



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 25 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:30 P.M., 25 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>	■ Pupils: Coronavirus	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ Schools: Coronavirus	14
■ Business: Coronavirus	5	■ Students: Finance	16
■ Coal: Mining	5	■ Teachers: Coronavirus	16
■ Consumer Rights Act 2015	6	■ Universities: Coronavirus	17
■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	6	<b>ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS</b>	17
■ Energy: Meters	7	■ Agriculture	17
■ Events Industry: Coronavirus	7	■ Committee On Climate Change: Correspondence	18
■ Hospitality Industry	8	■ Countryside: Access	19
<b>DEFENCE</b>	8	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Apprentices	19
■ AWACS: Procurement	8	■ Fishing Vessels: Territorial Waters	20
■ Military Aid	8	■ Food Supply	20
■ Reserve Forces: Coronavirus	9	■ Furs: Import Controls	21
<b>DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT</b>	9	■ Horse Meat: Exports	21
■ Broadband: Urban Areas	9	■ Horses: Republic of Ireland	22
■ Football: Gambling	10	■ Hydrogen: Air Pollution	22
■ Remembrance Day: Coronavirus	11	■ Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease	22
<b>EDUCATION</b>	11	■ River Thames: Swimming	23
■ Armed Forces: Schools	11	■ Transport: EU Countries	23
■ GCE A-Level: Assessments	12		
■ Pupils: Computers	13		

■ Wildlife: Coronavirus	24	■ Asylum: Employment	37
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	25	■ Asylum: Newcastle Upon Tyne	38
■ Asif Pervaiz	25	■ Asylum: Slavery	38
■ Bangladesh: Rohingya	25	■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes	39
■ British Council: Finance	26	■ Fixed Penalties: Coronavirus	39
■ Cameroon: Armed Forces	26	■ Immigration: Armed Forces	40
■ CDC: Finance	27	■ Members: Correspondence	40
■ CDC: Overseas Aid	27	■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review	41
■ China: Uighurs	28	HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	41
■ Developing Countries: Water	29	■ House of Commons: Shops	41
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contracts	30	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	42
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Sustainable Development	30	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	42
■ Greece: Migrant Camps	31	■ Housing: Construction	42
■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review	31	■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Apprentices	43
■ Maria Shahbaz	32	■ New Homes Ombudsman: Public Appointments	43
■ Middle East: Diplomatic Relations	32	■ Planning Permission: Local Press	43
■ Overseas Aid	33	■ Property Development: Floods	44
■ Overseas Aid: Contracts	33	■ Sleeping Rough	45
■ Overseas Aid: Fossil Fuels	34	■ Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus	46
■ Overseas Aid: Poverty	34	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	47
■ Pakistan: Ahmadiyya	34	■ Food: Import Duties	47
■ Pakistan: Human Rights	35	■ Trade Agreements	47
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	35	■ Wines: Import Duties	47
■ Earwax: Medical Treatments	35		
■ Haemochromatosis: Diagnosis	36		
HOME OFFICE	37		
■ Asylum	37		

JUSTICE	48	■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	61
■ Child Trust Fund: Disability	48	■ Duty Free Allowances	62
■ NHS: Negligence	49	■ Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland	62
■ Offences against Children: Internet	49	■ Financial Institutions: Taxation	63
■ Prisons: Coronavirus	50	■ Gyms and Leisure: Coronavirus	64
■ Sexual Offences	50	■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Personal Care Services	64
■ Suicide: Veterans	51	■ Treasury: Carbon Emissions	65
NORTHERN IRELAND	51	WALES	65
■ Imports: Northern Ireland	51	■ Devolution: Wales	65
SCOTLAND	52	■ United Kingdom Internal Market Bill: Wales	66
■ Government Departments: Edinburgh	52	■ Welsh Government	66
■ Scotland Office: Pay	52	WORK AND PENSIONS	66
■ Scotland Office: Staff	53	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Apprentices	66
TRANSPORT	54	■ Kickstart Scheme: Small Businesses	67
■ Aviation: Fuels	54	■ Kickstart Scheme: St Helens North	67
■ Boats: EU Countries	54	■ Personal Independence Payment	68
■ Cars: Hire Services	55	■ Universal Credit	69
■ Diesel Fuel: Renewable Fuels	55	<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>70</b>
■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Correspondence	55	HOME OFFICE	70
■ Electric Scooters	56	■ Asylum	70
■ Electric Scooters: Hire Services	57		
■ Public Transport: Hydrogen	58		
■ Railways: Pensions	58		
■ Railways: West Midlands	58		
■ Transport: Coronavirus	59		
■ Transport: Hydrogen	59		
■ Transport: Protective Clothing	59		
TREASURY	60		
■ Beer: Excise Duties	60		
■ Companies: Coronavirus	60		

