) other people with dual citizenship are barred from taking up positions within the UK with (a) BAE Systema Submarines and (b) the Atomic Weapons Establishment and (c) other defence contractors carrying out contracts for his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is obligated under the Government's Security Policy Framework to ensure personnel with access to sensitive information are appropriately vetted. We pass on this obligation to our contractors through relevant contractual security conditions which restrict the transfer of SECRET and above SECRET

information to employees who hold the right level of security clearance where this is required for the role.

British citizens who hold dual nationality are in principle eligible for employment by the Ministry of Defence and its defence contractors subject to achieving the appropriate level of security clearance. Due to the sensitive nature of the work concerned or International Treaty obligations there are circumstances in which dual nationals cannot be employed. This is likely to include posts within BAE Systems and AWE.

Jessica Morden:

[91827]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the extension of the Veterans Recognition Scheme.

Johnny Mercer:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Armed Forces (James Heappey) on 3 September 2020 to Question 81645 to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Andrew Gwynne).

Attachments:

1. 81645 - Veterans ID Cards [81645 - Veterans ID Cards.docx]

■ **Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust**

Rachael Maskell:

[89778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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 £6 million allocated to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by organisations.

Johnny Mercer:

On 12 May 2020 (Official Report: Volume 676, Column 128) I announced the creation of a £6 million COVID-19 Impact Fund for the Armed Forces Charity Sector. This fund was administered by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and I am pleased to say the allocation was distributed through grants to more than 100 charities by early August 2020. A full list of organisations who received support is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-funding-for-service-charities-as-veterans-support-is-stepped-up>

■ **Armed Forces: Mental Health**

Ruth Jones:

[91151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment his Department has made of the level of morale in the armed forces.

Johnny Mercer:

The maintenance of morale in the Armed Forces is a high priority and is measured in a robust, consistent and scientific manner, through mechanisms such as the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS). Ratings of high self-morale have remained unchanged since last year at 41%.

There are a range of measures underway in the fields of recruitment and retention designed to maintain morale; these are kept under constant review.

All personnel will shortly receive an increase to pensionable pay, delivered alongside September 2020 salaries and backdated to 1 April 2020. This follows the 2019 pay award which saw an increase in starting salaries for Other Ranks. We have also introduced other financial initiatives in certain priority areas. The Future Accommodation Model (FAM) is now being piloted across a number of sites providing eligible personnel greater choice of housing options to better suit their lifestyles. The introduction of Flexible Service is helping Regular personnel balance busy, committed careers with changing circumstances in their personal lives by offering temporary part-time working or restricted separation from home base, subject to operational capability. We have also collaborated with industry to provide new opportunities for those with critical skills in order to improve retention within the wider Defence community.

Detailed analyses of morale, commitment and engagement can be found in the AFCAS publications: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-continuous-attitude-survey-index>

■ Ministry of Defence: Apprentices**Robert Halfon:****[91615]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department is making on meeting the 2.3 per cent public sector apprenticeship target; and when his Department will meet that target.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is proud to be one of the largest deliverers of apprenticeships in the UK, with over 20,000 personnel engaged on a nationally recognised apprenticeship programme at any one time and over 90 per cent of our non-commissioned military recruits offered an apprenticeship relating to their trade. Public sector bodies with 250 or more staff have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3 per cent of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. The Armed Forces are exceeding this target with an average of 8.3 per cent of employees starting an apprenticeship in 2017-2019.

The MOD's Civil Service is contributing towards the overall Civil Service public sector target. As of 31 March 2020, the Civil Service had achieved a total of 2.1 per cent of its total workforce as apprentices against the legislative target for the public sector of 2.3 per cent by March 2021. This has increased from 1.6 per cent the year before. The MOD's Civil Service has achieved 1.5 per cent of the total staff employed within

the Department as apprentices. Given this target is a percentage of the total workforce, the percentage changes in line with workforce fluctuations over time, making it challenging to predict when a Department will meet it. The data for 2018-19 can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019>.

The data for 2019-20 will be released on the gov.uk website by the end of September 2020.

Departments are committed to increasing the number of apprentices across the Civil Service and continue to work towards the 2.3 per cent target. The impact of the current pandemic has slowed recruitment due to priority work and logistics. With the current strategy and targets coming to an end in April 2021, the Civil Service is already focusing on how to continue to support the apprenticeship agenda and drive forward apprenticeship recruitment, pulling on the Plan for Jobs initiative and considering the current economic situation.

However, as a Department, between April 2015 and 31 March 2020, we have successfully committed to enrolling 50,000 apprenticeships, exceeding our target one year ahead of schedule.

■ Navy: Discharges

Luke Pollard:

[90240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to introduce retrospective medical discharge with recourse to appeal in the Royal Navy.

Johnny Mercer:

The Royal Navy has no plans to review their policy and introduce retrospective medical discharge.

Luke Pollard:

[90241]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department provides to veterans of the Royal Navy who believe they have been wrongfully discharged.

Johnny Mercer:

Processes are in place through which concerns may be raised regarding discharge from the Royal Navy. For non-medical discharges, this is through the Service Complaints or appeal process. For medical discharges, this is via a request for review of the Royal Navy Medical Employability Board decision, as well as an independent appeal process. All recourse to appeal is time limited.

In addition, the Veterans Welfare Services, part of the Ministry of Defence Veterans UK organisation, provides one-to-one support to veterans through a national network of welfare managers. This service can be accessed online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/veterans-welfare-service>

■ Reserve Forces: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[90298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to circumstances which where a member of the auxiliary reserve forces lives in Northern Ireland but is part of a GB based military unit, that does not have an operating base in Northern Ireland, what support those service personnel get with travel costs to attend their regular training at their unit.

Johnny Mercer:

Volunteer Reserve personnel are eligible to claim Home to Duty Travel allowance which provides a contribution towards the costs incurred when they travel between their normal civilian place of work to attend training. Payment of this allowance is capped at a maximum travelling distance of 50 miles, regardless of any greater distance travelled, and this is in line with what is paid to Regular Service personnel. Some specialist Reservists may be eligible for rates in excess of 50 miles due to the location of certain Specialist Units. This extended mileage concession is only available on permission of Commanding Officers and after obtaining financial authority and applies to all specialist Reservists in the UK. The exceptional nature of this concession is because the Ministry of Defence needs to balance the cost of such travel with operational needs.

Not all Volunteer Reserve personnel live in the vicinity of their Unit. There will be some, for example, who have had to relocate for civilian employment reasons but who cannot, or choose not to, change to a new Unit. Where Volunteer Reserve personnel are unable to attend for training because of travel issues, they would not qualify for pay or be likely to earn a bounty, but that does not automatically mean they have to leave their Service. Units will do what they can to keep in touch with Volunteer Reservists in this situation.

Where Volunteer Reserve personnel are required to travel away from their normal Unit (e.g. for annual training) then they are eligible to claim Duty Travel allowance for the cost of the travel to and from their Unit to the temporary duty station where the training is due to take place.

■ Unmanned Marine Vehicles

Jonathan Edwards:

[91606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) progress by other countries in developing marine autonomous unmanned surface vehicles and (b) ability of Royal Navy submarines to avoid detection by those vehicles.

Jonathan Edwards:

[91607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of countries that (a) have developed and (b) are developing marine autonomous unmanned surface vehicles to detect submarines.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence audits the integrity of our submarine fleet regularly for all threats and acts to ensure that it maintains the highest possible standards. The oceans are, and will remain, complex and challenging environments in which to conduct large-scale anti-submarine warfare despite technological advancements.

I am unable to make specific comment on the UK's assessment of other countries' autonomous unmanned surface vehicles for the purposes of safeguarding national security as disclosure would be likely to prejudice the defence of the UK and the capability and effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

■ **Veterans: York Central****Rachael Maskell:**[\[90185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many veterans live in York Central constituency.

Johnny Mercer:

The number of veterans living in York Central constituency is not held.

However, the number of veterans in receipt of UK Armed Forces compensation or pensions by location can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/location-of-armed-forces-pension-and-compensation-recipients>

In July 2020, Parliament approved the inclusion of a veteran question in the England and Wales 2021 census which, for the first time, will enable Government to identify the number of veterans by location.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **Arts and Innovation: Festivals and Special Occasions****Jonathan Gullis:**[\[89872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress he has made on plans for UK Festival 2022; and how (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire can participate in that festival.

Caroline Dinenage:

Festival UK 2022 is a major nationwide festival of creativity and innovation. It will deliver a programme of ten ground-breaking large-scale new commissions with the ambition of bringing people together and promoting the UK's creativity to the world.

The programme, led by Martin Green, Chief Creative Officer, recently launched a £3m R&D Project. This is an open call for creative teams of organisations and individuals from across Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths to come together to receive funding to develop new ideas for 2022.

I encourage people and organisations in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to get involved by registering on the Festival website (www.festival2022.uk)

■ Children and Young People: Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker:

[88863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the report entitled Back on Track supporting young people out of lockdown, published by the YMCA in August 2020, if he will develop a strategy for children and young People's recovery from covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown which targets (a) education, (b) reducing loneliness, (c) improving mental health, and (d) reducing family strain.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Ministers have received the YMCA report 'Back On Track' and will be carefully considering its contents.

The department is aware of the impact Covid-19 has had on young people. We have worked closely with both young people and the youth sector to understand the effects of the pandemic, and are considering how the £500 million Youth Investment Fund, alongside other government initiatives, can best support young people with the issues we know to have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

DCMS has also worked closely with departments across Whitehall to ensure rounded support for young people. The Department of Education has placed a particular focus on wellbeing support for children and young people during the pandemic and as young people return to school and college. This includes investing £8 million in the Wellbeing for Education Return training and advice programme, which will provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and practical skills they need to support teachers, students and parents.

■ Data Protection: EU Law

Daniel Zeichner:

[90152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2020 to Question 82137 on Data Protection: EU Law, what assessment he has made of the cost to businesses of accessing alternative legal mechanisms; and what plans the Government has in place to support businesses in accessing those mechanisms.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK is seeking data adequacy decisions from the EU under the GDPR and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED) and the EU's adequacy assessment of the UK is underway. The UK remains confident that an adequacy agreement can be reached by the end of the transition period. However, we are taking sensible steps to prepare for a situation where this has not been achieved.

In such a scenario, organisations would be able to use alternative legal mechanisms to continue receiving personal data from the EU. Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) are the most common legal safeguard and will be the relevant mitigation for

most organisations. The implementation cost for SCCs would vary between different organisations, in part depending on the size of the business in question.

DCMS is working with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to ensure that all available guidance is simple, straightforward and actionable. The ICO has created an interactive SCCs tool for businesses to use and further guidance can be found on GOV.UK and the ICO's website regarding steps organisations may be required to take relating to data protection and data flows by the end of the transition period.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Cybercrime and Digital Technology

Chi Onwurah:

[86650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July to Question 72907 and the Answer of 17 July 2020 to Question 72907 on Cybercrime and Digital Technology, how many individuals have completed digital skills courses through the (a) degree conversion course programmes in data science and artificial intelligence, (b) Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund covering the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership areas, (c) Digital Skills Innovation Fund and The Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund, (d) Six Local Digital Skills Partnerships, (e) The Grenfell Digital Skills programme and (f) Code4000's Coding in Prisons programme in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Caroline Dinenage:

(a) degree conversion course programmes in data science and artificial intelligence

No individuals have completed courses in the degree conversion course programme in data science and artificial intelligence announced on 10 June 2020. The first students in the programme will start in Autumn this year.

(b) Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund covering the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership areas

The Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund is a £3 million fund aiming to boost digital skills training through short, responsive courses that will help employers recruit to hard to fill digital roles. The fund is estimated to train 741 individuals, with 158 courses completed to date, including:

- 50 course completions within cloud engineering
- 48 course completions in software development
- 24 courses completions in digital marketing
- 19 course competitions in DevOps
- 16 course completion in Linux engineering

(c) Digital Skills Innovation Fund and The Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund

The Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund was a £400,000 fund supporting older and disabled people, particularly those in rural areas. The 3 pilot projects impacted a total of 1672 individuals, including:

- 1094 digital learners in the Living Smart Homes project in West Essex
- 55 patients in end of life care, their carers and patient care volunteers in the Weldmar Hospicecare Trust
- 523 users of the Down's Syndrome Association's HealthSwap app

The Digital Skills Innovation Fund is a £1.1m fund supporting underrepresented groups or people from disadvantaged backgrounds get into digital roles or further training. 733 individuals have completed or nearly completed training from four pilot projects, including:

- The Heart of South West pilot helped 194 individuals over 12 months retrain and prepare for or advance a career in digital, primarily supporting women in small businesses. It focused on the 20% most deprived wards in the region.
- Lancashire's programme has 105 participants, who have completed or near completed women in business workshops, digital marketing, and IT Ready training. The programme is supporting unemployed residents from disadvantaged wards.
- Sheffield City Region and Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's pilot supported women and autistic people gain demand-led digital skills. The pilot had 246 participants.
- West of England's programme supported women, particularly those living in deprived neighbourhoods, acquire skills for digital roles. The programme had 188 participants, with 28 completing a formal, recognised training course, 24 receiving advice and guidance on accessing digital jobs, and 166 completing 'taster' or other introductory sessions.

(d) Six Local Digital Skills Partnerships

DCMS provides £75,000 per year to fund a Regional Coordinator, rather than training provision, in each Local Digital Skills Partnership. Regional Coordinators play an important role within the Local Enterprise Partnership/ Combined Authority to bring together cross-sector partners to co-design and deliver provision aligned to local needs, tackling local digital skills gaps, advancing digital inclusion, while contributing to regional economic growth.

(e) The Grenfell Digital Skills programme

The Grenfell Digital Skills Programme went live in November 2019. So far 292 sessions from 10 courses have been attended by 75 individuals.

(f) Code4000's Coding in Prisons programme

DCMS provided a £100,000 grant to Code4000 to support their coding workshops in prisons. The funding supported 90 learners as follows:

- 65 prisoners in the workshop at HMP Humber

- 25 prisoners in the workshop at HMP Holme House
- 5 of these prisoners were also supported on release at the pilot support hub in Sheffield

■ Gambling Act 2005

Carla Lockhart: [89880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress the Government has made on its plans to review the Gambling Act 2005.

Carla Lockhart: [89881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has assessed the effectiveness of safeguards in place to prevent underage gambling via smartphone apps.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

Operators are required both by law and by the conditions of their licence from the Gambling Commission to prevent underage gambling. In May 2019 the Commission strengthened requirements for age verification so that operators must verify a customer's age before they are able to deposit money, place a bet, or access free-to-play games. According to the Gambling Commission's Young People and Gambling Survey 2019, 7% of 11-16 year olds said they had ever gambled online (a category including both National Lottery games and commercial sites), 5% had used a parent's account with the parent's permission and 2% had used a parent's account without permission, showing that parents also have an important role to play in controlling children's access to gambling. For further detail, the full survey report can be found at: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/PDF/Young-People-Gambling-Report-2019.pdf>

■ Sports: Facilities

Paula Barker: [91187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of indoor sport and leisure facilities that have not reopened since the easing of covid-19 restrictions.

Paula Barker: [91188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on support for public indoor sport facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Paula Barker:

[\[91189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) community indoor tennis centres and (b) other public sport and leisure facilities do not close permanently following their mandatory closure as a result of covid-19.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. Outdoor swimming pools have been able to open from 11 July, and from 25 July indoor gyms, leisure centres (including sports halls) and swimming pools in England should be able to reopen. These facilities will be able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance.

Sport England have announced a £195 million package of support to help community clubs through this crisis. It recently boosted its Community Emergency Fund by a further £15 million to meet the demand, taking the total up to £210 million.

The income scheme announced on Thursday 2 July by the Secretary of State for Local Government, aims to support local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income from sales, fees and charge which they had reasonably budgeted for.

We are continuing to work across government to ensure the sector has the support it needs to continue providing their central role in helping people be active.

■ **Tennis: Coronavirus**

Julie Marson:

[\[87677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support in addition to the Coronavirus Employment Support Scheme is available to indoor tennis venues.

Julie Marson:

[\[87678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support his Department is providing to indoor tennis centres during the covid-19 outbreak.

Julie Marson:

[\[87679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support he is making available for indoor tennis centres who face ongoing fixed costs during the covid-19 lockdown.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

Indoor gyms, leisure centres (including sports halls) and swimming pools in England have been cleared to re-open from 25 July. These facilities are able to offer on-site

services to customers, provided they are Covid-secure and follow Government guidance.

Sport England have announced a £210 million package of support to help community clubs through this crisis.

Specific support for local authorities was announced through the income guarantee scheme on Thursday 2 July by the Secretary of State for Local Government, aimed at supporting local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income from sales, fees and charges which they had reasonably budgeted for.

■ Third Sector: Coronavirus

Jane Stevenson:

[90247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support is available for (a) charities and (b) religious organisations to help them respond to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government has made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. Religious activities are not eligible for this funding but religious organisations could be funded if their project benefits the wider community and does not include religious content. The funding is being allocated through the following ways:

£200 million is being distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund which is available to smaller and local VCSE organisations, including religious organisations that provide charitable services in response to the outbreak.

£360 million has been allocated by central government departments with £200 million of this directly supporting hospices.

To support the BBC's 'Big Night In', the Government matched the generous donations of the public across the country with grants for £20 million to the National Emergencies Trust who is working in Partnership with the UK Community Foundations and a further £17 million split between Comic Relief and Children in Need to issue grants to grassroots, local and community organisations providing charitable services during the outbreak.

£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 organisations from across the country who are 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 was allocated 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.

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

■ Youth Investment Fund

Sara Britcliffe:

[\[90291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timescale is for the launch of the Youth Investment Fund.

Mr John Whittingdale:

DCMS officials are working at pace on plans for the Youth Investment Fund, and continue to assess how COVID-19 is impacting on young people and youth services. We continue to engage with the youth sector as plans develop, and will publish further details in due course.

EDUCATION

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[91682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many covid-19 outbreaks have been reported in children's residential social care settings in each of the last six months.

Vicky Ford:

The department does not collect data on confirmed cases of COVID-19 outbreaks in children's residential social care settings.

We have been working closely with local authorities and have announced more than £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced funding for local authorities to help them address pressures arising from COVID-19. That includes funding to support children's social care settings to ensure they can continue to offer care for looked after children.

The government is committed to supporting the children's social care workforce by ensuring that children's homes, secure children's homes and residential special schools have access to testing and free access to emergency personal protection equipment supplies for COVID-19 purposes, for use in line with department guidance.

■ Children: Internet

Chi Onwurah:

[\[90128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer 11 September 2020 to Question 86651 on Children: Internet, whether that Answer refers only to those eligible or to all children of school age who do not have access to the internet.

Nick Gibb:

The answer previously given refers to the children and young people that could receive devices through the scheme: disadvantaged pupils in year 10, children with a social worker and care leavers.

In addition to providing 4G wireless routers, the Department is running pilots to provide internet connectivity to disadvantaged families with children aged from early years to 16 years old. In partnership with BT, the Department has launched a service to provide children and young people free access to BT wifi hotspots. Through the pilot, up to 10,000 families are able to access a BT wifi connection. We have expanded this offer for the autumn term, to allow more children to access the internet through their network of BT wifi hotspots, if they need access to the internet for remote education.

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

■ Children: Reading

Sir John Hayes:

[88820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of changes in the level of pupils' reading ability in the last ten years in (a) Lincolnshire and (b) the UK.