<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>72</b>	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND	
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	72	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	73
■ Covid-19 update	72	■ Homelessness Update	73

**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

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[91768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to mandate businesses to publish their covid-19 risk assessments.

**Paul Scully:**

Publishing risk assessments is not a legal obligation, but we are asking companies to consider publishing the results of their risk assessments whenever possible. We recommend that larger companies – those with over 50 workers – publish the results of their risk assessments. The results of a risk assessment, however, must be shared with employees if requested.

#### ■ Coal: Mining

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[93711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much and what proportion of coal in thousands of tonnes used in British industry in each of the last five years was mined in (a) the UK, (b) Russia and (c) Columbia.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

BEIS does not hold data linking the source of coal to its final use. Overall volumes are published in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics and Energy Trends.

The table below shows the volumes of coal imported from Russia, Columbia and produced by the UK and the total supply and demand for 2015 to 2019.

**Thousand tonnes**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Supply</b>	<b>37,600</b>	<b>18,022</b>	<b>14,422</b>	<b>11,922</b>	<b>7,971</b>
Of which UK production	8,598	4,178	3,041	2,580	2,166
Of which net stock draw	+6,869	+5,374	+3,378	-169	+16
Of which net imports	22,133	8,470	8,003	9,510	5,789
<i>Of which imports from Russia</i>	<i>8,380</i>	<i>2,433</i>	<i>3,883</i>	<i>4,695</i>	<i>2,421</i>

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Of which imports from Columbia</i>	6,553	2,896	731	635	1,078
<b>Demand</b>	<b>37,451</b>	<b>18,035</b>	<b>14,439</b>	<b>11,929</b>	<b>7,963</b>
Of which final consumption by industry	2,073	1,963	1,732	1,581	1,426

Source: Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2020, table 2.4:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/solid-fuels-and-derived-gases-chapter-2-digest-of-united-kingdom-energy-statistics-dukes>

Energy Trends table 2.4:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/solid-fuels-and-derived-gases-section-2-energy-trends>

## ■ Consumer Rights Act 2015

**Dan Jarvis:** **[93597]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Consumer Rights Act 2015 so that the same rights apply to non-consumer sales.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has no plans to amend the Consumer Rights Act 2015 to apply to non-consumer sales.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Stella Creasy:** **[93581]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 85040, what statutory provisions are in place on the calculation of (a) statutory redundancy pay and (b) pay reductions under Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme furlough agreements.

**Paul Scully:**

The provisions relating to calculation of redundancy and notice pay under the Employment Rights Act continue to apply when an individual is on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Employees who are dismissed due to redundancy and who satisfy certain qualifying conditions are statutorily entitled to a lump sum from their employer, based on their

age, length of service and contractual weekly earnings, subject to a statutory upper limit, payable at, or soon after, the dismissal date.

The Government wants to ensure that employees do not lose out on their employment rights because they have been furloughed. We therefore introduced legislation on 31 July, which ensures that statutory redundancy pay and statutory notice pay and unfair dismissal compensation are based on an employee's normal pay, rather than their furlough pay (potentially 80% of their normal wage).

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Dan Jarvis:**

[93598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many smart meters were installed in England in each month of 2020.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

From January to the end of June 2020 1,119,775 smart electricity and gas meters were installed in homes in Great Britain. The latest data on the number of smart electricity and gas meters installed is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/smart-meters-in-great-britain-quarterly-update-june-2020>

Data is collected at Great Britain level on a quarterly basis from large energy suppliers. Therefore a breakdown of installations for England by month is not available.

The next quarterly publication covering the period from July to end of September is due for release on 26 November.

## ■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

**Sarah Owen:**

[93697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent meetings he has had with representatives of the exhibition industry on the effect on that sector of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

Ministers and officials have regular engagement with a large number of businesses, representative organisations, and trade unions, including those from the Exhibition and Events sector, specifically for the purposes of COVID-19.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) publishes details of ministers' meetings with external organisations on a quarterly basis, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

**■ Hospitality Industry**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[93694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the proportion of hospitality sales that occur after 10.00pm.