Nick Gibb:

It is a statutory requirement in the national curriculum that pupils in state-maintained schools should be taught to apply phonic knowledge and skills for word reading.

The phonics screening check (PSC) was introduced in 2012 to confirm whether each child has learnt phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard. Reading is also assessed in the national curriculum assessments at Key Stage 1 and 2. The 2016 Key Stage 2 assessments were the first which assess the new, more challenging national curriculum which was introduced in 2014. Because of the changes to the curriculum, figures for 2016 are not comparable to those for earlier years.

The most recent data for both the PSC and KS2 assessments is 2019, as the 2020 assessments were cancelled due to COVID-19.

In 2012 68% of pupils in state-funded schools in the Lincolnshire Local Authority met the required standard of phonics decoding, by 2019 this had increased to 81%.[1] In 2016, 63% of pupils in state-funded schools in the Lincolnshire Local Authority met the expected standard of reading at KS2,[2] by 2019, this figure has risen to 68%.[3]

In 2012 58% of pupils in state-funded schools in England met the required standard of phonics decoding. By 2019, this had risen to 82% of pupils in state-funded schools England. In 2016, 66% of pupils in state-funded schools in England met the expected standard of reading at KS2, by 2019 this had risen to 73%.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/phonics-screening-check-and-key-stage-1-assessments-england-2019>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2016-provisional>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2019-provisional>

■ **Department for Education: Correspondence**

Catherine West:

[91113]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's average reply time has been for ministerial letters in each of the last five months.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education aims to respond to all ministerial correspondence within 18 days of receipt. Due to the increase in correspondence received since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the average reply time (in working days) for ministerial letters due during each month from April to August this year exceeds the 18-day target, as set out in the table below:

MONTH DUE	AVERAGE DAYS TO RESPOND
April	32
May	36
June	33
July	45
August	36

■ **Education: Wirral**

Margaret Greenwood:

[91664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) schools and (b) colleges in Wirral that are facing difficulties in keeping fully open to students as a result of delays in teachers or their family members getting covid-19 test results.

Margaret Greenwood:

[91665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of schools in England that are facing difficulties in keeping fully open to pupils because of delays in teachers or their family members getting covid-19 test results.

Nick Gibb:

Keeping close track of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools is a priority to the Government. The Department is currently collecting data from schools on a daily basis, as well as gathering information from local areas and following up with individual settings to confirm that procedures for requiring pupils to isolate are well understood and that necessary decisions are made on the basis of public health advice.

Testing capacity is the highest it has ever been, and we are working to provide further priority access for teachers. The home testing kits supplied to schools and colleges are only for those who develop the symptoms of COVID-19 and face significant barriers to accessing a test. In particular, these tests kits will help symptomatic staff who test negative, and are not close contacts of confirmed cases, to get back to work as soon as they feel well enough.

The Department collects data on the number of schools that have indicated that they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures and have attendance data for schools that have done so. We are currently looking at the quality of the data with a view to publishing it as part of the official statistics series. The series includes published data on school openings and attendance, which shows that over 99.9% of state-funded schools were open on 10 September and that attendance in state-funded schools was 88%. More information is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Public Health England (PHE) leads in holding data on infection, incidence and COVID-19 cases overall. PHE have published data on COVID-19 incidents by institution, including educational settings, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports> (page 16).

■ Free School Meals

Tulip Siddiq: [91684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to bring to an end the temporary extension of free school meals eligibility to certain no recourse to public funds groups.

Vicky Ford:

We are working with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the extension of eligibility will continue with the current income threshold until a decision on long-term eligibility is made.

■ Home Education

Daniel Zeichner: [89722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been enrolled for elective home education in September (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held by this Department. It does not currently collect data on numbers of home educated children.

Parents are not under a duty to register if they are home educating their children and therefore there is not a robust basis on which the Department can reliably collect statistics on home education.

In relation to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department is working closely with local authorities to encourage a return to full attendance in school and is monitoring the situation. Initial conversations with local authorities indicate that the majority have noticed an increase in enquiries from parents about home education. Where parents are anxious about the safety of their children returning to school, local authorities and school leaders are reinforcing that it is in the best interests of pupils to return to school.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[91681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many covid-19 outbreaks have been reported in early years settings in each week since 1 June 2020.

Vicky Ford:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan:

[\[90216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that pupils are able to swiftly access covid-19 tests so that they can return to their education setting.

Nick Gibb:

All pupils are eligible to be tested if they display symptoms of COVID-19 and should get tested in this scenario. A negative test result will enable pupils to get back into childcare or education once they feel well enough.

Testing capacity is the highest it has ever been and hundreds of thousands of people are being tested every day, but there is currently a significant demand for tests. It is vital that pupils and school staff only get a test if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. The NHS Test and Trace system is fully up and running, but it must stay focused on testing those with true symptoms of COVID-19.

The Government are upscaling testing capacity even further to 500,000 tests a day by the end of October. To support this, the Government has announced the addition of new lighthouse laboratories in Newport and Charnwood to the national lab network, and work is ongoing on plans to expand the UK's laboratory capacity even further over the coming months.

All schools and colleges have been provided with an initial supply of ten test kits to be used in the exceptional circumstance that an individual becomes symptomatic on site and may have significant personal barriers to accessing testing elsewhere. Schools and colleges can order additional test kits online if they have run out or are running out of test kits.

■ Remote Education: Coronavirus

Nick Fletcher:

[90289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of making it compulsory for teachers to teach the same curriculum to whole classes and year groups through software that enables live teaching, in the event that those groups are sent home to self-isolate in response to a covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to the continuation of high-quality education for all pupils during this difficult time. The Department published guidance on Thursday 2 July that sets out what is expected from schools for their remote education provision:

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

All schools should plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and so make good progress. Schools should also look to improve the quality of their existing provision against the expectations set out in the guidance on curriculum and remote education here:

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

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

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

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

The Department has already invested over £100 million to support remote education, including the delivery of over 220,000 laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access. The support package includes an investment of over £14 million on technical support to give schools access to cloud-based education platforms, nearly £6 million to support a new EdTech demonstrator school network, and over £85m to provide laptops, tablets and 4G internet devices, including security and e-safety packages and their distribution, and to top up the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.

We have already delivered over 50,000 4G wireless routers to support disadvantaged children to learn at home and access vital social care services. These routers come

with free data for the autumn term and will allow local authorities and academy trusts to support children who may have their education and care disrupted because of official coronavirus restrictions or disruption to face-to-face contact.

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

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Sajid Javid:

[\[88857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date schools are planned to be able to claim for exceptional costs associated with covid-19, after the first claim window closed on 21 July 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is providing additional funding to schools, on top of existing budgets, to cover unavoidable costs incurred between March and July due to the COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be met from their existing resources.

Schools are eligible to claim for: increased premises related costs associated with keeping schools open over the Easter and summer half term holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not in school, where schools are not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements.

The first claims window for the COVID-19 schools fund closed on 21 July. There will be a further opportunity in the autumn for schools to claim for exceptional costs that fell between March and July.

The second claims window will be for available for schools who were unable to claim in the summer and will be for the same eligible cost categories. Details regarding the application process will be published later in the year.

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

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[91172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has published for schools on (a) parents, (b) pupils and (c) teachers with covid-19 symptoms who are unable to access a covid-19 test.

Nick Gibb:

All schools and further education colleges have been sent an initial supply of home testing kits that they can give directly to parents or carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff who have developed symptoms at school. These are for use where an individual is symptomatic and has significant barriers to

accessing a test elsewhere, and where providing a test will therefore significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested.

Guidance for schools and colleges has been published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers>.

When a child, young person or staff member develops one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 they should be sent home and advised that they must self-isolate in line with the Department's guidance and encouraged to arrange a test. All staff and students attending an education or childcare setting have access to a test if they display symptoms of COVID-19 and are encouraged to get tested.

■ Teachers: Veterans

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: [91115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of applications to the Troops to Teachers scheme were successful in each year since 2018.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: [91116]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) applicants and (b) successful applicants to the Troops to Teachers scheme were (i) female, (ii) aged under 30, (iii) aged between 30 and 40, (iv) aged between 40 and 50 and (v) aged over 50.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: [91117]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) applicants and (b) successful applicants to the Troops to Teachers scheme were from the (i) Army, (ii) Royal Navy and (iii) Royal Air Force; and which rank each of those applicants held on leaving service in each year since 2018.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: [91118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of successful applicants to the Troops to Teachers programme left the course before completion in each year since 2018.

Nick Gibb:

The Troops to Teachers programme was closed in 2017 and replaced by a new Troops to Teachers initial teacher training bursary that became available in September 2018. The Department does not hold information centrally on the characteristics of people who are in receipt of the Troops to Teachers bursary.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Nadia Whittome:**[\[91749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that animal tests on products which have already been tested to EU REACH requirements will not need repeat testing to meet domestic registration.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green on 10 September 2020, PQ UIN 86122.

[questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-07/86122]

■ **Flood Control: South Yorkshire****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[91696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has set a date for the South Yorkshire flood summit.

Rebecca Pow:

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

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

Yesterday (21 September) the Government announced an extension of the £5,000 grant scheme available to homes and businesses affected by flooding last winter.

The Property Flood Resilience (PFR) scheme will be extended by nine months to take into account delays to repair work and the additional pressures placed on local authorities by coronavirus. The extension will give homeowners and businesses more time to carry out repairs and local authorities a greater period to process the grants.

■ **Forests and Tree Planting****Paul Bristow:**[\[89866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) financial and (b) other support he is giving to local authorities to (i) plant more trees and (ii) create new areas of woodland.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra supports tree planting in England through established mechanisms, almost all of which are available to Local Authorities and their partners if they can meet the

rules of the scheme. These include the Woodland Creation Planning Grant, Woodland Carbon Fund, Countryside Stewardship and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

We have also announced a £640 million Nature for Climate Fund which will drive tree-planting in this parliament. Plans for that will be announced through a new England Tree Strategy, including how local authorities can access grant funding for tree planting and woodland management.

■ Hunting: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[89850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much Government covid-19 support has been allocated to fox hunts during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rebecca Pow:

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

The Hunting Act 2004 bans the hunting of wild mammals with dogs in England and Wales, except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions set out in Schedule 1 to the Act. Any support to hunting related businesses, if provided, would only have been to those carrying out activities related to legal hunting under these exemptions.

■ Lighting: Pollution Control

Andrew Griffith:

[89904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) strengthen protections against light pollution and (b) increase the number of Dark Sky reserves.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has put in place a range of measures to ensure that light pollution is effectively managed through controls in the planning system; the statutory nuisance regime, and when improvements are made to street lighting.

My department has worked with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Transport to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework policies include consideration of the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation, including where there may be impacts on wildlife and eco-systems.

Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan will also deliver benefits including promoting access to stargazing.

Across the UK's 15 National Parks there are a number of locations that have been awarded International Dark Sky Reserve or Dark Sky Discovery Site status. Defra has no formal role in the Dark Sky designation process as it is non-governmental and non-statutory. The Independent Review of Landscapes recommended, 'A night under the stars in a national landscape for every child.' The Government has welcomed the Review and will respond in due course. We are committed to increasing opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy the benefits of spending meaningful time in our national landscapes in England.

■ Organic Food

Bill Esterson:

[\[91629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to secure equivalence agreements for organic products with her international counterparts.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is engaging with the 13 third countries with which we have organic equivalency arrangements and we expect to have arrangements in place for the end of the transition period. For countries with non-reciprocal arrangements, we will send them a letter confirming that we will continue to recognise their organic goods as we do now. For those countries with which we have reciprocal arrangements, we are updating the specific arrangements to reflect the end of the Transition Period.

In addition, the UK has proposed a technical annex which would include mutual recognition for organics as part of the Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU.

■ Pesticides: Trade Agreements

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[89860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK's standards for pesticides are protected and maintained in international trade agreements.

Victoria Prentis:

Our trade agreements will respect the regulatory autonomy of the Parties and decisions on standards will remain a matter for the UK Government and devolved administrations, including on pesticides.

We will maintain our high human health and environmental standards when operating our own independent pesticides regulatory regime after the transition period. We will ensure decisions on the use of pesticides are based on careful scientific assessment and will not authorise pesticides that may carry unacceptable risks. The statutory requirements of the EU regime on standards of protection will be carried across unchanged into domestic law.

The Government is clear that in all of our trade negotiations we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.

■ **Wildlife: Nature Conservation**

Colleen Fletcher:

[91657]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect endangered UK wildlife from extinction.

Rebecca Pow:

In England, the 25 Year Environment Plan (YEP) marked a step-change in ambition for wildlife and the natural environment. We are already taking action to fulfil this ambition. We have brought forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years with ambitious measures to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age, including restoring and enhancing nature. The Bill will set the framework for at least one legally binding target for biodiversity. We have announced new funding for nature through our Nature Recovery, Nature for Climate and Green Recovery Challenge Funds; and we will be launching a new Environmental Land Management scheme that will reward farmers and land managers for delivering environmental public goods, including thriving plants and wildlife.

Natural England's Species Recovery Programme supports the recovery of threatened and declining species in partnership with a number of stakeholder organisations. Natural England is also working with conservation organisations on the Back from the Brink programme. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and partners, it aims to save 20 of England's most threatened animals and plants from extinction, and benefit over 200 other species.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Asif Pervaiz**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[90098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan on the safety and well being of Asif Pervaiz who was detained and sentenced to death in September 2020 on charges of blasphemy in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of the case of Asif Pervaiz and are closely following developments. We regularly raise at a senior level the issue of the blasphemy laws with the authorities in Pakistan. We will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, in accordance with international standards. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon last raised our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 August.

■ Bahrain: Capital Punishment

Chris Law:

[\[90154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the cases of (a) Mohammed Ramadan and (b) Hussein Moosa were discussed during meetings between Ministers of his Department and Bahrain's Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 7 September 2020.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: During the recent visit to the UK of Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, I raised the use of the death penalty in Bahrain, reiterating the UK's opposition to the death penalty, in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. Separately, the Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad, raised the cases of Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa.

■ Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Lisa Nandy:

[\[91634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2020 to Question 88867 on Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, if he will publish the method by which the Government is assessing its position on ratification of Protocol V; and what his timescale is for completing that assessment.

James Cleverly:

Ratification of Protocol V requires careful consideration and is therefore not a short-term exercise. Any assessment must be thorough and comprehensive and take into account possible implications for all Government Departments. We hope to conclude this assessment in due course and will then share an update with the House.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[84322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76829, how much of the £774 million has been disbursed to multilateral institutions to date.

Nigel Adams:

The £774 million so far committed to combat Covid-19 and to reinforce the global effort to find a vaccine includes funding to multilaterals. Below is a table of the breakdown of this funding, with funding to multilaterals in bold. Of this total, all funding to multilaterals - UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the WHO - totalling £145 million, has been disbursed.

INSTITUTIONS	AMOUNT (£ MILLION)
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AU African Union Covid19 Response Fund	20
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INSTITUTIONS	AMOUNT (£ MILLION)
DEC	10
Expertise & misc. support	6
Red Cross (IFRC /ICRC/Nat Soc)	55
NGO support	20
UNFPA	10
UNHCR	20
UNICEF	20
UNICEF (Education Cannot Wait)	5
UNILEVER coalition	50
WFP	15
WHO	75
FIND	23
Wellcome/Gates Foundation/ Mastercard Therapeutics Accelerator	40
CEPI	250
Joint Initiative for Epidemic Preparedness / Wellcome Trust	5
IMF Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust	150
GRAND TOTAL	774

Preet Kaur Gill:

[88376]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September to Question 82263, of the £18 million provided to charities through the Rapid Response Facility, how much was allocated to (a) small, (b) medium and (c) large UK-based international development charities.

Wendy Morton:

Through the Rapid Response Facility (RRF), the UK has allocated £18 million to provide humanitarian assistance to some of the world's most vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis. This funding has been allocated to Action Against Hunger, CARE, Christian Aid, GOAL, Humanity & Inclusion and Norwegian Refugee Council. These organisations are large and medium-sized charities.

Further information about RRF projects can be found on the Development Tracker website: <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-301150>

■ Females: Equality

Yasmin Qureshi:

[89662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the change in the level of Official Development Assistance on global progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Wendy Morton:

Given the likely decrease in the size of the economy this year, all Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending departments have identified changes to the budget.

The careful review process looked at every strand of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure we can maintain operational capacity. This has been a thorough process, but we have been able to ensure that the money we will still spend in 2020 includes prioritising poverty reduction for the 'bottom billion', and championing every girls' right to 12 years of quality education. Advancing gender equality and women's rights are critical to achieving these agendas and remains core to this government's mission.

The FCDO will build on the UK's world-leading track record on gender equality, which includes fighting successfully for SDG5, and targets on gender equality across the other goals. Since the goals began in 2015, we reached an average of 25.3 million total women and girls with modern methods of family planning per year, helping to save thousands of lives. The UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 also means that consideration of gender equality in all UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) is a legal requirement.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Apprentices

Robert Halfon:

[91611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress his Department is making on meeting the 2.3 per cent public sector apprenticeship target; and when his Department will meet that target.

Nigel Adams:

Following the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on 2 September 2020, a new apprenticeship strategy is being planned. This will establish how the FCDO will achieve its new combined apprenticeship target, in support of the Civil Service's commitment to meeting the public sector apprenticeship target.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Reorganisation

Owen Thompson: [\[82663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the Government plans to publish details of the governance architecture of the new department responsible for the UK's aid budget.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) was formally established on 2 September under the leadership of the Foreign Secretary to meet the objectives of the UK's ambitious international agenda.

On 3 August, Sir Philip Barton was named as the Permanent Under-Secretary for the department, who in consultation with the Foreign Secretary appointed a new team of Directors General. The Permanent Under-Secretary will be the Accounting Officer in the new department.

Further details on governance arrangements and board structures are being carefully considered and will be published in due course.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

Rachel Hopkins: [\[89896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many full-time equivalent staff in his Department are employed on a fixed-term contract.

Nigel Adams:

As of 1 September 2020, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office had between 340 and 359 full-time equivalent Home Civil Service & Diplomatic Service staff employed on a Fixed Term Contract.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[89898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether an equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the decision to withdraw the opportunity of permanent jobs for fixed-term contact staff in his Department.

Nigel Adams:

The potential diversity impact of the decision not to offer opportunities for permanent employment to current fixed-term contract staff was discussed at length by the Joint Executive Committee of DFID and FCO. As such, the Public Sector Equality Duty was met.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[89901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the (a) gender, (b) age group and (c) ethnicity breakdown is of non-UK nationals employed in his Department.

Nigel Adams:

The breakdown of FCDO's non-UK national employees, as at 31 August 2020, is set out in the tables below.

AGE GROUP	No. OF STAFF
Under 35	61
35 - 44	63
45 - 54	23
55+	8
Total	155

ETHNICITY	No. OF STAFF
BAME	20
Not declared/ Prefer not to say	64
White	71
Total	155

GENDER	No. OF STAFF
Female	102
Male	53
Total	155

■ Georgia: Freedom of Expression**Alyn Smith:**[\[91155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations the Government has made to the Government of Georgia on (a) proposed updates to the law on electronic communications in that country and (b) the importance of maintaining that country's commitments to (i) freedom of speech and (i) rule of law.

Wendy Morton:

Through our Embassy in Tbilisi we are assessing the implications of the Georgian Parliament's recent amendment to the electronic communications law, giving more

authority to the communications regulator, on Georgia's media and telecommunications sector.

In our engagement with the Government of Georgia we have raised the importance of continued democratic and economic reforms in Georgia that support freedom of speech and the rule of law, most recently at the 7th UK-Georgia Wardrop Dialogue which took place on 9 September.

■ Greece: Migrant Camps

Daisy Cooper:

[\[91723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government is providing to vulnerable, unaccompanied children on the Greek islands following the fire at Moira refugee camp.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is responding to requests by the Greek Government to provide specific humanitarian goods and is urgently making plans for the delivery of these goods to those affected by the fire at the Moria camp. The UK has a long and proud history of welcoming those in need and escaping persecution. Throughout the pandemic the UK has remained ready to receive those accepted for transfer under the Dublin III Regulation. We remain in regular contact with sending Member States, including Greece, who are responsible for arranging transfers.

■ Greek Islands: Travel Information

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[90043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the clarity of the Government's advice for people travelling to Greek islands; and what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on publishing scientific advice on that matter.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO currently advises against all non-essential travel to the Greek islands of Lesbos, Tinos, Serifos, Mykonos, Crete, Santorini and Zakynthos. This advice is based on the current assessment of COVID-19 risks. The advice was announced on 11 September and published on the FCDO website.

In making decisions about travel advice, the FCDO considers the scientific evidence. Public Health England (PHE) and the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC), the organisations mandated to provide health advice to British nationals travelling overseas, assess the risk to an individual of exposure to the virus in each destination based on data covering virus incidence rates, trends in incidence and deaths, transmission status and international epidemic intelligence as well as information on a country's testing capacity. In addition to the data on epidemiology, our overall assessment also draws on the latest information from our network of embassies and high commissions, on the situation in each country and territory.

■ International Law

Sarah Olney:

[\[91124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK Government upholds the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: As a signatory to the Rome Statute Her Majesty's Government is bound to uphold its provisions, and introduced the International Criminal Court (ICC) Act in 2001 to incorporate the statute into UK Law. Beyond our support for the work of the Court in holding to account the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern, we also provide both practical and financial support to the ICC and are campaigning for the election of a UK judge to ICC Judiciary.

■ Migrant Camps: France

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[89651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the living conditions for refugees living in camps in (a) Calais and (b) Dunkirk.

Wendy Morton:

We are continuing to monitor closely developments in the Pas de Calais region and the actions taken by French authorities, which include relocating individuals to accommodation centres across France where they receive support, and medical care, including hospitalisation where necessary. Since the introduction of the COVID-19 measures in France on 17 March, French authorities have worked with over 950 migrants to relocate them to accommodation centres. In these centres asylum claims can be lodged, and any other urgent needs assessed.

■ Pakistan: Capital Punishment

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[89657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan on the death sentence imposed on Asif Pervaiz on the 10 September 2020 on charges of blasphemy in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of the case of Asif Pervaiz and are closely following developments. We regularly raise at a senior level the issue of the blasphemy laws with the authorities in Pakistan. The UK's position on the death penalty is well known - we are firmly opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances. We will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, in accordance with international standards. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon last

raised our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 August.

■ Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Ms Lyn Brown:

[89658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the safety of religious minorities in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

We remain deeply concerned by reports of discrimination and violence against religious minorities in Pakistan. Pakistan remains a FCDO Human Rights Priority Country. We regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief and the protection of minority communities with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister for South Asia, raised these concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 August. We will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, as laid down in the constitution of Pakistan and in accordance with international standards.

Alex Sobel:

[90235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Pakistan Government on the (a) construction of a new Hindu temple in Islamabad and (b) obligation to guarantee fundamental rights of religious freedom to their citizens.

Nigel Adams:

We are closely monitoring the situation regarding the construction of the Shri Krishna Mandir temple in Islamabad. The UK Government remains deeply concerned by reports of discrimination against religious minorities in Pakistan, including against the Hindu community. Our High Commission in Islamabad frequently engages with the Hindu community to understand their needs and continues to raise our concerns about the issues surrounding the construction of the Shri Krishna Mandir temple with the Government of Pakistan. In addition, we regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief and the protection of minority communities with the Pakistani Government at a senior level. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister for South Asia, raised these concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 August.

■ Pakistani National Commission for Minorities

Stephen Kinnock:

[89715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the creation of the National Commission for Minorities in Pakistan has been set up in accordance with the Paris Principles; and what representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan on the need for those internationally recognised standards to be met.

Nigel Adams:

We welcome the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our concerns about human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, in a call on 15 July and letter on 27 August. Our High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, discussed the National Commission for Minorities with Dr Mazari in a meeting on 8 June. We have highlighted to the Government of Pakistan the importance of ensuring the new Commission is established in line with the UN Paris Principles as it begins its important work, specifically focusing on its independence, funding and membership.

In addition, we have consulted civil society organisations working on human rights and religious communities in Pakistan regarding Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, and are also in close discussion with international partners. On 11 August, the British High Commission in Islamabad hosted a virtual roundtable with civil society members and religious community representatives on Freedom of Religion or Belief to mark National Minorities Day in Pakistan.

Stephen Kinnock:[\[89716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to (a) his counterparts in the EU and (b) the USA to urge the Government of Pakistan to comply with the international standards, outlined by the Paris Principles, in setting up an effective National Commission for Minorities.

Nigel Adams:

We welcome the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our concerns about human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, in a call on 15 July and letter on 27 August. Our High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, discussed the National Commission for Minorities with Dr Mazari in a meeting on 8 June. We have highlighted to the Government of Pakistan the importance of ensuring the new Commission is established in line with the UN Paris Principles as it begins its important work, specifically focusing on its independence, funding and membership.

In addition, we have consulted civil society organisations working on human rights and religious communities in Pakistan regarding Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, and are also in close discussion with international partners. On 11 August, the British High Commission in Islamabad hosted a virtual roundtable with civil society members and religious community representatives on Freedom of Religion or Belief to mark National Minorities Day in Pakistan.

Stephen Kinnock:[\[89717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with (a) civil society or (b) human rights organisations working in

Pakistan to seek their views about the effectiveness of the National Commission for Minorities.

Nigel Adams:

We welcome the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities. Most recently, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, raised our concerns about human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, in a call on 15 July and letter on 27 August. Our High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, discussed the National Commission for Minorities with Dr Mazari in a meeting on 8 June. We have highlighted to the Government of Pakistan the importance of ensuring the new Commission is established in line with the UN Paris Principles as it begins its important work, specifically focusing on its independence, funding and membership.

In addition, we have consulted civil society organisations working on human rights and religious communities in Pakistan regarding Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, and are also in close discussion with international partners. On 11 August, the British High Commission in Islamabad hosted a virtual roundtable with civil society members and religious community representatives on Freedom of Religion or Belief to mark National Minorities Day in Pakistan.

Stephen Kinnock:

[89718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Pakistani counterpart on (a) the relationship between future UK aid contributions to Pakistan and (b) the need for the Government of Pakistan to adhere to the internationally recognised standards outlined by the Paris Principles when setting up a National Commission for Minorities.

Nigel Adams:

Our aid relationship with any government is based on an assessment of commitment to our Partnership Principles, including human rights. We will continue to raise human rights as a concern in our dialogue with the Government of Pakistan, including at our annual Bilateral Assistance Talks.

We welcome the establishment of the National Commission for Minorities. Most recently, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our concerns about human rights, including our concerns regarding Freedom of Religion or Belief and the National Commission for Minorities, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, in a call on 15 July and letter on 27 August. Our High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner CMG, discussed the National Commission for Minorities with Dr Mazari in a meeting on 8 June. We have highlighted to the Government of Pakistan the importance of ensuring the new Commission is established in line with the UN Paris Principles as it begins its important work, specifically focusing on its independence, funding and membership.

■ Religious Freedom

Mr Steve Baker:

[85038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his oral contribution of 6 July 2020, Official Report, column 673, when he plans to co-host a conference on freedom of religion or belief; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

Defending the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all is a priority for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. In line with our commitment to championing FoRB, the UK intends to host an international Ministerial conference on this issue. We will announce a date for hosting this conference over the coming months.

■ Yemen: Tankers

Anna McMorris:

[91699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) his relevant international counterparts and (b) the United Nations regarding ongoing negotiations to obtain approved authorisation for UN investigators to inspect the physical condition of the FSO Safer oil tanker off the coast of Yemeni port, al-Hudaydah.

James Cleverly:

The FSO SAFER oil tanker remains is an environmental disaster waiting to happen. The Foreign Secretary raised the tanker's dire condition, which poses an environmental, economic and humanitarian threat to Yemen and the region, during the P5+ High Level Ministerial meeting on 17 September that he co-hosted with his Swedish, German and Kuwaiti counterparts. The Group agreed a Joint Communique - <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/joint-communique-on-the-conflict-in-yemen> - which called on the Houthis to urgently facilitate unconditional and safe access for UN experts to conduct an assessment and repair mission. The UK is also working with the UN and other donors to ensure there is enough funding in place for that mission to proceed and that comprehensive UN contingency plans are in place should a leak occur.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Addictions: Public Health

Dr Dan Poulter:

[85004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for public health addictions policies and strategies following the merger of Public Health England with NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[85005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his plans are for public health tobacco smoking policies and strategies following the merger of Public Health England with NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[85006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his plans are for public health alcohol policies and strategies following the merger of Public Health England with NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[85007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for public health drugs policies and strategies following the merger of Public Health England with NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[85008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his plans are for public health gambling policies and strategies following the merger of Public Health England with NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[85009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his plans are for developing sexual health policies and strategies following the merger of Public Health England with NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: The Government will continue its focus on health improvement and preventing ill-health, with support from the expert teams who currently sit in Public Health England (PHE), who will continue with their excellent work. We are not envisaging any changes to where responsibilities such as drugs, alcohol, gambling and sexual health will sit until spring 2021. We have been consulting with staff and engaging with an external stakeholder advisory group on where PHE's health improvement functions would be best placed in order to support the public health system in our aim to increase healthy life expectancy. Furthermore we will be consulting with all staff.

■ Asthma

Henry Smith: [\[85020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 June 2020 to Question 58767, what plans he has to centrally collate data on the total number of severe asthma patients (a) in England and (b) within each of the NHS E+I regions.

Helen Whately:

There are no plans for this.

■ Ayanda Capital: Protective Clothing

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[81545]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the qualifications of Ayanda Capital Limited to ensure compliance with NHS safety standards in relation to masks supplied by that company.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Any personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by suppliers must meet strict safety standards as per the published technical specification for PPE at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-specifications-for-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

When offers are being evaluated, the technical suitability of the products on offer are confirmed with separate teams at NHS Supply Chain.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Craig Tracey:

[R] [86716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the article published in The Lancet on 12 August 2020 entitled Effect of mammographic screening from age 40 years on breast cancer mortality, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of lowering the breast cancer screening age for women.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) is aware of the The Lancet publication of the long-term outcomes of the UK Breast Screening Age trial.

The UK NSC will examine the findings carefully along with other initiatives in this area, which includes the use of artificial intelligence and digital pathology in the National Health Service Breast Screening Programme (NHS BSP). Currently there is a robust estimate that the current NHS BSP strategy is effective in preventing deaths from breast cancer. This involves regular screening in women aged 50 up to their 71st birthday.

The UK NSC also awaits the publication of the Age Extension Trial of screening in women over the age of 70 which is due to report in 2026.

The Committee's overriding concern is that any significant change to the Programme should result in more good than harm and be cost proportionable.

■ Cancer

Martyn Day:

[82151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with gastroenteropancreatic neuroendocrine tumours in (a) 2014, (b) 2015, (c) 2016, (d) 2017, (e) 2018 and (f) 2019.

Martyn Day:

[82159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with gastroenteropancreatic neuroendocrine tumours in (a) England, (b) Northern Ireland, (c) Scotland and (d) Wales in (i) 2014, (ii) 2015, (iii) 2016, (iv) 2017, (v) 2018 and (vi) 2019.

Jo Churchill:

Data on gastroenteropancreatic neuroendocrine tumours are not available in the format requested.

The National Disease Registration Service in Public Health England collects data on cancers diagnosed in England. Not all cancer types and sites are included in all routine publications. The latest complete year of cancer incidence data is for 2018, available to view at the following link:

<https://www.cancerdata.nhs.uk/>

Data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the cancer registries in those jurisdictions.

■ **Cancer: Coronavirus**

Henry Smith:

[81799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a national cancer recovery plan to tackle the backlog of cancer care resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

As set out in the Terms of Reference of a letter sent to NHS Providers on 31 July 2020, a National Cancer Taskforce will be established, and publish a national cancer recovery plan in the near future. The Terms of Reference are available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/cancer-forums-and-groups-terms-of-reference/>

Bambos Charalambous:

[82270]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish cancer waiting time statistics for (a) urgent two week wait referrals and (b) the 62 day wait for first treatment for the last (i) six months, (ii) 12 months and (iii) 24 months, by age.

Jo Churchill:

Information is not held in the format requested.

Jim Shannon:

[83808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people with cancer had (a) an urgent two week wait referral and (b) a 62 day wait for first treatment in each age category in the last (i) six, (ii) 12 and (iii) 24 months.

Jo Churchill:

Information not held in the format requested.

Jim Shannon:

[\[89701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on additional funding being made available in the next Comprehensive Spending Review to ensure that the NHS has the cancer workforce it needs.

Edward Argar:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly engages his Cabinet colleagues on topics relating to health and social care.

Making sure the National Health Service is well staffed is a top priority for this Government and the next phase of the NHS People Plan will focus on workforce growth and ensuring it has the right skills mix in place for a flexible and modern NHS.

The Government is delivering on its historic five-year National Health Service settlement. The NHS budget will increase by £33.9 billion a year in cash terms by 2023-24 (compared to 2018-19), reflecting that the NHS is this Government's top domestic spending priority and helping to fund the NHS Long Term Plan.

On 21 July the Chancellor launched the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review which will set out the Government's spending plans for health and social care for future years. The Government will set out the results of the Spending Review in due course.

■ **Cancer: Medical Treatments**

Kate Osborne:

[\[82485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the backlog of unmet clinical cancer need due to the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps his Department is taking to improve radiotherapy services.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: One of the key priorities for cancer outlined in the third phase of the National Health Service response to COVID-19 is to reduce the number of patients who have waited longer than 62 days from urgent referral and/or 31 days from a decision to treat to pre-pandemic levels. Actions to reduce long waits include increasing diagnostic capacity (particularly endoscopy and CT) and expanding the capacity of surgical hubs set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the wider NHS recovery programme, local systems have determined how best to restore cancer services and recovery is now underway across the NHS.

During the COVID-19 pandemic radiotherapy services provision continued and radiotherapy services made use of fewer fraction protocols as supporting evidence emerged. Subsequently the focus for radiotherapy has been to embed the use of

hypofractionated (fewer fraction) treatments in order to minimise trips to hospital, particularly for people likely to be worse affected by COVID-19.

■ **Cancer: Standards**

Grahame Morris: [\[81802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish cancer waiting time statistics on (a) urgent two week wait referrals and (b) the 62 day wait for first treatment for the last (i) six months, (ii) 12 months and (iii) 24 months, by age.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Information is not held in the format requested.

■ **Cancer: Third Sector**

Stuart Anderson: [\[82399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what financial support is available to organisations and charities that help people with cancer.

Jo Churchill:

We recognise that many charities are facing difficult decisions at the exact time their services are needed most and on 8 April 2020 the Chancellor announced £750 million to support the charity sector in response to COVID-19.

The Department does not routinely provide financial support to charities. However, of the £360 million allocated by central Government as part of that announcement, £200 million is for hospices and £22 million for health and social care charities. The £22 million includes the following cancer charities who were awarded grants in July:

- Jo's Cervical Cancer - £435,000;
- Blood Cancer UK - £341,000; and
- Anthony Nolan - £325,000.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell: [\[88911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the news story, £22 million awarded to life-saving health charities during virus outbreak, published on 22 May 2020, how much of that funding has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by organisations to date.

Edward Argar:

The Department can confirm that the £22 million has been fully allocated.

Payments to the value of £21.3 million have been made to date. Payments to charities are being made in staged payments and expenditure plans show that the grants will be fully paid by the end of October.

■ Coronavirus: Business

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[41068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Coronavirus support from business web page.

Jo Churchill:

To date over 26,000 offers have been received by the central support from business triage point and survey. All offers are automatically acknowledged by email upon receipt and by a call.

To date, the Crown Commercial Service has made phone contact with most suppliers (around 99.5%) that have made non-medical offers of support and as a result has published a catalogue of offers which is designed to make it as easy as possible for offers of non-medical goods and services to be taken up by anyone across the United Kingdom public sector. To date 9,145 offers are published on the catalogue. Offers relevant to specific Departments or sectors are shared in some cases directly with the appropriate Department.

■ Coronavirus: Children

Fleur Anderson:

[\[86179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the effects of the covid-19 outbreak and lockdown on children's (a) physical agility and (b) weight gain.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: We published 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' in July. The strategy demonstrates an overarching campaign to reduce obesity and sets our measures to get the nation fit and healthy, protect against COVID-19 and protect the National Health Service. The strategy continues to deliver actions set out in the childhood obesity plan including promoting a national ambition for every primary school to adopt an active mile initiative. We have also confirmed that schools in England will benefit from £320 million from the PE and Sport Premium during the academic year 2020-21.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Meg Hillier:

[\[60717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will publish the daily recovery rates for confirmed covid-19 cases.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not available in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Health Services

Henry Smith: [86635]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps NHS England is taking to monitor uptake of its Using patient initiated follow-ups as part of the NHS covid-19 recovery guidance published on 7 August 2020.

Henry Smith: [86636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what role patient organisations have had in developing the guidance entitled Using patient initiated follow-ups as part of the NHS covid-19 recovery, published by NHS England on 7 August 2020.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with a range of rapid adopter sites to implement patient-initiated follow-ups as part of the restoration of services following COVID-19. This includes joint work to monitor uptake in these sites. Alongside this, 50 trusts provided information detailing their implementation of patient-initiated follow-up this summer. For the longer term, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with NHS Digital and other organisations to seek to capture further data on patient initiated follow-up usage in future.

The initial guidance was prepared in rapid response to the need to restore outpatient services following COVID-19. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges patient lay committee was involved in the development of the guidance. We are working nationally with the NHS England and NHS Improvement personalised care group to engage further with patients and patient organisations as part of the ongoing development of supplementary guidance and tools for local systems. The guidance includes a recommendation that providers/systems carry out local patient engagement as part of implementation.

■ Coronavirus: LGBT People

Crispin Blunt: [40956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the health effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on (a) LGBT+ people and (b) other people with protected characteristics; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 May 2020]: Public Health England (PHE) has conducted a rapid review to better understand how different factors such as ethnicity, deprivation, age, gender and obesity can impact on how people are affected by COVID-19. The review's findings, published on 2 June 2020, are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes>

PHE publishes a weekly epidemiological surveillance report with information about cases and deaths by sex, age, ethnicity and other characteristics. This report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Sir Alan Campbell:

[81584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to provide free face masks to people in receipt of benefits.

Jo Churchill:

A face covering is not the same as a face mask such as the surgical masks or respirators used as part of personal protective equipment by healthcare and other workers.