**Paul Scully:**

No assessment has been made, but we will be working with the sector to understand the impact over the coming weeks.

**DEFENCE****■ AWACS: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[93541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, by what measure the Government has added 600 new jobs to the E-7 Wedgetail contract; and what the job titles of those jobs are.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The E-7 Wedgetail programme is expected to secure several hundred jobs in the UK, which will be spread throughout the supply chain. These jobs include training, modification of the aircraft, component manufacture, infrastructure build and services, and engineering and supply chain support to the aircraft.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[93542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to public purse would be of cancelling the E-7 Wedgetail contract.

**Jeremy Quin:**

If any decision was taken to cancel the E-7 Wedgetail contract, financial implications and further liabilities would be subject to commercial negotiations in accordance with normal practice.

**■ Military Aid**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[93537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 84971 on Military Aid, when the decision was taken by his Department to adapt the P-8s training mission to include flights over the English Channel.

**James Heappey:**

On 12 August 2020, the Secretary of State for Defence approved that P-8A training missions be conducted in support Border Force operations in the English Channel.



## ■ Reserve Forces: Coronavirus

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[93540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse is of mobilising reservists under Operation Rescript.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence has mobilised 1,800 reservists in support of Operation RESCRIPT. The cost of their mobilisation will depend on the individual circumstances of each reservist and the duration of their mobilisation. The Department does not, therefore, yet have a full understanding of the cost to the public purse and wouldn't expect to have one until all reservists working on RESCRIPT have finally been demobilised.

Our reservists play a vital part in our response to the pandemic and will be critical in providing further resilience this winter. We will continue to mobilise reservists as required and recognise how essential their skills and experience have been in allowing Defence to provide such outstanding support to other Government departments over the last six months.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Broadband: Urban Areas

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[93585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support his Department provides to broadband customers in urban areas who are unable to access fibre-to-the-cabinet, where Openreach has no plans to make such services available and whose premises are above the connectivity thresholds in the universal service obligation.

**Matt Warman:**

The government is committed to delivering nationwide coverage of gigabit-capable broadband as soon as possible by encouraging network build by Openreach and a range of alternative competing networks. Gigabit broadband will provide customers in urban areas with access to faster and more resilient broadband.

To support this objective, we are taking action to remove barriers to the commercial roll out of faster broadband. For example, we have introduced legislation into Parliament to make it easier to connect tenanted properties where there are unresponsive landlords. In addition, we have plans to mandate connectivity in new builds, and are working with the Department for Transport to reform the streetworks regime to make it quicker and easier to deploy new networks.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[93586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many and what proportion of urban properties are unable to access fibre-to-the-cabinet broadband and above the connectivity thresholds for the universal service obligation.

**Matt Warman:**

Ofcom's Connected Nations Report 2019 found that 2% of all urban properties (approximately 322,000 premises) in the UK could receive a fixed broadband connection that was above the threshold for the Universal Service Obligation but below 30Mbps, the typical minimum speed delivered by Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) technology. These statistics consider only fixed network provision.

The Department does not hold the information about how many or what proportion of properties are specifically connected using Fibre to the Cabinet technology. Many urban properties can also access 30 Mbps speeds or more using cable networks, as well as 4G and 5G mobile services capable of delivering broadband speeds above the Universal Service Obligation thresholds.

**Catherine McKinnell:**[\[93587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many and what proportion of urban properties are unable to access fibre-to-the-cabinet broadband and qualify for assistance under the universal service obligation.

**Matt Warman:**

The Ofcom Connected Nations Report 2019 found that 1% of all urban properties (approximately 161,000 premises) in the UK were unable to access a fixed broadband connection that met the minimum speed thresholds under the Universal Service Obligation (USO). However, the vast majority of these premises are likely to be able to access a 4G or 5G mobile service that provides USO level download and upload speeds or higher and will not therefore be eligible for an upgraded connection under the Universal Service Obligation.