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 and what materials can be used.

Dan Carden:

[82319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking tackle the risk of stigma faced by people who are unable to wear face masks due to hidden disabilities and/or mental health reasons.

Jo Churchill:

Our guidance published online is clear that there are exemptions where people do not need to wear face coverings. We are also clear that people do not need to prove they are exempt and they should not be challenged about this.

If someone is more comfortable showing they are exempt from the requirement to wear face covering, they are able to use some form of optional visual cue. Different options are available on GOV.UK, on charity and organisations websites, or could be hand-made. This aims to tackle the stigma faced by people who are unable to wear a face covering due to hidden disabilities and/or mental health reasons

The Government is running a proactive communications campaign on face coverings to alert the public to the places where they are required to wear a face covering, who is exempt from wearing one, and how to wear one correctly.

We are actively engaging with stakeholders including disability charities to communicate new guidance to their members as well as highlighting this message to the general public on social media and via broadcasting opportunities.

■ **Dental Services: Protective Clothing**

Esther McVey:

[81863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the average cost of disposable mask used in dentistry practises in (a) Jan 2020, (b) Feb 2020, (c) March 2020, (d) April 2020, (e) May 2020, (f) June 2020

and (g) July 2020; and what the projected cost is of such disposable masks up to the end of 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: This information is not available.

Mick Whitley:

[82418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that dental surgeries have access to an adequate supply of appropriate personal protective equipment as those surgeries reopen after covid-19 lockdown.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Dental practices purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) from dental wholesalers. As practices reopened from 8 June, the Department made available the necessary PPE to wholesalers for onward sale in addition to the wholesalers existing ability to source PPE from the wider market.

The overall supply of PPE has significantly improved over recent months.

Arrangements have been made to increase the supply of PPE to wholesalers for dentistry as well as National Health Service support in arranging the necessary fit testing for the PPE needed for aerosol generating procedures.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Staff**

Neil O'Brien:

[87647]

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

Edward Argar:

The Department is committed to Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), with a strategy which aims to create an inclusive culture where difference is valued, diversity is harnessed, and everyone has equal opportunity to achieve their potential.

Within the Department we have 10 posts which have either 'equality, diversity or inclusion, gender, LGBT or race' in the job title. Seven of these roles are within Human Resources and the remaining are in the different business areas.

Within the Department, there are also five posts with 'inequalities' in the job title and two posts with 'neurodiversity' in the job title.

In addition to this, we have visible Senior D&I Champions in place and their role includes sponsorship and aligning priorities and forward plans with staff networks, such as the Equality Matters network for race and PRISM network for LGBT+ matters. The Departmental Champions works with other Civil Service D&I Champions to push forward the diversity and inclusion agenda across the Civil Service. In the Department, Champion roles include a LGBT+ Champion and Race Champion as well as Champions for other protected characteristics.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Training

Neil O'Brien:

[\[86149\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

The following table shows how much the Department has spent on unconscious bias training in each of the last five years:

REPORTING YEAR	SPEND
April 2019 – March 2020	£12,234
April 2018 – March 2019	N/A
April 2017 – March 2018	N/A
April 2016 – March 2017	N/A
April 2015 – March 2016	N/A

Required Unconscious Bias online training for all staff which is accessed via Civil Service Learning forms part of the Civil Service Learning offer. Although we pay a yearly subscription cost for all Civil Service Learning, we are not able to provide a breakdown of spend for the required Unconscious Bias online training for all staff accessed via Civil Service Learning.

In addition to online training, in 2019-20 we held and paid for face to face Unconscious Bias workshops as part of Senior Civil Service and management training programmes.

Whilst our records show a spend of £12,234 for April 2019 to March 2020, learning on Unconscious Bias is built into other learning programmes, such as our line management training offer. This includes workshops on 'Leading Inclusive Teams' and 'Building Effective Teams'. It is not possible to extract the amount spent on Unconscious Bias where this forms part of a broader training offer.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Lee Anderson:

[\[88391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the proportion of people switching to e-cigarettes in (a) 2020 and (b) 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) published the latest review of the evidence on e-cigarettes and vaping in England in March this year. The review provides a full analysis of trends in behaviours and attitudes relating to the use of nicotine vaping

products among young people and adults. It found that prevalence of e-cigarette use has remained stable since the 2019 review.

This review can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaping-in-england-evidence-update-march-2020>

Data for 2020 will be published in early 2021 in PHE's next e-cigarette evidence update.

■ **Gambling: Health Services**

Carolyn Harris: [86706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of treating people with gambling addiction in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 (c) 2020.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not currently collected centrally.

■ **General Practitioners: Coronavirus**

Matt Vickers: [83974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the safety of face-to-face GP surgery appointments as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

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, on 31 August NHS England and NHS Improvement issued guidance 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.

The Government and the devolved administrations have published clear guidance on appropriate personal protective equipment for health and social care workers, including GPs. This has been written and reviewed by all four UK public health bodies and informed by NHS infection prevention and control experts. The guidance is consistent with World Health Organization guidance for protecting health and social care workers from COVID-19 and should allow the safe recommencement of regular face-to-face GP appointments.

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker:

[88300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the correlation between the level of hospital admissions and positive tests for covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 15 September 2020]: Data on hospital admissions and positive tests are reviewed by Public Health England and published on a weekly basis through the weekly surveillance report, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

COVID-19 hospital admission and positive tests contribute to understanding of COVID-19 activity in the population and the targeting of interventions.

Hospitalisations have remained relatively stable in recent weeks. However, there is typically a lag between an increase in disease activity and increases in hospitalisations. Following recent increases in case numbers, increases in hospitalisations can be seen in some parts of the country, such as the North West, in older adults.

■ Hospitals: Parking

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[91129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timescale is for ending free parking for NHS workers.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: As the Prime Minister said in his oral contribution of 8 July (Official Report, column 966), hospital car parks are free for National Health Service staff for this pandemic – they are free now – and we are going to get on with our commitment to make them free for patients who need them as well. This remains the Government's position.

■ Hospitals: Protective Clothing

Stuart Anderson:

[82394]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure all personnel in hospitals wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to ensuring that frontline staff in hospitals are equipped with the right personal protective equipment (PPE) not only for their protection, but to enable them to continue to deliver the first-class level of care that is amongst the best in the world.

Since 25 February 2020 the Department has distributed over three billion PPE items for use by health and social care services in England. Over 31 billion items of PPE

have been ordered overall from United Kingdom-based manufacturers and international partners to provide a continuous supply in the coming months.

We have published and continually updated our guidance on who needs PPE and when they need it, and the routes to ensure those who need it can get it at the right time, including hospital personnel.

■ Inflammatory bowel disease: Health Services

Justin Madders:

[\[86087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on care for patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis patients of service pressures resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Madders:

[\[86088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with NHS England on improving care for patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis as the NHS resumes normal service levels as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment on the effect of care for patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak has been made.

Early in the pandemic NHS England and NHS Improvement advised that in-person consultations "should only take place when absolutely necessary". Providers have been rolling out remote consultations using video, telephone, email and text message services as a priority, including for those with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Judith Cummins:

[\[86683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who are shielding will be able to receive a flu vaccination.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: General practitioners and other National Health Service providers have been asked to prioritise flu vaccination for all those who are in the defined clinically vulnerable groups documented in the national guidance. In addition, this season household contacts of those who are on the shielded patients list are also eligible for a free NHS vaccine to allow us to offer additional protection.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will be introducing a call and recall service to ensure that all eligible individuals are aware that they can receive a free vaccination and how to access one. Alongside this, additional trained workforce is being made available to local providers to support them to access the most vulnerable patients who may be in care homes or require domiciliary visits.

■ Lung Cancer: Medical Treatments

Derek Twigg: [\[81540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time in each (a) clinical commissioning group and (b) region was for lung cancer patients for (i) chemotherapy and (ii) surgical procedures was in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the average waiting times were in the same period in 2019.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Information is not held in the format requested.

■ NHS: Incentives

Julian Sturdy: [\[88306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a one-off financial bonus for NHS staff who worked on covid-19 wards during the outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Over 1 million National Health Service staff received pay rises in April from existing multi-year deals and in July we accepted the independent pay review body's recommendations of a 2.8% pay rise for specialty and associate specialist doctors, dentists, consultants and salaried general practitioners. The Government will carefully consider the pay review bodies' recommendations for other staff groups next year when we receive them.

The NHS reward offer is about much more than basic pay and includes excellent benefits such as generous annual leave and a much-valued pension scheme. We want to ensure that the NHS employment offer continues to attract, retain and reward staff and this offer continues to be kept under review.

■ NHS: Protective Clothing

John Redwood: [\[38400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new domestic suppliers of personal protective equipment have been signed up in the last two months by NHS England and Public Health England.

Jo Churchill:

We have rapidly processed over 24,000 offers of personal protective equipment (PPE) from over 15,000 suppliers to ensure they meet the safety and quality standards that National Health Service staff need, as well as prioritising offers of larger volumes. We've contracted with over 175 new suppliers able to deliver at the scale and pace the United Kingdom requires.

Lord Deighton, formerly Chief Executive of London 2012 Olympics, has lead on our domestic efforts to increase the supply of PPE. The Department has now signed contracts for over three billion items of PPE through UK-based manufacturers,

including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons, ensuring we build and maintain a domestic base for the future.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova: [\[89836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what resources and funding he is allocating to restart ophthalmology services and provide increased ophthalmology capacity as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

As part of the third phase of the National Health Service response to COVID-19, focus is on accelerating the return of non-COVID-19 health services, including ophthalmology, whilst also preparing for winter demand pressures.

To support with this, the Government is providing an additional £3 billion to the NHS, which includes funding for continued access to the independent sector to carry out routine treatments and procedures as well as provide additional capacity for COVID-19 patients, should it be needed.

The restoration of services will also be done alongside continued vigilance in light of any further COVID-19 spikes locally and possibly nationally.

■ Ovarian Cancer: Diagnosis

Liz Twist: [\[82278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review the referral pathway to allow CA125 blood tests and ultrasound tests to be done at the same time, rather than sequentially, to diagnose and treat ovarian cancer.

Jo Churchill:

There are currently no plans in place. The CA125 Blood test, followed by an ultrasound for raised CA125, is the current process recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

Rapid Diagnostic Centres (RDCs) are being rolled out across England as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. One of the key principles of RDCs is the coordination of testing, including implementation of multiple-same day testing to provide timely diagnosis of cancer.

■ Patients: Transport

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[82632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the additional costs attributed to increased personal protective equipment purchases incurred by non-emergency patient transport service providers.

Jo Churchill:

The non-emergency patient transport sector have had access to free of charge personal protective equipment through the centralised Departmental supply model.

Grahame Morris:

[\[86640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward proposals to widen access to NHS patient transport in County Durham.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: On 27 March the National Health Service released a guidance to reflect changes in patient transport services during the COVID-19 response. As the NHS returns to a business as usual position further amendments to the guidance have been made and are due to be published shortly. On 31 July 2020, the NHS released a letter which outlined Phase 3 of the response to the pandemic and stated that the national alert level has dropped down to level 3. As a result, the North East Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust reopened its booking centre on 17 August 2020, enabling patients, general practitioners and trusts to make Patient Transport Service bookings for their travel requirements. All patients who require patient transport are now able to travel and are assessed for eligibility based on their mobility and other available alternatives open to them (such as friends and family).

■ **Prostate Cancer**

Paul Bristow:

[\[82504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS funding spend on cancer is currently spent on prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The amount spent by the National Health Service on prostate cancer related services is not collected separately to the overall spend on cancer services.

■ **Prostate Cancer: Diagnosis**

Paul Bristow:

[\[82506\]](#)

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 prostate cancer identification and diagnosis rates from March 2020 to July 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The data is not currently available.

■ **Prostate Cancer: Screening**

Paul Bristow:

[\[82507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the National Screening Committee in its review into the case for prostate cancer screening will make an assessment of the European Association of Urologists' recommendation, published in its 2019 position paper on the wide-scale adoption of population-based prostate cancer screening programmes.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) opened its three-month public consultation on screening for prostate cancer/ prostate-specific antigen testing in men over 50 on 25 June 2020.

As per the UK NSC's evidence review process when examining the evidence for a condition, only published peer-reviewed evidence is taken into consideration in order to allow for robust population screening recommendations to be made. The evidence review process can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process/uk-nsc-evidence-review-process>

■ Protective Clothing: Contracts**Christine Jardine:****[82307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons Government contracts for the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) were awarded to companies with (a) no prior expertise in producing PPE and (b) limited financial capability; and what steps the Government has taken to ensure that it demonstrated appropriate competitive tendering for PPE.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 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>

Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. These include a direct award due to extreme urgency or the absence of competition. Over 1,000 purchase orders have been raised with suppliers for COVID-19 related work, the majority through a direct award.

The Government issued a public call to action to support the increased requirements of personal protective equipment (PPE). The aim was to reach suppliers who had experience of supplying PPE and also those who had no prior experience but who had access to sources of PPE through their business contacts. To date this has resulted in 15,000 suppliers offering their help and support. All offers were prioritised based on volume, price, clinical acceptability and lead time – this is the time from an offer being accepted by the Department to the supplier delivering those items. Many suppliers with no previous experience of PPE repurposed their production lines and/or their supply routes in order to begin or increase production of the supply of PPE items. These were often established private businesses whose net asset position is only one factor in evaluating their offer.

■ Protective Clothing: Imports

Gareth Thomas:

[37397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help secure the import of personal protection equipment during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Lord Deighton is leading the Government effort to expand the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) from imports from overseas and improving domestic manufacturing capability.

A cross-Government PPE sourcing unit, staffed by over 400 people, is securing new supply lines from across the world and has published rigorous standards against which purchases will be made. We are identifying new sources of critical PPE from overseas markets, diversifying the United Kingdom's sources of supply and strengthening the UK's supply chains for the long term.

Teams from the Department for International Trade and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office around the world are seeking new supplies, lobbying governments to lift export restrictions and helping get crucial deliveries back to the UK. The combined Department for International Trade, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for Health and Social Care efforts have resulted in the Department for Health and Social Care raising purchase orders for over 31 billion items of PPE; direct from new relationships in source countries, as well as through our trusted UK suppliers to the National Health Service, who themselves are using their global connections to help us.

■ Protective Clothing: Turkey

Justin Madders:

[82032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 3 August 2020 to Question 59809 on Protective Clothing: Turkey, how many of the 185,000 gowns and coveralls have been used.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: 185,000 gowns and coveralls were transported from Turkey to the United Kingdom by the Royal Air Force on 22 April. While a small number of these gowns failed tests in the UK, the majority passed tests making them suitable for use in the National Health Service.

This consignment from Turkey was merged with the wider stock of gowns and coveralls and has since been split into stock units. The stock has been incorporated into the supply chain and has been available for order.

■ Radiotherapy

Daisy Cooper:

[82428]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the All-party Parliamentary Group on Radiotherapy's six point plan to transform radiotherapy services.

Jo Churchill:

The transformation of radiotherapy services is a priority for the Government and is referenced in the NHS Long Term Plan. Implementation includes the following:

- Faster, smarter and effective radiotherapy, supported by greater networking of specialised expertise, will mean more patients are offered curative treatment, with fewer side effects and shorter treatment times. 11 Operational Delivery Networks are in place, supported by a new Radiotherapy Learning Healthcare System and a future pipeline of investment to support improved radiotherapy information, increased use of quality improvement science to support service improvement, and adoption of consistent quality assurance approaches;
- A £130 million upgrade of radiotherapy machines has been completed; and
- The recruitment of 1,500 additional full time equivalent in the cancer workforce across seven priority specialisms by March 2021.

■ Rehabilitation

Elliot Colburn:

[82452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to review the suspension of face-to-face community rehabilitation services in England.

Jo Churchill:

All community services, including rehabilitation, that were previously stopped or partially stopped, should now be fully reinstated. This includes, where needed, home visits for vulnerable adults, subject to appropriate infection control protections.

■ Shotley Bridge Hospital: Domestic Visits

Mr Richard Holden:

[89871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, prior to 14 September 2020, when (a) he and (b) another minister in his Department most recently visited Shotley Bridge Hospital in Consett, Co. Durham.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: My Rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care had not visited Shotley Bridge Hospital prior to 14 September 2020 in his Ministerial capacity. The Department of Health and Social Care can also find no record of the current Ministerial team visiting the hospital prior to 14 September 2020.

■ Skin Cancer: Health Education

Sir Edward Leigh:

[81514]

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, what steps he is taking to increase public awareness of non-melanoma skin cancer.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) supports Melanoma UK's ambition to increase awareness of non-melanoma skin cancer.

PHE ran a regional Be Clear on Cancer campaign in 2014 to raise awareness of the signs of skin cancer aimed at people aged 50 and over, the age group most likely to be diagnosed with the most serious form of skin cancer, malignant melanoma.

The Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are designed to improve rates of early diagnosis of cancer by raising the public's awareness of specific cancer symptoms and encouraging people with those symptoms to go to the doctor promptly. The Be Clear on Skin Cancer advertising resources are available on the PHE Campaign Resource Centre, to a range of partners including the National Health Service, charities and local authorities for their continued use where needed. The Be Clear on Cancer Resources can be accessed at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/16-be-clear-on-cancer/resources>

PHE also provides advice to other Government departments, such as the Health and Safety Executive, on sun safety to help develop their policies.

■ Surgery

Sir Christopher Chope:

[88810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it the policy of the Government to require NHS hospitals to make provision for elective surgery seven days a week; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 September 2020]: As part of the third phase of the National Health Service response to COVID-19, focus is on accelerating the return of non-COVID-19 health services, including elective care, and the NHS will be looking to deliver the following elective activity levels in the coming months:

- In September, delivering at least 80% of last year's activity for both overnight electives and for outpatient/daycase procedures, rising to 90% in October;
- Return to at least 90% of their last year's levels of MRI/CT and endoscopy procedures, with the goal to reach 100% by October; and

- 100% of last year's activity for first outpatient attendances and follow-ups (face to face or virtually) from September through the balance of the year (and aiming for 90% in August).

Providers, working as local systems, have been asked by 21 September to submit draft plans for how they intend to meet the key actions in the phase 3 guidance. The restoration of non-COVID-19 services will be done whilst also preparing for winter demand pressures and alongside continued vigilance in light of any further COVID-19 spikes locally and possibly nationally.

■ Tobacco: Packaging

Emily Thornberry:

[88835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance the Government has provided to the UK tobacco manufacturing industry on the source of the pictorial health warnings that they are required to use on products manufactured for sale in (a) Great Britain and (b) Northern Ireland, from 1 January 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 September 2020]: The Department published guidance on 19 August 2020 outlining the requirements for labelling tobacco products after the end of the transition period. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/labelling-tobacco-products-after-the-end-of-the-transition-period>

■ Tobacco: Research

Sir Charles Walker:

[86574]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 30 January 2020 to Question 8193 on Tobacco: Research and Question 8194 on Smoking, when the Government plans to announce the call for evidence to assess further the effectiveness of heated tobacco products in helping people to quit smoking and reducing associated health harms.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: In the prevention Green Paper consultation 'Advancing our health: Prevention in the 2020s' the Government indicated that we will consider running a call for independent evidence to assess further how effective heated tobacco products are, or are not, in helping people quit smoking and reducing health harms from smoking. This forms part of our commitment to evaluate the evidence on new products. This work is currently paused due to the need to prioritise work on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will consider looking at this at a later date to form part of our smokefree 2030 plans.

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

Nadia Whittome: **[91747]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of delays in renewing biometric residency permits due to the covid-19 outbreak on people's ability to prove their right to work.

Nadia Whittome: **[91748]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason there is a requirement to provide biometric data in applications for further leave to remain from applicants for whom biometric data is already held.

Kevin Foster:

We have implemented measures to reduce the impact on people caused by the restrictions which have been necessary to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

As already set out we have introduced reuse of previously enrolled biometrics and published guidance on Gov.UK which sets out the applicable circumstances. The guidance can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913700/biometric-enrolment-guidance-covid-19-v1.0ext.pdf.

People can still evidence their right to work through the Employer Checking Service after they have submitted an application for a biometric residence permit to ensure there is no impact on their employment.

■ **Antisocial Behaviour: Coronavirus**

Stuart Anderson: **[89859]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support communities in tackling anti-social behaviour (a) during and (b) following the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Atkins:

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of flexible tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour. These powers and tools continue to be applicable during this period.

The powers in the 2014 Act are local in nature, and it is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate in the specific circumstances as they are best-placed to understand the needs of their community and the most appropriate response.

The 2014 Act also introduced specific measures designed to give victims and communities a say in the way that complaints of anti-social behavior are dealt with.

This includes the Community Trigger, which gives victims of persistent ASB the ability to ask for a formal case review.

■ **Asylum: Coronavirus**

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on covid-19 testing and safety for people in asylum accommodation; and if she will publish that guidance.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in asylum accommodation have been tested for covid-19.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in asylum accommodation are classed as shielding.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in asylum accommodation have tested positive for covid-19.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in asylum accommodation have died from covid-19.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is following national guidance in relation to testing, as set by Public Health England.

We do not publish figures in relation to COVID 19. Asylum seekers who have been tested, would appear in the nationally published statistics on testing.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to complete and publish the full report of its evaluation of asylum accommodation and support services relating to Glasgow during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

We are committed to improving accommodation and support services experienced by asylum seekers, as evidenced by the evaluation of the provisions in Glasgow during the pandemic and our commitment to act on the findings.

The evaluation is on-going, and publication will be considered once the evaluation has been concluded.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[89744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what countries her Department has assessed it safe to return refused asylum seekers to during the covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Philp:

All asylum and human rights claims are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw.

■ Asylum: Deportation**Stuart C McDonald:****[89745]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been subject to enforced removal since since 1 April 2020; and to what countries they have been removed.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes data on returns from the UK in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Data on the number of enforced returns, by return destination, are published in table Ret_D02 within the returns detailed datasets.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/returns-and-detention-datasets>

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the Returns summary tables. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on returns. The latest data relate to June 2020.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar '.] https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest

■ Asylum: Finance and Housing**Stuart C McDonald:****[89743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to implement asylum support cessations and evictions of people in asylum accommodation who have been refused asylum.

Stuart C McDonald:**[89746]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish any public health guidance or advice that informed her decision of 11 August 2020 to restart asylum support cessations and evictions.

Chris Philp:

We are resuming negative asylum support cessations in England, and soon after in the rest of the United Kingdom following discussion with officials in the Devolved Administrations. Those without an ongoing right to be in the UK should be taking steps to leave the country. All cases that receive a negative cessation will have an available route of return and we offer support through a Voluntary Returns Scheme

that will pay for travel and provide a cash amount, and this can and should be utilised whenever possible.

The general advice received was that people who are awaiting a Covid test result should not be asked to leave their current dwelling until they receive a negative test result and are symptom free and that those self-isolating due to a positive test result should adhere to the full 14-day self-isolation period for close contacts.

These factors, applied to an individual case, might mean that a failed asylum seeker continues to be eligible to receive support because they are unable to leave the UK or take the necessary practical steps to enable them to leave (for example by attending an interview for the purposes of obtaining a necessary travel document).

■ Asylum: Hotels

Stuart C McDonald: [89731]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on support and standard operating procedures in relation to its hotel accommodation; and whether those procedures are published.

Stuart C McDonald: [89740]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason it is her policy to exclude financial support to asylum residents in full board hotels.

Stuart C McDonald: [89741]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department pays its three accommodation contractors directly for meeting its definition of essential living needs in relation to hotel residents in full board asylum accommodation.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seekers who are accommodated in "dispersal" accommodation (generally flats and houses) receive £39.60 per week to cover their other essential living needs. Asylum seekers accommodated in hotels and other full-board facilities do not receive this payment because their essential living needs are provided for in kind, or a mixture of in kind support and some cash.

The detail of the support arrangements for those supported in full-board accommodation are set out in the contracts with the accommodation providers; specifically the "Statement of Requirements", which can be found at:

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1112/AASC - Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements>

The accommodation providers receive payments for providing services consistent with those requirements.

Stuart C McDonald:

[89739]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure the safety of asylum seekers in hotel accommodation across the UK in response to recent Far-Right activities and harassment at those hotels.

Chris Philp:

We are working closely with our providers to review security arrangements within all of the hotels currently being used to accommodate asylum seekers. Our accommodation providers liaise closely with local Police colleagues and asylum seekers are briefed as to risks and encouraged to report Hate Crimes accordingly.

We are also working with Home Office and local authority colleagues to develop strategic responses to any further harassment of asylum seekers accommodated in hotels nationally.

Stuart C McDonald:

[89742]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has paid to (a) Serco, (b) Mears Group and (c) Clearsprings for the provision of hotel asylum accommodation since 1 April 2020.

Chris Philp:

Total asylum spends are published as part of transparency data which can be found using this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

■ Asylum: Interviews

Christine Jardine:

[82311]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of effectiveness of teleconferencing interviews for asylum seekers to ensure that the (a) quality and experience of interviews is maintained; (b) claimants do not suffer retraumatisation and dehumanisation; (c) the loss of physical communication and body language does not result in adverse credibility assessments.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office has successfully used video technology to support asylum interviewing since 2017 and has appropriate operating procedures that are designed to ensure participants are able to give the best account of their circumstances. Asylum Operations has an assurance process, the three lines of defence model, which assesses the quality of decisions, interviews and the application of Home Office policy and video conference interviews are a part of this assurance process.

Assurance Compliance and Improvement (ACI) are in the process of conducting second line assurance on interviewing via video conference but we are continuing to complete our own first line assurance. We regularly liaise with partners and received feedback to ensure our standards of interviewing are upheld.

■ Detention Centres: Non-governmental Bodies

Philip Davies:

[89643]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list (a) the Non-Governmental Organisations with access to Immigration Removal Centres, (b) the purpose of their access and (c) which centres have they visited in the last 12 months.

Chris Philp:

Individuals or organisations who do not have a statutory right of access and who wish to view an immigration removal centre are required under the provisions of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 to obtain the permission of the Secretary of State. Published Detention Services Order 04/2012 'Visitors and visiting procedures' sets out the practical arrangements in place for visitors to the immigration detention estate.

Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) regularly visit immigration removal centres to provide a range of different services including advocacy, welfare services, religious support and mental health provision. In addition, the Home Office, NHS (England) and our suppliers have grant or contractual arrangements with a small number of NGOs.

Visiting NGOs include Samaritans; British Red Cross; Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group; Bail for Immigration Detainees; Medical Justice; and the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID). The Home Office does not hold a central record of NGO visits to individual centres.

■ Greece: Refugees

Ms Lyn Brown:

[89655]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of granting refuge to some of those refugees who have been affected by the recent fires in the Moria refugee camp on the island of Lesbos.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[89656]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the number of unaccompanied children refugees living in camps in (a) Calais, (b) Dunkirk and (c) the island of Lesbos.

Chris Philp:

The identification and relocation of vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied children, on French territory remains the domestic responsibility of the French government.

The Greek Government and International agencies have stated that approximately 400 unaccompanied minors were left in the Moria camp in early September following transfers of unaccompanied minors to the Greek mainland since November 2019. After the fire, it is reported that the remaining unaccompanied minors were also moved to the mainland.

The UK focusses on resettling vulnerable refugees through our refugee resettlement schemes and we rely on referrals of recognised refugees from UNHCR, who do not currently prioritise resettlement for refugees already in Europe.

■ Home Office: Apprentices

Robert Halfon:

[91612]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department is making on meeting the 2.3 per cent public sector apprenticeship target; and when her Department will meet that target.

James Brokenshire:

Departments are committed to increasing the number of apprentices across the Civil Service and continue to work towards the 2.3% target. The impact of the current pandemic has slowed recruitment due to priority work and logistics. With the current strategy and targets coming to an end in April 2021, the Civil Service is already focusing on how to continue to support the apprenticeship agenda and drive forward apprenticeship recruitment, pulling on the Plan for Jobs initiative and considering the current economic situation.

As of 31 March 2020, the Civil Service has achieved a total of 2.1% of its total workforce as apprentices against the legislative target for the public sector of 2.3% by March 2021.

As of 31 March 2020, the Home Office had achieved 1.1 % of the total staff employed within the department at this time.

■ Human Trafficking

Alex Norris:

[86742]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who had been identified as trafficked used her Department's Voluntary Returns Service during (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019; and which were the top five countries they returned to.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes statistics on all types of removals from the UK which includes voluntary departures. The latest statistics are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020>

Table Ret_D01 shows returns from the UK by type. The Home Office holds data on those identified as having been trafficked into the UK, but not in a format which can easily be reported. To provide the data requested would require examination of individual case files which could only be done at prohibitive cost.

Karen Bradley:

[R] [88311]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) identified potential victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and (b) persons prosecuted for human

trafficking or modern slavery offences were stopped from entering the UK having tried to enter with forged, illegal or fraudulent documents or were otherwise undocumented in each calendar year from 2016 to 2019 inclusive.

Victoria Atkins:

The specific information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. This is because a manual search through individual records would be required to identify individuals who have been refused entry to the UK from 2016 to 2019 as well as searching such records to identify victims of modern slavery who were identified and referred to the National Referral Mechanism

Tackling human trafficking and modern slavery, both in the UK and overseas, is a priority for the government. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 gives law enforcement agencies the tools to tackle modern slavery and provides protection for victims. The Modern Slavery Act also includes powers which enable law enforcement officers, including Border Force, to pursue modern slavery perpetrators at sea.

Border Force has a duty of care to all crossing the border and adults with vulnerability for any reason will be dealt with respect and care.

The Home Office publishes statistics on referrals into the National Referral Mechanism on a quarterly basis. These reports detail the number of referrals submitted into the NRM by Border Force, however they are not broken down by port. These reports can be located via the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170404150655/http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

<https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications?search=&category%5B%5D=3&=%2Fwho-we-are%2Fpublications%3Flimit%3D15%26sort%3Dtitle%26direction%3Dasc&limit=100&tag=>

■ **Immigrants: Finance**

Stephen Timms:

[89586]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of change of conditions applicants with no recourse to public funds were required to respond to a request for additional information in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017; and what proportion of those applications were (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful.

Stephen Timms:

[89587]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of change of conditions applications made by people with to no recourse to public funds were successful following administrative review in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017.

Stephen Timms:

[89588]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what reasons for refusal were given to unsuccessful change of conditions applications from people with no recourse to public funds, in each quarter since quarter 3 of 2017.

Stephen Timms:

[89589]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether administrative review was offered to people with no recourse to public funds who applied unsuccessfully for a change of conditions since quarter 3 of 2017; and in how many cases administrative review was sought.

Stephen Timms:

[89590]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in how many cases administrative review was offered in response to unsuccessful change of conditions applications from people with no recourse to public funds, in each quarter since quarter 3 of 2017; and in how many of those cases it was pursued.

Chris Philp:

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

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

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

As part of the regular publication of this data the Home Office will review whether the data can be meaningfully broken down any further. The next update of this data is due to be published in November 2020.

■ **Passengers: Coronavirus**

Nick Thomas-Symonds:

[83882]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Passenger Locator Forms have been checked by UK Border Force Officials from those people returning from countries not included in the Government's travel corridors, since 3 July 2020.

Chris Philp:

Border Force does not collect the data on country of origin, unless there is an issue with non-compliance, therefore, we do not hold that level of data. Border Force continues to operate a spot checking regime to support compliance with the PLF, and will balance the needs of this against a range of other factors, including the public health risk of queuing passengers in a confined space.

■ Refugees

Neil Coyle: [\[91653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to restart the UK Resettlement Scheme.

Chris Philp:

It is not currently possible to undertake resettlement activity due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We are evaluating how to respond given these restrictions and pressures, but we expect to resume refugee resettlement activity when safe and operationally viable to do so.

We continue to closely monitor the situation and remain in regular dialogue with our international and domestic stakeholders.

■ Refugees: Resettlement

Stuart C McDonald: [\[88331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the resettlement of refugees into the UK will resume.

Chris Philp:

It is not currently possible to undertake resettlement activity due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We are evaluating how to respond given these restrictions and pressures, but we expect to resume refugee resettlement activity when safe and operationally viable to do so.

We continue to closely monitor the situation and remain in regular dialogue with our international and domestic stakeholders.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[88332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to continue resettlement of refugees in the long term; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

It is not currently possible to undertake resettlement activity due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We are evaluating how to respond given these restrictions and pressures, but we expect to resume refugee resettlement activity when safe and operationally viable to do so.

We continue to closely monitor the situation and remain in regular dialogue with our international and domestic stakeholders.

■ Slavery: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[89781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 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 £1.8 million allocated to the Survivors of Modern Slavery Fund has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by organisations.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office received £1.76 million of funding for modern slavery services, to support those organisations which work directly with victims in the Victim Care Contract (VCC). On 5 May the Home Office informed The Salvation Army, as the Prime Contractor of the VCC, of the funding available to them and sub-contracting organisations. This funding, rather than being disbursed via grant mechanisms, is being drawn down through existing contractual invoicing processes as required to meet additional costs related to the provision of victim support during the pandemic.

As of 16 September 2020, £566,180 has been received by The Salvation Army.

■ Slavery: Victims**Karen Bradley:****[R] [87542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many potential victims of modern slavery were identified and referred to the National Referral Mechanism at (a) seaports, (b) airports and (c) rail ports in each year from 2016 to 2019 inclusive.

Victoria Atkins:

The location from which a First Responder identified and referred a potential victim of modern slavery to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is not captured in a reportable format.

The Home Office publishes statistics on referrals into the National Referral Mechanism on a quarterly basis. These reports detail the number of referrals submitted into the NRM by Border Force, however they are not broken down by port. These reports can be located via the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170404150655/http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

<https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications?search=&category%5B%5D=3&=%2Fwho-we-are%2Fpublications%3Flimit%3D15%26sort%3Dtitle%26direction%3Dasc&limit=100&tag=>

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Justin Madders:****[87572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department, how many passengers have (a) entered the UK from countries on which the UK has imposed quarantine restrictions since those restrictions were imposed, (b) registered their address and contact details and (c) have been subject to a check to ensure that quarantine requirements are being fulfilled.

Kevin Foster:

Border Force does not hold the data requested in an accessible format.

However information relating to Health measures at the border and compliance with quarantine restrictions are available on GOV.uk at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border>.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Christian Wakeford:

[82644]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many immigrants who have crossed the English Channel illegally since 1 January 2018 remain in the UK.

Chris Philp:

Details on the number of people who have crossed the Channel in small boats between January 2018 and June 2020 was published, via a letter from the Home Secretary to the Home Affairs Select Committee, in September 2020. The information is available

at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2333/documents/22962/default/>

We remain committed to removing those with no right to be in the UK, and who do not comply with our immigration laws.

The Home Office continues to work closely with EU Member State partners to enact transfers as soon as possible and ahead of the six-month timeframe for a return.

The Home Office publishes data on the number of asylum seekers transferred under the Dublin regulation in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Data on the number of asylum seekers transferred out of the UK under the Dublin Regulation, broken down by the EU member state they have been transferred to are published in tables Dub_D01 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets>

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending December 2019.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar' https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?keywords=immigration&content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=relevance

Sir David Amess:

[89585]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether illegal immigrants who have recently crossed the English Channel are being housed in hotels in Southend West constituency.

Chris Philp:

We do not provide accommodation to illegal immigrants. Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are provided with free, fully furnished accommodation while applications are considered.

The number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>, this includes the numbers of those accommodated in hotels

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Daisy Cooper:****[91725]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2020 to Question 88934 on Mortgages, what steps he is taking to raise awareness of alternatives to the EWS1 form with the mortgage sector; what suitable equivalent evidence he has encouraged mortgage lenders to accept; and if he will publish those lenders that have given assurances to the Minister for Building Safety that leaseholders should face no barriers to renewing their mortgage with their existing lender.

Christopher Pincher:

A building owner might have other evidence that may provide the necessary assurance to lenders, such as a recent fire risk assessment which includes the external walls. The Department is continuing to meet with lenders to explore such alternative evidence. No lender has said they would request an EWS1 when an existing mortgage holder is renewing their mortgage on the same terms and is not seeking to borrow more.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control****Daniel Zeichner:****[89721]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to provide financial support to district councils for the provision of covid-secure marshals.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has provided local authorities with an unprecedented £3.7 billion in unringfenced funding to support them in responding to the pandemic, as well as further funding for adult social care and to support local outbreak planning. We will provide further details on marshals in due course.

■ Homelessness: Finance**Rachael Maskell:****[89777]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 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 £6 million allocated to the homelessness response fund has been (a) allocated and (b) received by organisations.

Kelly Tolhurst:

MHCLG announced £6 million of emergency funding to provide relief for frontline homelessness charitable organisations who are directly affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. This is part of a £750 million package of government support for UK charities who may have been impacted by the pandemic. This Covid-19 Homelessness Response Fund was delivered by Homeless Link and applications closed on Wednesday 27 May. Successful applications were announced on 7 June with payments following shortly afterwards. £5,920,000 has been awarded and paid out to organisations.

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

■ Lighting**Andrew Griffith:****[89903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department will take to strengthen the protections against light pollution in the forthcoming reforms to the planning system.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light. The Framework is supported by our planning guidance, revised in November last year, which sets out how environmental and other impacts of light pollution should be considered in the planning system. Local planning authorities must take the Framework into account when preparing their plans, and its policies - including those on light pollution - also need to be taken into account in making individual planning decisions. The Planning for the Future White Paper includes proposals for strengthening the way that environmental issues are considered through the planning system. These proposals are now being consulted on and the Government is encouraging feedback from individuals and organisations as part of its assessment of the proposed measures.

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Paul Bristow:

[89865]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) financial and (b) other resources he is making available to help local authorities become carbon neutral.

Luke Hall:

Local authorities have a vital role in meeting our net zero commitment. Support is available from departments across Government for councils seeking to undertake local action on climate change. Recent examples include the Green Homes Grant (BEIS) and Active Travel Fund (DfT).

On 8 July, the Chancellor announced a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme to upgrade homes across England. £500 million funding will be delivered through local authorities, to improve the energy efficiency of low-income households. This will help reduce fuel poverty and support the installation of low carbon heating.

The £250 million emergency active travel fund announced on 9 May is designed to help local authorities create an environment that is safe for both walking and cycling in their regions. The money will help create pop-up bike lanes, wider pavements, safer junctions, and cycle and bus-only corridors. We want to support all communities across England who want to change the way they use their streets and new guidance has already been published to tell councils how they can give more road space to cyclists and pedestrians.