**Football: Gambling****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[93619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 91087 on Football: Gambling, if he will make an assessment of (a) the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to place the industry whistle to whistle ban on gambling on a statutory basis and (b) the effect of gambling advertising on children.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

As set out in the answer to Question 91087, in August 2019 the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (IGRG) Code for Socially Responsible Advertising was amended to ban betting adverts on TV during live sport before the 9pm watershed. Industry figures indicate that exposure to sports gambling advertising during the times covered by the whistle-to-whistle ban has fallen by 96%. In addition, data published by the Advertising Standards Authority looking at children's exposure to gambling advertising in 2019 – including the first 6 months of the whistle to whistle ban – shows that children's exposure to sports betting advertising on TV has fallen to 0.3 per

week. The Gambling Commission's code of practice for operators already requires adherence to the IGRG code, and failure to do so can be used as evidence in any compliance or enforcement activity that the Commission undertakes.

As outlined in the answer to Question 73907, the Government assessed the evidence on advertising in its Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures, the full response to which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-proposals-for-changes-to-gaming-machines-and-social-responsibility-measures>. Since then, in March this

year, the charity GambleAware has published the final report of a major piece of research into the effect of gambling marketing and advertising on children, young and vulnerable people. That study found that exposure to advertising was associated with an openness to gamble in the future amongst children and young people aged 11-24 who did not currently gamble. It also found that there were other factors that correlated more closely with current gambling behaviour amongst those groups including peer and parental gambling. It did not suggest a causal link between exposure to gambling advertising and problem gambling in later life.

## ■ Remembrance Day: Coronavirus

**John Spellar:**

[\[93519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals and advice on the conduct of parades and services on Remembrance Sunday.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

DCMS is only responsible for organising and delivering the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Whitehall on 8 November.

We have taken advice from Public Health England on the appropriate controls and mitigations to ensure safe social distancing and we will continually review the situation seeking advice from health experts and making necessary changes where and when required.

Those organising local Remembrance Sunday events across the UK should follow the guidance on outdoor events prepared and issued by the Events Industry Forum, with input from DCMS and in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive. This guidance can be found [here](#). The Local Government Association has also issued guidance for local authorities about outdoor events [here](#).

## EDUCATION

### ■ Armed Forces: Schools

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[90943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding from the taxpayers purse was spent on Military Ethos programmes in each year since 2013.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Military Ethos in Schools Programme was launched by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, in 2012. It comprised of three distinct work strands: the Cadet Expansion Programme, which was run jointly with the Ministry of Defence to create new cadet units in state schools; Troops to Teachers, to attract ex-service personnel into teaching; and military ethos alternative provision, which aimed to raise educational attainment and improve behaviour and attendance for children and young people at risk of exclusion.

The Department funded the Troops to Teachers and military ethos alternative provision work streams. The Troops to Teachers programme was replaced in 2018 by the Troops to Teachers undergraduate initial teacher training (ITT) bursary. This bursary offers undergraduate service leavers £40,000 over two years to train as a secondary school teacher in mathematics, physics, computing or modern foreign languages. It should be noted that graduate service leavers can complete postgraduate ITT, therefore data regarding expenditure on the Troops to Teachers undergraduate ITT bursary does not encompass all service leavers entering teaching.

The Cadet Expansion Programme was funded jointly by the Department for Education and the Ministry of Defence between 2012 to 2015. From 2015 to 2020, the Government used £50 million of the London Inter-bank Offered Rate funding to further increase the number of cadet units in schools.

A yearly breakdown starting from the financial year 2012/13, detailing all three Military Ethos in Schools Programmes, is provided in the attached table.

**Attachments:**

1. 90943 Table Attachment [90943 table showing yearly funding for Military Ethos in Schools Programmes.docx]

**■ GCE A-Level: Assessments****Stephen Timms:****[89591]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using UCAS predicted grades to determine the A-level results for external candidates who were unable to sit their exams in summer 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

Ofqual and the exam boards explored the options for those students who did not have an existing relationship with an exam centre and who needed results this summer for progression purposes. The Joint Council for Qualifications published guidance which set out the options that would be available. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/jcq-publishes-supplementary-information-on-validation-of-evidence-by-centres-for-private-candidates/>.

Ofqual and the Government asked organisations that represent higher and further education to consider the steps that they could take when making admissions decisions this summer for any external candidates who do not receive a grade. The

Department have asked institutions to consider a range of other evidence and information for these students to allow them to progress wherever possible.