To encourage drivers to make the switch to electric vehicles as part of a greener future, the Government has also announced an extra £10 million to incentivise local authorities to install up to 7,200 additional on-street electric vehicle chargepoints, doubling the current funding amount for the second time this year.

It is for authorities to decide what measures are best aligned with local opportunities and needs.

■ Public Lavatories: Disability

Navendu Mishra:

[89870]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make it a statutory requirement to consult disability organisations on all planning applications where Changing Places toilets are included.

Christopher Pincher:

Local planning authorities are required to publicise and consult on all planning applications, including those for Changing Places lavatories. Whilst disability organisations are not statutory consultees on planning applications, we would expect local planning authorities to consider whether there are planning policy reasons to engage local disability organisations who are likely to have an interest in a proposed development.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Steve Reed: [\[91651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the proposed recovery and devolution White Paper will be published.

Luke Hall:

As we set out in June, the Government intends to bring forward the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in the Autumn, detailing how the UK government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Board of Trade: Meetings

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[91697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2020 to Question 89802, whether the next board of trade meeting will be advertised prior to it taking place.

Graham Stuart:

The next Board of Trade meeting forms part of my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade's itinerary. On security grounds, details of the next Board of Trade meeting will not be advertised prior to the meeting.

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Anthony Mangnall: [\[90258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on negotiating the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Pursuing potential accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a priority for the HM Government and is a key part of our trade negotiations programme. We have engaged with all eleven member countries, at both ministerial and official level. Most recently, on 9th September 2020, my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade addressed a United Kingdom-CPTPP Senior Officials' meeting and all CPTPP members have welcomed our interest in accession. Prior to that, on 10th July 2020, the Secretary of State convened Heads of Mission from all CPTPP countries to discuss the United Kingdom's potential accession. We will continue to engage all members as we consider our application, an approach that aligns with the accession process for new CPTPP members, which encourages countries to engage informally with every CPTPP member.

■ Expert Trade Advisory Groups: Membership

Bill Esterson:

[\[91627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has to meet with the TUC to discuss the membership of the Trade Advisory Groups.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The sector-specific Trade Advisory Groups are just one way that the Department for International Trade engages on trade policy. A representative of the TUC was appointed a member of the Strategic Trade Advisory Group in 2019 and my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and I continue to consider ways in which the Department can engage further with the TUC and individual trade unions.

■ Organic Food: Exports

Bill Esterson:

[\[91628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to promote the export of organic produce from the UK.

Graham Stuart:

The UK's food and drink exports increased by 5% to £23.8bn in 2019. The UK's organic produce is exported widely around the world, and we work closely with industry to support the sector.

On 22 June, in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for International Trade launched a Bounce Back Plan to support the food, drink and agriculture industries. The package offers initiatives to support the organic industry including export masterclasses and virtual meet the buyer events. This bespoke package will further boost our trade efforts and complement the new opportunities presented by free trade agreements such as that with Japan.

JUSTICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[906352\]](#)

What steps he is taking to improve the rehabilitation of offenders on release from prison.

Lucy Frazer:

Everyone leaving prison should have the tools they need to avoid a life of crime, including a job, a home and treatment for substance misuse issues.

Offenders typically have complex needs, many of which drive offending. The prison and probation system provides an opportunity to address these, but we also need a concerted effort across Government to rehabilitate individuals on release from prison.

For example, we are working with NHS England to develop their care after custody service, RECONNECT, to engage and support more people into treatment upon release.

John Nicolson: [\[906353\]](#)

What recent progress has been made on the Independent Review of Administrative Law.

Alex Chalk:

The independent and expert panel has begun its work, issuing a call for evidence which closes in October.

The panel will then move to consider this evidence and make their report.

Lee Anderson: [\[906358\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the public are protected from terrorists.

Lucy Frazer:

All terrorist offenders are subject to specialist multi-agency case management which utilises our network of counter-terrorism specialists. We use tailored interventions to facilitate disengagement and share risk assessment with security partners.

Since the latest terror attacks we have acted swiftly and decisively to review those multi-agency arrangements, and significantly invested in CT capability in the sector.

We have already taken an emergency Act through Parliament to end automatic early release of terrorists and we will introduce tougher sentencing and release measures through the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill.

Wera Hobhouse: [\[906360\]](#)

What steps he is taking to tackle recent trends in the level of self-harm in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

There are encouraging signs that self-harm has started to reduce in recent months, but it remains a concern.

We have given over 25,000 prison staff better training to spot and prevent self-harm;

We have refreshed our partnership with the Samaritans which supports the Listeners scheme, whereby selected prisoners are trained to provide emotional support to their fellow prisoners;

We have also piloted improvements to Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT), the multidisciplinary case management approach to supporting prisoners thought to be at risk of self-harm or suicide. We are currently planning the resumption of roll-out of the revised ACCT across the prison estate.

Tim Farron: [\[906363\]](#)

What steps he is taking to tackle the backlog of family court hearings accrued during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The protection of vulnerable children is a top priority, and I am extremely grateful for the dedication of family justice professionals at this unprecedented time.

At the start of the pandemic the family courts quickly prioritised the most urgent cases, and moved to hear the majority of cases remotely. More court rooms are reopening, and a record number of sitting days were sat in June and July.

I recognise there is more to do. We are working with the judiciary and operational partners to agree further measures for the sustained recovery of the family justice system, building on the robust actions already taken, to meet the challenges we continue to face.

Fiona Bruce:[\[906366\]](#)

What plans he has to include proposals on strengthening non-custodial sentences in the forthcoming sentencing White Paper.

Chris Philp:

The Sentencing White Paper sets out our plans for more effective community sentencing that offers punishment and responds to the underlying drivers of offending.

We will better identify individual needs, provide treatment options where appropriate and utilise technology to drive compliance. These measures will support offenders to change their lifestyles for good and protect the public.

The reforms will be underpinned by our ongoing probation reform, to deliver effective, tailored and responsive supervision of offenders in the community.

Paul Holmes:[\[906369\]](#)

What steps his Department has taken to ensure that courts can continue to operate effectively during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The Justice system has operated throughout the pandemic. o Jury trials, the part of the system we did have to suspend, restarted in May

o By Monday 14 September 2020, jury trials will have resumed in 72 Crown Courts

Our buildings are 'Covid secure' and social distancing measures are in place

o By rolling out plexiglass and other measures, we are on track to open 250 Crown courtrooms by the end of October. o 110 jury trial rooms are currently in use.

We have swiftly expanded our use of technology so that we can hold more video and audio hearings across all jurisdictions, subject to judicial discretion.

We are rolling out Nightingale Courts across the country, undertaking Saturday sittings, and piloting Covid operating hours in further efforts to support access to justice.

The progress made to introduce online access to services through reform has made a substantial difference in maintaining the operation of the courts and tribunals, enabling more work to continue where reform is more advanced, and underlining the wider value of reform in supporting a more resilient and adaptable service.

Those services which have already been reformed, notably divorce, probate, SSCS, IAC, and jurisdictions using CE-File have proved more resilient to the impact of the pandemic and still been able to process thousands of applications.

■ **Community Rehabilitation Companies: Staff**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[89648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Community Rehabilitation Company staff have appealed against the indicative role assignments to (a) the National Probation Service or (b) the dynamic framework that they have been issued by their Community Rehabilitation company director.

Lucy Frazer:

Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) are currently undertaking the assignment activity for their staff and are due to send their outputs to the Probation Reform Programme from the end of September 2020. CRCs are responsible for communicating with their staff the outcome of assignment and for dealing with any appeals against an assignment outcome from staff. Once the assignment activity is concluded each CRC will know how many appeals they have processed.

■ **Courts: Closures**

Mr David Lammy: [\[89602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much revenue has been raised by the court closure programme in the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

Since 2010, £322m has been raised from the sale of surplus court and tribunal buildings. Since 2015 sale proceeds totalling £211m have been reinvested as part of the HMCTS reform programme.

The closure of any court is not taken lightly – it only happens following full public consultation. We have been clear that courts have only closed where they were underused, dilapidated or too close to one another.

Mr David Lammy: [\[89603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the reduction in court capacity as a result of court closures in the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

Since 2010, the permanent court and tribunal estate has reduced from a total of 605 operational court and tribunal buildings to 330 operational court and tribunal buildings.

The closure of any court is not taken lightly – it only happens following full public consultation. We have been clear that courts have only closed where they were underused, dilapidated or too close to one another and in each case, we have only agreed to close the court where sufficient capacity existed in other nearby courts to accommodate the work of the closing courts.

HMCTS has published an update on their response to Covid-19 in the criminal courts in England and Wales (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-and-tribunal-recovery-update-in-response-to-coronavirus>). This includes details on the use of Nightingale courts and our plans to open additional locations.

■ Courts: Crimes of Violence

Mr David Lammy:

[89606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of violence against court staff have been recorded in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

HMCTS takes the safety and security of its staff very seriously. Court and tribunal buildings, the policy and operating procedures in place across the organisation, and training programmes are all designed to ensure a safe working environment. There are specific controls in place to manage the risks faced by court and tribunal staff.

The data available on instances of physical violence against court and tribunal staff goes back to 2013-14. Before that, data was not systematically recorded. For the seven-year period for which we have data, the number of incidents of violence towards HMCTS court staff totals 171. This is broken down between financial years as follows:

2019-20 - 35

2018-19 - 30

2017-18 - 18

2016-17 - 26

2015-16 - 26

2014-15 - 19

2013-14 - 17

■ Crown Court: Coronavirus

Mr David Lammy:

[89601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the cases in the crown court backlog by type of case.

Chris Philp:

The volume of outstanding cases at the Crown Court is published by case type as part of the National Statistics bulletin [Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly](#).

The latest published data is available to March 2020.

National Statistics for the period to June 2020 will be published on September 24, 2020.

■ Employment Tribunals Service

Mr David Lammy: [\[89593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of employment tribunals have been attended by parties litigant in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

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

The term “litigant in person” (“party litigant” in Scotland) applies to Claimants without a legal representative. In the Employment Tribunal any person may be permitted to act as a representative, including a friend or relative.

■ Family Proceedings

Mr David Lammy: [\[89592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of (a) private and (b) public proceedings in family courts have been attended in person by parties litigant in each of the last ten years.

Alex Chalk:

While a party to private or public law court proceedings may not be legally represented, they may have previously received legal advice.

The Department does not collect information on litigants in person in the family courts. This information could only be obtained from analysis of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

However, an indication of self-representation in family cases is identified in the case management systems used by Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service by the legal representation field being left blank. By focusing on cases with at least one hearing, the parties with no legal representative recorded give an approximation to the information requested. This is provided in the attached table which covers the year 2011 to 2019.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ 89592 table.xlsx]

■ Immigration: Appeals

Mr David Lammy: [\[89594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of proceedings before the (a) First-Tier Immigration and Asylum Tribunal and (b) Upper-Tier Immigration and Asylum Tribunal were attended by parties litigant in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

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

The term "litigant in person" ("party litigant" in Scotland) applies to appellants without a legal representative. In the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) and Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) any person may be permitted to act as a representative, including an immigration advisor, friend, relative or litigation friend. The case management system cannot provide a statistical breakdown between different types of representative.

Legal Opinion: Advisory Services**Rachael Maskell:**[\[89779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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 £5.4 million allocated to support the legal advice sector during the covid-19 outbreak has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by organisations.

Alex Chalk:

The not-for-profit advice sector organisations in local communities across the country play an essential role in helping people resolve their legal problems.

This is why we have made £5.4m available to fund not-for-profit providers of specialist legal advice across England and Wales during the pandemic.

Of the £5.4m allocated to non-for-profit providers of specialist legal advice to support the legal advice sector, to date, £4.7m has been received by organisations, with the remaining funds to be distributed to recipients by the end of October.

Ministry of Justice: Apprentices**Robert Halfon:**[\[91614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department is making on meeting the 2.3 per cent public sector apprenticeship target; and when his Department will meet that target.

Chris Philp:

As of 31 March 2020, the Civil Service has achieved a total of 2.1% of its total workforce as apprentices against the legislative target for the public sector of 2.3% by March 2021. The Ministry of Justice has achieved 1.3% of the total staff employed within the department.

The Ministry of Justice's Apprenticeship Strategy, designed to meet the allocated targets consists of 3 strands:

1. Promoting the use of Cabinet Office approved apprenticeships programmes to develop professional skills;

2. Designing and delivering operational apprenticeship standards for specific operational roles; and
3. Promoting the use of apprenticeships as an entry route / development of career pathways for staff at all levels of the organisation.

In March 2020 the MoJ reported a year on year increase in apprenticeships starts vs 2018-19 by 31%; and it was expected that this trend would continue into the new financial year, with the recruitment of c2,700 prison officer apprentices nationally throughout 2020-21.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has significantly impacted the delivery of our apprenticeship strategy; particularly in the prison operational roles, with activity being paused in the short term. Plans are in place to rapidly re-start operational apprenticeships as soon as it is both safe and operationally viable to do so.

Given this target is a percentage of the total workforce, the percentage changes in line with workforce fluctuations over time, therefore making it challenging to predict when a department will meet it. The data for 2018/19 can be found [here](#). The data for 2019/20 will be released on gov.uk by the end of September 2020.

Departments are committed to increasing the number of apprentices across the Civil Service and continue to work towards the 2.3% target. The impact of the current pandemic has slowed recruitment due to priority work and logistics. With the current strategy and targets coming to an end in April 2021, the Civil Service is already focusing on how to continue to support the apprenticeship agenda and drive forward apprenticeship recruitment, pulling on the Plan for Jobs initiative and considering the current economic situation.

■ Ministry of Justice: Contracts

Mr David Lammy:

[89605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which contractors have received tenders from his Department in the last 12 months.

Chris Philp:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The name of each contractor which has submitted a bid on a running tender is not held centrally.

The MoJ will consider each contractor bid within the necessary criteria and award the tender based on the most suitable candidate to provide the required goods or service, ensuring value for money.

■ Prison Service: Labour Turnover

Ms Lyn Brown:

[89649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the retention of experienced (a) prisons and (b) probation staff in the last five years.

Lucy Frazer:

Overall resourcing levels are monitored through a number of processes which provide the appropriate level of information for staffing decisions to be made. At a local level, the workforce planning processes which are in place for prison groups and probation regions have the level of detail needed to manage current staffing levels and make accurate predictions around future needs.

A link to national resourcing is in place to ensure the accurate forecasting of Prison Officer Entry Level Trainees (POELT) and Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) new starters needed to maintain the recruitment pipelines and allow for the required qualification and training standards to be met. This is monitored nationally and feeds into national workforce planning decisions. Specialist staff are also in place to monitor major organisational changes.

We have created a retention programme which is linked to wider activities around employee experience, employee lifecycle and staff engagement at work. In parallel, we are looking at leaver trend data and using exit interview outcomes to establish the drivers of attrition in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. This work consists of reviewing existing policy, process and benefit arrangements for staff and establishing how best to optimise them order to retain a leading presence in the labour market, as an employer of choice.

■ Prisoners' Release**Mr David Lammy:**[\[89599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of number of suspected offenders who were likely to be released early without the custody time limit extension.

Chris Philp:

Temporary legislation has been introduced to extend the length of the Custody Time Limit in the Crown Court by 56 days for 9 months. It does not apply retrospectively and defendants retain the right to apply for bail. The decision to release a defendant on bail is one taken by our independent Judiciary based on the specific circumstances of the case. There is therefore, no reliable statistic that answers this question.

Mr David Lammy:[\[89604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have been released in error in each of the last 10 years.

Lucy Frazer:

A release in error may occur from prison or from court. A prisoner is released in error if they are released earlier than their correct release date. They will be unlawfully at large until they are returned to custody, unless they are subsequently released correctly.

Releases in error are rare and the vast majority are returned to custody very quickly. We work closely with the police to recapture offenders at large and investigate each of these incidents thoroughly to see what lessons can be learned.

Please find below the number of prisoners released in error in England and Wales, since 2010. The data is the 12 months ending March 2010 to 12 months ending March 2020.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
68	63	42	44	50	49	64	72	66	62	50

■ Prisoners' Release: Children

Mr David Lammy: [\[89597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children have been released from custody without a confirmed permanent address in the last 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

Decisions on accommodation for children under the age of 18 who leave custody are taken at local level, so this data is not held centrally by MoJ. Local Authority-led Youth Offending Teams work closely with young offender institutions, secure training centres and secure children's homes on accommodation arrangements so that any issues can be identified and resolved as early as possible before release.

Arrangements for the child or young person's accommodation are reviewed at regular intervals and in addition to the statutory 'Duty To Refer' requirements, local protocols have been developed to allow for cases of particular concern to be escalated within the relevant local authority. The Local Authority has a duty to accommodate children upon their release from custody.

■ Prisoners' Release: Females

Mr David Lammy: [\[89596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women have been released from prison without a confirmed permanent address in the last 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

The latest available and validated data for the accommodation status of women released from prison up to March 2020 are published at the following link under Table 11: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-performance-quarterly-update-to-march-2020>.

■ Prisons: Coronavirus

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[89650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2020 to Question 84991, on Prisons: Coronavirus, what responsibilities his Department holds

on (a) the fair treatment of staff throughout the prison estate, (b) the public health effects of his Department's policies and (c) prison staff health and well-being with respect to the management of private prisons in England and Wales .

Lucy Frazer:

Public Sector Prisons' Covid-19 HR processes and policies are driven by Civil Service HR guidance which is based on Government advice and Trade Union engagement. The Health and Safety function are a key partner in determining specific operational guidance and their expertise is the driver for HR decision making. It is accepted that Government guidance is based on the principles of effectiveness and fairness and that the existing support networks, focus groups and HR processes will steer any actions into an inclusive and supportive outcome.

As we have previously stated, all staffing matters, including the responsibility for ensuring the fair treatment of staff and their well-being, lie with contractors. There is no requirement in the contracts to agree such matters with the Ministry of Justice.

Private providers continue to play an important role in the prison estate, and I can assure you that performance of all providers is closely monitored. Further we will not hesitate to take action where standards fall short.

■ **Prisons: Crimes of Violence**

Mr David Lammy:

[\[89607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of violence against prison officers have been recorded in each of the last 10 years.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of recorded cases of violence against prison staff is published as part of the Safety in Custody statistics, the figures for each of the last ten years are provided below:

2010 - 2,848

2011 - 3,132

2012 - 2,987

2013 - 3,266

2014 - 3,640

2015 - 4,963

2016 - 6,844

2017 - 8,417

2018 - 10,203

2019 - 10,033

Figures for the first quarter of 2020, up until the end of March, show there were 2,290 incidents of violence against prison staff, a decrease of 4% from the previous quarter.

Violence against our hardworking prison officers is unacceptable, and we work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to bring the perpetrators to justice. Additionally, our new Assaults on Emergency Workers Act means that those who attack them can expect an additional 12 months behind bars.

We are also giving officers PAVA pepper spray and body-worn cameras to make their jobs safer, as well as access to post incident care teams, occupational health support and counselling for those who need it. More widely, 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.

■ Prisons: Drugs

Mr David Lammy:

[89608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of illegal substance misuse have been record in English and Welsh prisons in each year since 2010.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of individual cases of illegal substance misuse is not recorded, however, data and information on drug testing is routinely published and is available on the link below. Data on drugs tests in 2020/21 will be published in due course.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-annual-digest-april-2019-to-march-2020>

Illicit substances pose significant challenges in our prisons which is why we have developed a comprehensive drugs strategy which provides prisons with guidance and examples of good practice to support them tackling drugs.