Where schools and colleges had accepted entries from external candidates, those students should have been taken into account in the process of producing centre assessment grades, where the head teacher or principal was confident that they and their staff had seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement. In addition, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) predicted grades can be provided by schools, colleges and other further education providers, including for external candidates. Other external candidates, such as those who work with private tutors or self study, may not be able to receive a UCAS predicted grade.

To support students who are unhappy with their summer grade or for whom there was not enough evidence for a grade to be awarded, the Department is running an additional series of exams in the autumn. AS and A level exams will take place in October and GCSE exams in November, and will be available in all GCSE, AS and A level subjects.

#### ■ Pupils: Computers

**Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[90934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the number of pupils without access to an (a) internet-enabled laptop or (b) tablet at home.

**Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[90935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 81506 on Education: Digital Technology, what was the source of the data his Department used to estimate the 150,000 devices required for children eligible for technology support in the event of disruption to face-to-face learning.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has allocated a number of digital devices to each school in the case that they experience disruption to face-to-face education because of COVID-19 related restrictions.

To arrive at this allocated number, the Department used data on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in each school, alongside an assumption that pupils' device needs will be met to some extent by the device endowments of schools and colleges. To construct this assumption, the Department used the British Educational Suppliers Association ICT 2019 survey data on the average number of laptops and tablets in primary and secondary schools and assumed that these are distributed between teachers and pupils. The Department also referred to the Teacher Tapp survey from March 2020, which shows the proportion of teachers provided with a device by their school.

Schools can access their allocated number of devices from the 150,000 devices available when they experience disruption to face-to-face education and become

reliant on remote education. They are able to request additional devices if their original allocation by the Department does not meet their needs.

The devices are an injection of support, alongside local initiatives, and are in addition to the 220,000 laptops and tablets the Department has already delivered to local authorities, academy trusts and schools between May to July.

## ■ Pupils: Coronavirus

**Sarah Owen:**

**[93699]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students have been absent from school since 1 September 2020 as a result of a pupil in their (a) bubble and (b) school having covid-19 symptoms and awaiting a test.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is a priority for the Government to keep close track of the situation in schools in relation to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. 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.

We collect data on the number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures and have attendance data for schools that have done so. The Department's published data on school openings and attendance, shows that 94% of state-funded schools were fully open on 17 September. For responding schools which were not fully open on 17 September, 4% said they were not fully open due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. Approximately 87% of pupils on roll in state-funded schools were in attendance on 17 September. Attendance estimates include pupils absent for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related reasons. More information on this data 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>.

From the autumn term, pupils in all year groups were asked to return to school full-time. Our latest guidance on full opening sets out the public health advice schools should follow and how we expect schools to operate in the autumn term. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Louise Haigh:**

**[91091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools in (a) Sheffield, (b) Yorkshire and (c) England have (i) students and (ii) staff who are self-isolating due to covid-19 in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Nick Gibb:**

Keeping close track of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools is a priority for 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.

We collect data on the number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures and have attendance data for schools that have done so. The Department's published data on school openings and attendance, shows that 94% of state-funded schools were fully open on 17 September. For responding schools which were not fully open on 17 September, 4% said they were not fully open due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. Approximately 87% of pupils on roll in state-funded schools were in attendance on 17 September. Attendance estimates include pupils absent for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related reasons. Equivalent estimates have not been made at lower levels of locality. 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>.

From the autumn term, pupils in all year groups have now returned to school full-time. Our latest guidance on full opening sets out the public health advice schools should follow and how we expect schools to operate in the autumn term. The Department's guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

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. This data can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports> (page 16).

**Louise Haigh:****[91093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional resources he is providing schools to respond to guidance on covid-19.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

Schools have been able to claim additional funding for exceptional costs incurred due to COVID-19, between March and July 2020, such as additional cleaning required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases and increased premises costs to keep schools open for priority groups during the Easter and summer half term holidays. Schools have also continued to receive their core funding allocations



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

As stated in our guidance, schools should use their existing resources when making arrangements to welcome all children back for the autumn. There are no plans at present to reimburse additional costs incurred as part of that process.

## ■ Students: Finance

**Siobhain McDonagh:** [\[90936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many student bursaries were awarded to 16- to 19-year olds between 23 March and 1 September 2020; and what comparative assessment his Department has made of that figure and the number of those bursaries awarded during the same period in each of the past five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

16 to 19 Bursary funding is designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation that they face, and institutions must ensure the funds go to those who genuinely need them. It has 2 elements, the discretionary bursary, and the bursary for defined vulnerable groups.

Education providers draw down the funding for the bursary for defined vulnerable groups when they have identified an eligible student. Information on this element of the bursary fund is below (latest full year data is not yet available).

ACADEMIC YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
2014/15	23,205
2015/16	22,160
2016/17	21,354
2017/18	21,377
2018/19	21,120

The discretionary bursary funding element is allocated to individual education institutions for them to administer to students. Because this is devolved to individual providers, the Department for Education does not hold information about the number of discretionary bursaries awarded or the total overall number of bursaries.

## ■ Teachers: Coronavirus

**Louise Haigh:** [\[91092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers are waiting for covid-19 (a) tests and (b) test results in (i) Sheffield, (ii) Yorkshire and (iii) England.



**Nick Gibb:**

This data is not collected by the Department for Education. The Department collects data on daily suspected COVID-19 related absences, as well as data on the number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures. However, this does not include information on the number of teachers or pupils currently awaiting tests or test results.

Testing capacity is the highest it has ever been and hundreds of thousands of people are being tested every day, but we are currently seeing a significant demand for tests. The Government are scaling up testing capacity even further to 500,000 tests a day by the end of October.

**Universities: Coronavirus****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[91767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to mandate universities to publish publicly their covid-19 risk assessments.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Higher education (HE) providers have a legal responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees, students and other people on site.

As part of the process of opening buildings and campuses to staff and students, HE providers should produce risk assessments for both working and communal environments. These will vary significantly based on the needs and circumstances of individual providers. Risk assessments will inform the risk mitigations to ensure all areas of the institution are COVID-19 secure.

HE providers are autonomous institutions and it is not for the government to mandate publication of these risk assessments. However, on 10 September, the department published updated guidance for providers on reopening buildings and campuses which states that providers should share their risk assessments with staff and staff unions. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses#risk-assessments>.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****Agriculture****Jim Shannon:**[\[91038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage family farming in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Agriculture is devolved, so this response will largely refer to policy in England. Now we have left the EU each UK administration has the flexibility to develop agricultural policy suited to its own unique circumstances. For those policy areas where legislation is not required, we are working with the devolved administrations to find approaches that work for the whole of the UK. We are also working closely with the devolved administrations on an administrative framework to coordinate agricultural support.

Under the new system in England, we will move away from subsidies based on how much land the farmer has. Instead, the Agriculture Bill will enable us to create an ambitious new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, based on the principle of “public money for public goods”, which will allow us to reward farmers and land managers who protect our environment. The Bill also provides powers for improved animal welfare, while making sure that farmers can still produce high quality food in a sustainable way.

Public goods benefit more than just the recipient and cannot be rewarded by the market alone. They include things like clean and plentiful water, clean air, thriving plants and wildlife, reduction in and protection from environmental hazards, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, and beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment.

By paying for things the public value, we can also improve animal welfare and reduce the use of antibiotics in our food chain. Targeted financial assistance for innovations such as precision farming can help farmers to reduce costs and improve their yields, while enhancing the environment.

Defra is providing £1 million grant funding this year for nine projects to provide resilience support to farmers and land managers in England to help them prepare for the Agricultural Transition period that will take place from 2021-27. One of these projects is working to improve the resilience of more than 120 small family farms in Shropshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The impact and value for money of each of the approaches will be evaluated to assess whether a scale-up of the interventions would be effective and provide good value for taxpayers' money.

**■ Committee On Climate Change: Correspondence****Caroline Lucas:**[\[90996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish any correspondence he has had with the Committee on Climate Change in 2020 on the burning of peatland in the UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

I am pleased to provide the hon. Member with a copy of my correspondence with the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) that I have forwarded to the hon. Member's office.

The correspondence states the following:

The Government welcomes CCC support. We have always been clear of the need to phase out burning of protected blanket bog to conserve these vulnerable habitats. We are currently looking at how legislation could achieve this and considering next steps.

#### ■ **Countryside: Access**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[91037]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the public (a) right of way and (b) right to roam on farmers and landowners.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The effect of the public accessing the countryside over recent months has been monitored continuously through engagement with a range of stakeholder groups. Stakeholder feedback has informed government guidance and key messages on accessing the countryside in a safe and respectable manner.