A crucial part of this strategy is the use of drug testing as it provides us with robust evidence on the prevalence of drug misuse and can be used to support security measures, identify and signpost into drug treatment, monitor treatment compliance and act as an incentive to engage in treatment and recovery.

We are also supporting prisons with £100 million of investment in additional airport-style security, including x-ray body scanners, designed to stop drugs entering prisons in the first place.

These measures are part of our wider investment to make jails safer, while working closely with healthcare providers to ensure prisoners have the support they need to live free of the influence of drugs upon release.

■ Social Entitlement Chamber

Mr David Lammy:

[89595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of proceedings before the First-Tier Social Entitlement Chamber were attended by parties litigant in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The term “litigant in person” (“party litigant” in Scotland) applies to appellants without a legal representative. In the First-tier Tribunal, Social Entitlement Chamber (SEC) any person may be permitted to act as a representative, including a friend or a relative.

The case management systems used in the tribunals of the SEC (Social Security and Child Support; Criminal Injuries Compensation; and Asylum Support) cannot provide a breakdown between different types of representative.

■ **Trials: Coronavirus****Mr David Lammy:****[89600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many jury trials were outstanding in each of the last 12 months.

Chris Philp:

The table below provides the number of outstanding trial cases at the Crown Court by month, between March 2019 and March 2020.

YEAR	MONTH	OUTSTANDING TRIAL CASES AT THE CROWN COURT
2019	Mar	25,360
	Apr	25,925
	May	26,140
	Jun	26,341
	Jul	26,728
	Aug	27,185
	Sep	27,272
	Oct	28,155
	Nov	28,629
	Dec	29,403
2020	Jan	30,179
	Feb	31,019
	Mar	31,686

March 2020 is the latest period for which National Statistics broken down by type of case are published in England and Wales. National Statistics for the period to June 2020 will be published on September 24, 2020.

■ UK Relations with EU

Mr David Lammy:

[\[89598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the rule of law and negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU.

Alex Chalk:

The Lord Chancellor speaks frequently with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters. The Lord Chancellor remains committed to the Rule of Law, and through the Ministerial Code, all Ministers are required to consider their obligations against the overarching duty to comply with the law. The statement published on 10 September sets out the government's legal position in relation to specific clauses in the UK Internal Market Bill.

The Government, as a whole, continues to pursue negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU and concluded the 8th round of negotiations on 10 September. Our position remains unchanged; we want a relationship with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals and centred on free trade.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Official Visits: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[\[89887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 77858 on Official Visits: Northern Ireland, for what reason the Government does not maintain a record of the number of visits made to Northern Ireland by the (a) Prime Minister of the Irish Republic and (b) Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Irish Republic.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government does not maintain a record of every visit by a member of foreign governments to the UK. The Government has no operational need to maintain such records and sees no requirement to keep such a formal record.

■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[\[90297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 3 September to Question 78927 on Broadcasting: Northern Ireland, when the overall profiling of the £140 million of the £2 billion of funding to support implementation of the

New Decade, New Approach deal set aside to address Northern Ireland's unique circumstances will be confirmed.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government has committed £140m alongside the New Decade, New Approach deal for Northern Ireland's unique circumstances. The resources will be allocated by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland following consultation with NI Executive ministers through the UK Government-NI Executive Joint Board.

■ **Terrorism: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna:

[\[91174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will ensure that the UK Government provides adequate funding for the Troubles victims' pension scheme; and what steps he is taking to implement that scheme.

Mr Robin Walker:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: The UK Government made legislation establishing a victims' payments scheme in January. The Regulations provide for the Executive Office to be able to provide funding to the Department responsible for supporting the Victims' Payments Board. The devolved funding settlement means that the Executive is funded through the Block Grant together with its own revenue raising capabilities to fund its statutory responsibilities, including this scheme.

The Government welcomes the designation of the Department of Justice to lead on administrative support for the scheme and the Executive must now deliver on implementation, so that applications can be processed and payments made to victims. We will continue to prioritise supporting the Executive's delivery of this scheme.

■ **Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation**

Louise Haigh:

[\[91090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has held with the Home Secretary on the continuation of funding for the Warrington Peace Foundation's victims of terror support service.

Mr Robin Walker:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: As stated at Northern Ireland Oral Questions earlier this month, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is committed to discussing this important issue with the Home Secretary.

PRIME MINISTER■ **Special Envoy On Freedom of Religion Or Belief**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[91578\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when the Government plans to fill the position of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Patrick Grady: [\[91666\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what plans he has to appoint a new Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Boris Johnson:

An appointment will be announced in due course.

TRANSPORT■ **Acceleration Unit**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[91626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to evaluate the effectiveness of the Transport Acceleration Unit.

Andrew Stephenson:

The members of the Acceleration Unit will engage positively with key stakeholders and colleagues across the department, government, and industry on a range of projects and programmes at varying stages of their lifecycle to deliver the best possible outcome from accelerating their delivery.

The Acceleration Unit aims to speed up the delivery of key projects and programmes which will be determined by the Secretary of State. A key element of the Unit's work will be to put in place a means to judge the effectiveness of its interventions.

The Acceleration Unit Director Darren Shirley will assess the effectiveness of its activities in accordance with these criteria and report to the Secretary of State.

■ **Bus Services**

Robert Largan: [\[90294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to publish its National Bus Strategy for England.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government remains committed to a National Bus Strategy and aims to publish by the end of the year.

■ Business: Disability

Caroline Nokes:

[\[89682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of grants in each of the Transport-technology research innovation grants funding rounds have been awarded to disabled entrepreneurs.

Rachel Maclean:

We have not collected disability status data on T-TRIG awardees in the past, but are planning to collect this data as part of T-TRIG 2020. We are working with the Connected Places Catapult and Innovate UK to maximise the diversity of applications to the current call.

■ Business: Females

Caroline Nokes:

[\[89681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of grants in each of the Transport-technology research innovation grants funding rounds have been awarded to (a) female entrepreneurs and (b) companies led by women.

Rachel Maclean:

Since 2014, 13 out of 176 or 7.4% of grants offered under The Transport-Technology Research Innovation Grants (T-TRIG) or similar schemes have been awarded to teams led by women.

We do not hold data on the sex of the leaders of these companies either when grants were offered or now.

Each of these projects were delivered by teams. We do not hold data on the sex of members of delivery teams.

We are planning to expand the collection of equality data as part of T-TRIG 2020 and are working with the Connected Places Catapult and Innovate UK to maximise the diversity of applications to the current call.

■ Dartford-Thurrock Crossing: Air Pollution

Sir David Evennett:

[\[90053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in the number of crossings made on the Dartford Crossing during the covid-19 outbreak on air quality in the surrounding areas.

Rachel Maclean:

Highways England continuously monitor air quality on the Dartford Crossing and operate two automatic air quality stations either side of the A282. Monitoring station ID51 is located next to the northbound carriageway and monitoring station ID52 is next to the southbound carriageway.

The measured monthly average nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations between January and August (covering the COVID-19 lockdown period) for 2019 and 2020 are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Air Quality Monitoring Data

										AVERAG E MARCH	
		JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TO JULY	
	Site	2019	38.3	39.6	26.4	42.5	30.8	32.8	28.9	30.1	32.3
	51 NB										
2020	21	13.6	16.7	20.2	25	24	18.6	30.7	20.9		
	Site	2019	71.6	67.9	61.7	46.5	55.3	53.2	55.1	50.2	54.4
	52 SB										
2020	58.1	51.8	43	32.7	35.3	38.4	42.4	42.7	38.4		

As shown in Table 1 the impact of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions has led to a reduction in measured NO₂ concentrations between March and July 2020 (bold figures), which corresponds to a reduction in traffic flows between the same time period.

■ Department for Transport: Carbon Emissions

Paula Barker:

[\[91182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will place in the Library his Department's plans to reduce its carbon emissions.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to going further and faster to tackle climate change, which is why we are developing a bold and ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport. We published "Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge" to kick start this work at the end of March and will publish the final plan before the end of this year.

■ Driving Licences: Applications

Derek Twigg:

[\[90047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving licence applications had been received but not processed on 30 August 2020; and what estimate he has made of the average time taken to process those applications.

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 1 September, there were 127,870 paper driving licence applications where customers

had applied directly to the DVLA, awaiting processing. As of 15 September, this had reduced to 94,920.

The average time taken to deal with driving licence applications received across online and paper channels is 5.26 days.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Alan Brown:

[89765]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department has allocated from the public purse to (a) electric vehicle charging infrastructure and (b) hydrogen vehicle refuelling infrastructure in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean

Funding allocated to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure in each of the last five years is as follows:

Spending Review 2015: £20m to install chargepoint infrastructure dedicated to electric taxis and private hire vehicles

Autumn Statement 2016: £80m to support the installation of chargepoints in the home, workplace and on-street

Autumn Budget 2017: £200m for the Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund

March Budget 2020: £500m for charging infrastructure over the next five years

The Government has provided £40m of funding via our Go Ultra Low city scheme to 8 cities across the UK to support uptake of ultra low emission vehicles in those cities.

To date, well over 2500 chargepoints have been installed as part of this scheme, including the first 350kW enabled EV charging station in the UK

The Government and industry have supported the installation of over 18,000 publicly available charging devices and over 130,000 domestic chargepoints.

With regard to hydrogen, the Office for Low Emission Vehicle's £4.8m Hydrogen for Transport Advancement programme (HyTAP) programme was launched in 2015 to funded hydrogen refuelling infrastructure. In 2017 Government provided £23m Hydrogen for its Transport Programme to increase the uptake of fuel cell electric vehicles and expand hydrogen refuelling infrastructure. Through this funding, the UK now has one of the largest publicly-accessible hydrogen refuelling station networks in Europe.

Our approach to delivering our ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral, supporting different zero emission technologies where the market favours their use.

Alexander Stafford:

[89891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much his Department has allocated from the public purse to (a) electric vehicle charging infrastructure and (b) hydrogen vehicle refuelling infrastructure in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean

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Our approach to delivering our ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral, supporting different zero emission technologies where the market favours their use.

■ Electric Vehicles: Hydrogen**Alan Brown:****[89764]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to help increase the number of hydrogen passenger vehicles in use.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government's approach to realising our ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral and we are supporting hydrogen technology where the market favours its use. The Government's £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is increasing the uptake of fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) and growing the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations. The programme is delivering new refuelling stations, upgrading some existing stations as well as deploying hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles. Our FCEV Fleet Support Scheme has also increased the number of hydrogen passenger vehicles in use, by supporting both public and private sector fleets to become early adopters of FCEV cars and vans. We are investing in hydrogen buses and 62 are being delivered through our Low and Ultra Low Emission Bus Schemes.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[89890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to help increase the number of hydrogen passenger vehicles in use.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government's approach to realising our ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral and we are supporting hydrogen technology where the market favours its use. The Government's £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is increasing the uptake of fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) and growing the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations. The programme is delivering new refuelling stations, upgrading some existing stations as well as deploying hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles. Our FCEV Fleet Support Scheme has also increased the number of hydrogen passenger vehicles in use, by supporting both public and private sector fleets to become early adopters of FCEV cars and vans. We are investing in hydrogen buses and 62 are being delivered through our Low and Ultra Low Emission Bus Schemes.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Hydrogen

Alan Brown:

[\[89766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of hydrogen lorries to de-carbonising transport; and what discussions he has had with representatives of the road haulage industry on the introduction of hydrogen lorries.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department for Transport published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts of a range of fuel and powertrain options for road vehicles over the period to 2050, including hydrogen fuel cell heavy goods vehicles. Transport Ministers and officials regularly meet with sector representatives on a range of issues, including the use of hydrogen in the freight industry. During July and August officials engaged with over 700 key stakeholders to support the development of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will be published later this year and set out options and support for green hydrogen across road, rail, maritime and aviation.

Owen Thompson:

[\[89791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on transport decarbonisation of hydrogen lorries; and what discussions he has had with the transport industry on the introduction of those lorries to the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department for Transport published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts of a range of fuel and powertrain options for road vehicles over the period to 2050, including hydrogen fuel cell heavy goods vehicles. Transport Ministers and officials regularly meet with sector representatives on a range of issues, including the use of

hydrogen in the freight industry. During July and August officials engaged with over 700 key stakeholders to support the development of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will be published later this year and set out options and support for green hydrogen across road, rail, maritime and aviation.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[89892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of hydrogen lorries to de-carbonising transport; and what discussions he has had with representatives of the road haulage industry on the introduction of hydrogen lorries.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department for Transport published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts of a range of fuel and powertrain options for road vehicles over the period to 2050, including hydrogen fuel cell heavy goods vehicles. Transport Ministers and officials regularly meet with sector representatives on a range of issues, including the use of hydrogen in the freight industry. During July and August officials engaged with over 700 key stakeholders to support the development of our Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will be published later this year and set out options and support for green hydrogen across road, rail, maritime and aviation.

■ Patrol Craft: Plymouth

Luke Pollard:

[\[91721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department holds information on a vessel named HMS Alfred the Great being registered and based in Plymouth.

Robert Courts:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has no record of a vessel named HMS Alfred the Great on its UK Ship Register.

■ Railways: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel:

[\[90236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage people to use the railways as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased; and if he will make it his policy to reduce rail fares.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We now understand the epidemiology of the virus better and can control it through targeted, local action. Our priority remains the safety of staff and passengers. We are working with rail operators to ensure passengers have the confidence to return to the railway, and continue to take all necessary measures to make rail travel safe. These include the installation of clear floor markings, the provision of extra staff to manage passenger flows and provide guidance, and the mandating of face coverings on public transport.

We have also asked the rail industry to increase the number of services they run. Rail operators continue to assess local demand regularly and deliver the services passengers need. From 7 September, the railway has been operating 91% of its pre-pandemic capacity, providing frequent and reliable trains for passengers.

To support a safe, green recovery and new working patterns we are also considering proposals to try to ensure better value and convenience for part-time and flexible commuters and to support those returning to the railway.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[91724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what covid-secure contingency plans he has for the railway network in the event of (a) signal failure and (b) other disruption.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In the event of any disruption we expect operators to put in place mitigation measures, such as lifting ticket restrictions, providing rail replacement busses, or increasing train lengths where possible. Operators will work with the Department and Network Rail to remedy the underlying reason for the disruption. In any situation operators will adhere to their Covid-19 policies that have been put in place to comply with Government regulations and guidance, including providing clear advice and guidance to passengers about the disruption and mitigations put in place.

■ Railways: Diesel Fuel

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[90984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of diesel-only trains on the environment.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Rail is a comparatively green mode of transport, but the Government is working to further decarbonise and reduce the impact of air pollution.

Diesel freight and passenger trains in Great Britain created 1,848 kilotonnes of CO₂ e last year. The Government will reduce these emissions through our ambition to phase out diesel-only trains by 2040 and deliver a net-zero transport system by 2050.

Diesel trains can also contribute to air pollution hotspots. The Department is working with Network Rail and the wider industry to monitor the impact that diesel trains have on air quality, to help us make improvements where they matter most.

■ Railways: Weather

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[91658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve the resilience of rail infrastructure to bad weather conditions to prevent delays and cancellations to rail services.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail is undertaking a range of measures to improve the resilience to extremes of weather from active monitoring of rails at potential risk of buckling during hot weather to enable contingency plans to be enacted; to Emergency Weather Action Teams being stood up proactively in readiness to respond in advance of any extreme weather. Furthermore, in light of the tragic events at Stonehaven, NR were commissioned to produce a report in to improving the resilience of the network in response to extreme weather events. The interim report was published on 10 September and contained a range of short term and longer term actions which are being taken forward, including the creation of two task forces to look specifically the management of earthworks and the other to make best use of weather data. A full report will be published in due course.

■ **Railways: West Midlands**

Daniel Kawczynski: [89644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many journeys are made on average annually between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton by train.

Daniel Kawczynski: [89645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people use the train service between Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury annually on average.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Passenger demand flows between specific stations and on specific routes are not publicly available as this data is commercially sensitive. However, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) publish data on the estimates of the total number of passengers entering and exiting each station in Great Britain.

The table below, which includes the number of station entries and exits at Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, may be of interest.

Total number of station entries and exits, 2018-19 financial year

STATION NAME	ENTRIES AND EXITS
Shrewsbury	2,226,302
Wolverhampton	5,305,432

Data for additional stations and years are available at:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage/>

■ Roads: Construction

Layla Moran:

[\[91710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has for the future of the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway project.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government confirmed in March, as part of the second Road Investment Strategy, that further development of this scheme has been paused. This is while we consider how roads investment, alongside other transport investment, can best support the Government's ambition for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, and benefit people who live and work there.

■ Roads: Hedgehogs

Steve Double:

[\[89756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 84287 on Roads: Hedgehogs, what steps local highway authorities in England need to take to obtain the hedgehog warning signs announced by his Department on 17 June 2019.

Rachel Maclean:

Local highway authorities in England need to apply to the Department for an authorisation to use the small wild animal warning sign.

■ Trains: Carbon Dioxide

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[89646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much carbon dioxide is emitted annually by diesel-only trains in the UK.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Data from train and freight operating companies indicate that diesel train traction in Great Britain created 1,848 kilotonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) in the last financial year (2018-2019). This figure includes bi-mode diesel trains, as well as diesel-only trains.

■ Transport: Hydrogen

Alan Brown:

[\[89763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to establish a hydrogen hub; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential contribution that a hydrogen hub could play in de-carbonising transport.

Rachel Maclean:

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

Alexander Stafford:

[\[89889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to establish a hydrogen hub; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential contribution that a hydrogen hub could play in de-carbonising transport.

Rachel Maclean:

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

TREASURY

■ Bank Services

Paul Maynard:

[\[89668\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of unbanked individuals in the UK.

John Glen:

The Treasury does not make assessments of the number of people who do not have a bank account. However, in 2017, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published the results of the Financial Lives Survey which found that 1.3 million UK adults were unbanked, i.e. have no current account or alternative e-money account. The FCA intend to repeat the Financial Lives Survey on a regular basis in future.

The 2017 Financial Lives Survey report contains further information on the characteristics of the unbanked. The report analyses survey results across the four nations of the UK, the nine regions of England, and by rural and urban areas.

Government believes that individuals, regardless of their background or income, should have access to useful and affordable financial products and services, including a bank account.

Basic bank accounts are a key financial inclusion policy. They provide people with a way of receiving income, whether that be salary, pension, benefits or tax credits and enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis effectively, securely and confidently.

A basic bank account is fee-free for all everyday banking services and has no overdraft facility. The 9 largest personal current account providers in the UK are legally required to offer fee-free basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account in the UK or who are ineligible for a bank's standard current account.

The Treasury publishes data on basic bank accounts annually. The December 2019 publication shows that in total there are nearly 7.5 million basic bank accounts open in the UK.

■ Beer: Excise Duties

James Wild:

[89863]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much Small Breweries' Relief has cost the public purse; and how many brewers have received it in each year since 2015.