We have published guidance to promote safe access to green spaces:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely>

#### ■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Apprentices**

**Robert Halfon:**

**[91621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural 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.

**Victoria Prentis:**

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. Defra had achieved 1% of the total staff employed within the department.

In Defra group, we have taken the following steps towards the public sector apprenticeship target.

We have reactivated our 'Early Talent' Strategy for 2020/21 to focus on:

- increasing the use of apprenticeships within external recruitment;
- promoting the use of apprenticeships to support development of existing staff;
- increasing and maximising the use of the levy; and
- using targeted apprenticeship recruitment to improve the diversity of our workforce.

We have identified a number of levers that can be used to achieve the above and these are actively being discussed within the business. We continue to enhance the information and tools available to line managers to improve understanding.

While there are a number of standards that we can actively use, given the unique nature and breadth of our activities in Defra group, we continue to explore and invest in trailblazer activity.

Defra group has been focused on delivery against EU exit requirements and more recently COVID-19. Defra remains committed to the Civil Service Apprenticeship Strategy and is looking to increase our use of apprenticeships across Defra group over the next 12 months.

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 the target. The data for 2018/19 can be found on the GOV.UK website at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-apprenticeship-data-2018-to-2019). 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.

## ■ Fishing Vessels: Territorial Waters

**Chris Evans:** [\[91022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to ban supertrawlers from fishing in UK waters.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, during the transition period, we have agreed that we will continue to apply current fisheries rules and shared access to waters will continue until the end of 2020. When the transition period ends, we will be able to restrict the fishing activities of all vessels, including supertrawlers, throughout our waters.

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

## ■ Food Supply

**Martyn Day:** [\[91675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will provide financial support to wholesalers to ensure the security of the food supply after the transition period.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Our thorough preparations for leaving the EU alongside the lessons we have learned during the Covid-19 response provide a robust foundation for end of transition period planning on food supply. We are currently working alongside industry and across Government including with the Devolved Administrations to plan for the end of the year.

The Government introduced an unprecedented package of support for sectors and businesses in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes, but is not limited to, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the Bounce Back Loan scheme for SMEs.

We will continue to assess the support needs of the food industry to inform policy both in response to Covid-19 and the end of the transition period as we enter a new trading relationship with the EU.

**■ Furs: Import Controls**

**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[91168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to further restrict the fur trade after the transition period.

**Christian Wakeford:** [\[91202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the planned timescale is for bringing forward legislative proposals on banning the sale of fur in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

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

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

**■ Horse Meat: Exports**

**Chris Evans:** [\[91025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what quantity of horse meat was exported from the UK in 2019.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) issues Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for animals and products of animal origin exported to non-EU countries. In 2019, APHA did not issue any EHCs for the export of horse meat to non-EU countries.

APHA is not able to provide any data regarding the quantity of horse meat exported from the UK to the EU in 2019. Data for such trade is currently drawn from EU systems based on movements of animals to the EU that require an Intra-Trade

Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC). An ITAHC was not required for movements of meat between the UK and the rest of the EU in 2019.

#### ■ Horses: Republic of Ireland

**Chris Evans:** [\[91026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many soliped and equidae were imported from Ireland for slaughter in Great Britain in (a) 2019 and (b) in each month of 2020.

**Victoria Prentis:**

TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System) is a European Commission system used by EU member states to facilitate and record animal/animal product movements into and throughout the EU. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), as the competent authority, is able to extract information from TRACES for imports of live animals into the UK.

Based on the information available, there were no solipeds or equidae certified for slaughter which had been imported from Ireland in 2019 or 2020.

#### ■ Hydrogen: Air Pollution

**Ian Paisley:** [\[91035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on air quality of the use of hydrogen energy technology.

**Rebecca Pow:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham on 10 September, PQ UIN 905828.

[<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-10/905828>]

#### ■ Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease

**Jim Shannon:** [\[91644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease in the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease is not a notifiable disease in the UK. There are no risks to public health. The European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and occasionally the European brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) are the species affected in the UK.

Defra's Animal and Plant Health Agency has a small scale surveillance programme in place to monitor the disease in wild rabbits.