Kemi Badenoch:

HMRC publishes annual statistics on Small Brewers Relief, this includes the number of people claiming the relief and the historic cost of the relief. Information on the historic number of brewers claiming the relief is not readily available. The latest publication of annual tax relief data for Small Brewers Relief can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Drew Hendry:

[91671]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of monies voluntarily returned within the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grants have been returned to HMRC where an employer no longer needs the grant, or has realised they have made errors and followed the guidance on putting things right. As of 15 September a total of £215,756,121 had been returned to HMRC voluntarily, via payments and adjustments to claims.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Trade Unions

Simon Jupp:

[89888]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 September 2020 to Question 85130, on Trade Unions, if he will publish anonymised figures for (a) the totality of funding given to trade unions, as employers in their own right, to date under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and (b) how many individual trade unions have claimed under the scheme, according to figures held by HM Revenue and Customs.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have published data on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme claims by three-digit SIC2007 code for all claims for March to June 2020. This shows that PAYE schemes classified in the category SIC2007 94.2 Activities of Trade Unions made claims under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to the value of £2 million for this period. In all, claims were made by about 100 employers in this category.

The data covers those organisations classified as SIC2007 94.2 Activities of Trade Unions by the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR). Amounts are rounded to the nearest million and counts to the nearest hundred.

This data is available on GOV.UK under CJRS claims by detailed sector (three-digit SIC2007): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-august-2020>.

■ Transport: Hydrogen

Alan Brown: [89767]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential contribution to the economy of the introduction of a hydrogen hub.

Alexander Stafford: [89893]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential contribution to the economy of the introduction of a hydrogen hub.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and acknowledges the potential positive contribution that hydrogen can play in our efforts to decarbonise the economy.

The Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy commissioned an Energy Innovation Needs Assessments in 2019. Within this series of studies, produced by Vivid Economics, the 'hydrogen and fuel cells' study found that potential domestic opportunities could reach £1.5 billion in GVA and 15,000 jobs per annum by 2050.

■ Treasury: Apprentices

Robert Halfon: [91610]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department is making on meeting the 2.3 per cent public sector apprenticeship target.

Kemi Badenoch:

As of 31 March 2020, the Civil Service has achieved a total of 2.1% of its total workforce as apprentices against the legislative target for the public sector of 2.3% by March 2021. HM Treasury Group has achieved 2.4% of the total staff employed within the department and those of its arms length bodies which are in scope for the target. We are also on track to meet our target in the current year 2020/21. Given this target is a percentage of the total workforce the percentage changes in line with workforce fluctuations over time therefore making it challenging to predict when a department will meet it. The data for 2018/19 can be found [here](#). The data for 2019/20 will be released on gov.uk by the end of September 2020.

Departments are committed to increasing the number of apprentices across the Civil Service and continue to work towards the 2.3% target. The impact of the current pandemic has slowed recruitment due to priority work and logistics. With the current strategy and targets coming to an end in April 2021, the Civil Service is already focusing on how to continue to support the apprenticeship agenda and drive forward

apprenticeship recruitment, pulling on the Plan for Jobs initiative and considering the current economic situation.

■ Treasury: Procurement

Emily Thornberry:

[\[91593\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the Trader Support Services tender notice published on 9 July 2020 was subsequently withdrawn; when that notice was withdrawn and for what reasons the contract value was set at £25 million.

Jesse Norman:

The Trader Support Service will be able to help all traders, regardless of size, to move their goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and to import goods into Northern Ireland from the Rest of the World. It will be a free to use, end-to-end support service which will educate traders on what the Protocol means for them and complete import and safety and security declarations on their behalf.

HMRC have run an open and transparent procurement process for the Trader Support Service, resulting in the identification of a supplier capable of delivering the service.

The 9 July notice was a 'Prior Information Notice' to alert potential suppliers of the forthcoming Trader Support Service opportunity. The original notice published on 9 July 2020 was immediately withdrawn, as it contained a non-material content error that occurred during its electronic transmission. It was replaced by the correct notice on the same date. The initial valuation of £25 million represented an early estimate of the potential contract value. This was subsequently refined through market engagement and a higher value was published as part of the invitation to tender.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[89839\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, which organisations the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities has called on to give evidence.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[89840\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, for how long the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities plans to consult interested parties.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[89841\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the opportunity to give evidence to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities will be open to anyone or by invitation only.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[89842\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether she has had discussions with the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities on organisations to exclude from its consultation.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[89843\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to Public Health England's review of the effect of covid-19 on BAME communities, whether she has written to all stakeholders who engaged with that review on continuing that work.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities will engage across Government, and with as broad a range of public bodies, the voluntary and private sectors, and members of the public as is possible over the course of its duration.

The Commission will be launching a public call for evidence in due course. Organisations or individuals seeking to submit evidence to the Commission can already do so if they wish - contact details are published on its website. No discussions have been had about organisations to exclude from consultation.

Finally, on 10 August the Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch MP, wrote to all of the stakeholders who participated in the Public Health England review thanking them for their contribution and asking whether they wished to be involved in future engagement. A number of the stakeholders responded positively to this and the Race Disparity Unit has included them in its ongoing engagement strategy.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Pensions: Fraud

Mike Amesbury:

[\[87643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the finding of the Financial Conduct Authority that pension scammers take on average £91,000 from each of their victims, what assessment her Department has made of additional protections required to protect UK pensioners (a) in the UK and (b) overseas from pension transfer scams.

Guy Opperman:

Action was taken by the Pension Regulator, Financial Conduct Authority, and Money Advice and Pension Service on 7 April pointing to the actions members should seek to take to safeguard against becoming victims of scams. Additional guidance was issued to trustees, and providers from both The Financial Conduct Authority and the Pensions Regulator to support them to produce suitable communications during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Please see links below for more information about the joint statement from Regulators and the Money Advice Service, and help available, produced by the Pension Protection Fund and supported by government.

<https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/covid-19-savers-stay-calm-dont-rush-financial-decisions>

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/sites/default/files/file-2020-05/COVID-19-and-your-pension.pdf>

All of Government is committed to safeguarding consumer savings amongst those based in the UK and living overseas with UK based pension savings. We have adopted a layered approach building from interventions to assist all pension savers seeking to access their pensions to those who are most at risk of scams.

For all pension savers aged 50 and over, in the lead up to accessing their pension savings, our aim is to support them make informed choices about their retirement income. We are therefore committed to replicating measures introduced by the FCA for contract based schemes for occupational pension schemes and requiring trustees to provide information to pensions savers from the age of 50, in a simpler format, to encourage savers to think about their retirement savings, choices and raise awareness of Pension Wise.

We want to encourage savers with to take appropriate guidance (currently provided by MAPS under the Pension Wise brand) when they exercise their Pension Freedoms by applying to access savings. Recent trials showed a nudge to guidance during the application process is effective. We want to present taking guidance as a natural part of the journey when individuals access their pension savings. We are working with the FCA on rules that would require managers of private pension schemes to introduce parallel provisions.

Although the majority of transfers are to safe destinations there are still fraudsters who try to entice individuals to transfer to schemes for the purposes of relieving them of their pension savings.

To help protect people from pension scams, government has introduced an amendment to clause 125 in the Pension Schemes Bill 2020 limiting the statutory right to transfer. The clause achieves two things:

- it meets the Government's third commitment in the Pension Scams consultation, namely to introduce in legislation provisions that enable members to be required to provide evidence of an employment link or, if transferring abroad, residency before a statutory transfer can take place; and
- it enables legislation to require people to confirm they have received information or taken guidance about the risk of scams in certain circumstances before a transfer can proceed. We are and will continue to work with industry and regulators to identify the circumstances that cause trustees most concern when a transfer request is received and set those out in the legislation. Where any of these circumstances are identified we will require members seeking to transfer to confirm

to trustees that they have obtained information or guidance on the risks of transfer to scam schemes.

In addition, the Government, working with the regulators and the Money and Pension Service, has been communicating with pension savers to alert them to the risk of scams in the current climate. DWP continues to communicate regularly on social media about the warning signs of a scam.

■ Rapid Response Service

Jonathan Reynolds: [91642]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many projects have been initiated by the Rapid Response Service in each month since January 2020; how many companies have been included in those projects; and how many redundancies have occurred in those projects.

Jonathan Reynolds: [91643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who have been made redundant by companies involved with Rapid Response Service (RSS) projects since the beginning of 2020 have taken up services offered under RRS; and what proportion of those people received (a) information, advice and guidance, (b) skills and training analysis and (c) training.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

John McDonnell: [91567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit sanctions have been issued to claimants in each month since 30 June 2020.

Mims Davies:

Sanctions statistics on those people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group), Income Support and Universal Credit are published quarterly and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

Additional breakdowns of the figures can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The statistics for May to July 2020 will be published in November 2020.

■ Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[91154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the economic effect of self-isolation on people who are (a) reliant on and (b) ineligible for statutory sick pay.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are off work sick. SSP should not be looked at in isolation. Where an employee's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support, for example where they are not eligible for SSP, they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on individual circumstances.

Background

SSP is paid at a flat level of £95.85 per week.

Where an individual receives both SSP and Universal Credit, SSP will be taken into account when calculating the Universal Credit payment.

An estimated 2 million individuals do not qualify for SSP because they earn below the Lower Earnings Limit (£120 per week).

From 28 September 2020 a new £500 Test and Trace Support payment will be introduced for working people who are on low incomes and cannot work from home who are required by NHS Test and Trace to remain at home to help stop the spread of the virus.

■ Universal Credit: Severe Disability Premium

Kate Osamor:

[\[90194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her response to the Social Security Advisory Committee's letter of 27 May 2020, dated 8 July 2020, how many people in receipt of employment support allowance on 31 March 2020 were unable to make a universal credit claim because they were in receipt of severe disability premium.

Justin Tomlinson:

All ESA claimants can choose to claim UC if they believe they will be better off, however special arrangements exist for those in receipt of SDP.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Cancer: Health Services

Derek Twigg: [\[81541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the referral rates from primary care for patients presenting with possible symptoms of cancer were in each (a) clinical commissioning group and (b) region in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what those rates were for the same period in 2019.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 September 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

Information has been provided in the attached **tables** documents.

This data shows the two-week referral to treatment standard over the periods June 2020 and June 2019, at clinical commissioning group and regional level.

This data is provisional and subject to change.

It should be noted that figures refer to the number of episodes and not the number of people as someone may be referred for more than one type of cancer to different consultants.

Attachments:

1. **Data by Region 2019 and 2020 .xlsx**
2. **Data for June 2019 by CCG.xlsx**
3. **Data for June 2020 by CCG.xlsx**

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Personal Independence Payment

Jessica Morden: [\[81702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of personal independence payments have died within three months of having their application rejected since April 2018.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 September 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically. New Claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) are fast tracked and are being

cleared in 5 working days on average (as at the end of April 2020, the latest available published data).

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department.

- Between April 2018 and 31 st October 2019, 1,360,420 registrations were made for PIP New Claims and Reassessments from DLA. Of these, 18,290 died within 6 months of registering a claim to PIP up to 30 th April 2020.
- ~~Between April 2018 and 31st January 2020, 688,100 disallowances at initial decision were made for PIP New Claims and Reassessments from DLA. Of these, 3,310 died within 3 months of receiving a disallowance decision up to 30th April 2020.~~
- **Between April 2018 and 31st January 2020, 688,100 disallowances at initial decision were made for PIP New Claims and Reassessments from DLA. Of these, 1,700 died within 3 months of receiving a disallowance decision up to 30th April 2020.**

Notes

Sources: PIP ADS, Customer Information System

- PIP data includes normal rules and special rules for the terminally ill claimants, and is for both new claims and DLA reassessment claims.
- This analysis only takes the first registration a claimant makes to PIP.
- This is unpublished data from the PIP computer system's (PIP CS) management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Data has been rounded to the nearest 10.
- Figures cover PIP claims registered from April 2018 – October 2019, initial decisions made from April 2018 – January 2020, and deaths from April 2018 up to 30 th April 2020 as recorded at 31 st July 2020. Data and may be subject to retrospection.
- GB Only.

Under the Social Security (Notification of Deaths) Regulations 2012 and s125 of Social Security Administration Act 1992 date of death is provided to the Department for all registered deaths. Additionally next of kin also provide information on the date of death of an individual and this information is used appropriately in the administration of Departmental benefits.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Modern Slavery

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Victoria Atkins): **[[HCWS463](#)]**

Today the Government has published its response to the Transparency in Supply Consultation. A copy of the Government response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and it will also be published on Gov.UK.

The landmark transparency provisions in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established the UK as the first country in the world to require businesses to report annually on their work to prevent and address risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. This legislation was introduced to empower investors, consumers and civil society to hold businesses to account, and it has since sparked an international trend for supply chains legislation.

I am proud that thousands of businesses have risen to the challenge of reporting and consistently raised the benchmark for transparency since the Act came into force. This year the Government joined the private sector in opening up about its supply chains, becoming the first country in the world to publish a Government modern slavery statement setting out how we are leveraging public spending to prevent risks in Government supply chains and drive responsible practices. In his foreword to the statement, the Prime Minister made the Government's ambitions clear:

'It's not enough for government and businesses to simply say they don't tolerate modern slavery. As we take stock of both the challenges faced and achievements made, we must match our words with actions.'

Five years on from the Act, it has become more important than ever that businesses take responsibility for their supply chains, and I am committed to ensuring this Government maintains its global leadership on this agenda. In May 2019, the final report of the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act, led by Frank Field, Rt Hon Maria Miller MP and the noble Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE, considered the Act's transparency legislation alongside four other key areas and made a compelling case for change. In response, the Home Office launched a public consultation seeking views on a range of measures to strengthen section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act and enhance the impact of transparency.

I am grateful for the expertise of the reviewers and of those who responded to the consultation. Today, I am proud to announce the ambitious package of measures we will be taking forwards to strengthen and future-proof the Modern Slavery Act's transparency legislation.

To improve transparency, we will be requiring all organisations caught by the Act to publish their statement to a central Government-run reporting service, to ensure

organisations' work to prevent modern slavery is open to scrutiny. At the same time, we will be introducing mandatory topics that modern slavery statements must cover, to increase transparency and encourage year on year improvement in key areas. Taken together, these measures will drive a race to the top, ensuring progress is recognised and gaps are addressed.

To improve compliance, we will introduce a single reporting deadline on which all statements must be published. We are also considering options for civil penalties for non-compliance forwards in line with the development of the Single Enforcement Body for employment rights, led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Finally, we will be extending the reporting requirement to public bodies – a global first. Leveraging public spending is a crucial step towards driving responsible practices and identifying risks, and I welcome the voluntary efforts of many public sector organisations on this agenda. Like businesses, public sector organisations have a responsibility to be transparent about modern slavery risks in their supply chains and how these are being addressed. Ministerial Government departments have already committed to publishing annual modern slavery statements, the first of which will be published in September 2021.

Many of these measures are global firsts. However, I am determined that Government and industry do everything possible to protect vulnerable workers from exploitation. Tackling modern slavery remains a priority for the Government and I will continue to look at what further measures are needed to strengthen our response, in partnership with the Devolved Administrations, law enforcement, business, public sector organisations, NGOs, civil society and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Negotiations on the UK's Future Trading Relationship with the US: Update**

The Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss): [\[HCWS461\]](#)

The fourth UK-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiating round took place from 8 September to 18 September 2020.

There were 29 sessions held in this round, covering 16 different chapter areas. Significant progress has been achieved since launching negotiations in May 2020, and most chapter areas are now in the advanced stages of talks.

In total, 132 sessions have been held over the past four negotiating rounds, as well as an additional 30 intersessional discussions, involving officials from 20 different UK Government departments and agencies.

In the fourth round, both sides continued to have detailed textual discussions, and negotiators are now in the process of consolidating texts in the majority of chapter areas.

Shortly before the fourth negotiating round both sides exchanged their first tariff offers, allowing a series of detailed market access discussions to be held during the round.

The exchange of tariff offers is a notable milestone, and the speed at which this stage has been reached demonstrates the momentum behind these negotiations.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to continue negotiations at pace throughout the Autumn in advance of the US Presidential elections.

The fifth round of talks will take place in mid to late October, with additional intersessional discussions taking place between the fourth and fifth rounds. Further such talks will be held this week on Telecommunications, Intellectual Property, Market Access, and Rules of Origin.

Below is a summary list of those workstreams discussed in the round:

- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)
- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Competition
- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- Market Access
- Financial Services
- Good Regulatory Practice
- Rules of Origin
- Investment
- Economics
- Cross Border Trade in Services
- Industrial Subsidies
- Sectoral Annexes
- Core Text
- Trade Remedies
- State Owned Enterprises

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Government Equalities Office Update

Minister for Women and Equalities (Elizabeth Truss):

[\[HCWS462\]](#)

Response to Gender Recognition Act (2004) consultation

Today, I am announcing the Government's response to the consultation on the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

As a Government, we are determined that everyone in the UK should be free to live their lives and fulfil their potential regardless of their sex, gender identity, race or disability.

We are proud to have introduced same-sex marriage and passed the Turing law.

We want transgender people to be free to live and to prosper in a modern Britain. We have looked carefully at the issues raised in the consultation, including potential changes to the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

It is the Government's view that the balance struck in this legislation is correct, in that there are proper checks and balances in the system and also support for people who want to change their legal sex.

However, it is also clear that we need to improve the process and experience that transgender people have when applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate – making it kinder and more straightforward. Our changes will address the main concerns that trans people themselves tell us they have about it.

In 2017, we conducted by far the largest survey ever of British LGBT people, with over 108,000 respondents, of whom 7000 were trans. Of those who had completed their transition, around 2 in 5 said that they had a Gender Recognition Certificate, a higher proportion than is often believed. The survey then asked those who had not applied what had prevented them from doing so. They were able to choose as many reasons as they wanted.

Thirty-eight per cent told us the process was too bureaucratic. So we will place the whole procedure online. Thirty-four per cent said the process was too expensive. This, too, we will address. We will reduce the fee from £140 to a nominal amount.

We have also come to understand that gender recognition reform, though supported in the consultation undertaken by the last government, is not the top priority for transgender people. Perhaps their most important concern is the state of trans healthcare. Trans people tell us that waiting lists at NHS gender clinics are too long. I agree, and I am deeply concerned at the distress it can cause. That is why we are opening at least three new gender clinics this year, which should see waiting lists cut by around 1,600 patients by 2022. The full benefit of the increases in clinical capacity that we've been able to secure will lead to greater patient choice, shorter waiting times, better geographical coverage and easier access. It will also make it easier to fulfil the medical requirements of obtaining a GRC.

It is why we last year provided funding for the UK's first National LGBT Health Advisor to help improve transgender people's experience.

Britain leads the world as a country where everybody is able to lead their life freely and treated with respect and that, for many years, transgender people have been widely accepted in British society; able to use facilities of their chosen gender; and able to participate fully in modern life.

At the heart of this is the principle of individual liberty. Our philosophy is that a person's character, your ideas, and your work ethic trumps the colour of your skin or your biological sex. We firmly believe that neither biology nor gender is destiny.

The Equality Act 2010 clearly protects transgender people from discrimination. The same act allows service providers to restrict access to single sex spaces on the basis of biological sex if there is a clear justification.

We want every individual, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity to have the confidence and the freedom to be themselves. We will continue with our international leadership by hosting our International LGBT Conference to make sure LGBT people around the world are safe to be themselves.

I am laying the analysis report of consultation responses as a Command Paper today and it will be published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Attachments:

1. GRA 2004: Analysis of consultation responses [GRA Consultation Analysis Report.pdf]