For domestic rabbits there is a vaccine available which is an effective means of protection, provided it is administered before the virus causes infection. We recommend that any concerned pet owners seek advice from a vet.

## ■ River Thames: Swimming

**Layla Moran:**

[\[91709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of giving Designated Bathing Water Status to a stretch of the River Thames in Oxford.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Bathing waters are designated through an application process and Defra welcomes applications for designation for both coastal and inland waters such as rivers. Local authorities, groups and individuals can apply for sites to be designated. Defra encourages this by writing to the Chief Executive of every local authority in England, as well as by sending similar letters to other stakeholders like swimming associations. It is these local authorities and stakeholders who will best know which popular riverside bathing areas may be suitable for designation.

All applications are considered in line with our usual process, the details of which are available on gov.uk. There is currently a consultation seeking the public's views on a proposal submitted by a local group to designate an area of the River Wharfe, between Ilkley Main Bridge and Beanlands Island, as a designated bathing water. The consultation ends 2 October.

## ■ Transport: EU Countries

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[93526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made as to whether there are sufficient supplies of heat-treated pallets to meet EU regulations covering the transport of products from 1 Jan 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

After the end of the Transition Period, all wood packaging material (WPM) moving between Great Britain (GB) and the EU must be treated and appropriately marked in compliance with [international standards](#) (ISPM 15). This is in line with international requirements for trade and is in place to protect both the EU and GB from harmful plant pests and diseases.

Defra has established a strong relationship with the WPM industry. The UK Timber Pallet and Packaging Confederation (TIMCON), the Freight Transport Association, National Association of Pallet Distributors, the European Federation of Wooden Pallet and Packaging Manufacturers (FEFPEB) and the Closed Pallet Pooling Coalition have been working hard with Defra and industry to ensure there are sufficient compliant pallets available for 1 January 2021. This will ensure our biosecurity is maintained and trade continues to flow with as little disruption as possible.



The WPM industry have been working tirelessly to both increase the stock of compliant WPM and to grow our WPM treatment capacity by increasing the number of heat treatment facilities (kilns) and their hours of operation and by simplifying and improving ISPM15 processes to reduce the time needed to treat their WPM. In a recent survey of the industry, 70% of respondents indicated they were confident that they would be fully ready by the end of the Transition Period. TIMCON is also strongly encouraging FEFPEB and EU national associations to engage and support their countries' WPM industries to increase their own stocks of compliant pallets.

Defra, the Forestry Commission and other relevant plant health authorities are continuing to work closely with the WPM sector to address what further actions they need to take to manage this new requirement by the end of the Transition Period.

As there will be no immediate change to the biosecurity threat of WPM originating from the EU at the end of the Transition Period, GB will maintain its current risk-based checking regime for EU WPM.

## ■ Wildlife: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[91655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect wildlife from death or injury caused by discarded face masks.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government has published guidance on the proper disposal of face coverings and other PPE during the coronavirus pandemic. This is available at:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste).

Littering of PPE is a criminal offence, and councils have legal powers to take enforcement action against offenders. Anyone caught littering may be prosecuted in a magistrates' court, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500 on conviction. Instead of prosecuting, councils may decide to issue a fixed penalty (on-the-spot fine) of between £65 and £150. If a council has not set a local fixed penalty level, it must charge the default penalty, which is £100.

Defra is raising awareness via social media of what individuals can do to protect others and the environment, including in relation to litter. We have recently published a video highlighting the issue of improperly discarded face coverings at:

[twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1309045391724351489](https://twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1309045391724351489).

Defra has launched a 'Respect the Outdoors' campaign this summer. This has been promoted both online and in locations near to urban parks, beaches and national parks to highlight the impacts of littering, as well as unauthorised barbecues and campfires, and breaches of the countryside code.

Defra has also supported, and provided funding for, Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks campaign, which encourages people to treat our parks with respect this summer. Further information about the campaign is available at:



[www.keepbritaintidy.org/news/new-campaign-launched-face-littering-epidemic-parks](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/news/new-campaign-launched-face-littering-epidemic-parks).

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Asif Pervaiz

**David Linden:**

[91700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the death sentence passed on Asif Pervaiz for blasphemy on 8 September 2020.

**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.

**David Linden:**

[91701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he will make representations to his Pakistani counterpart on the use of blasphemy laws to sentence Asif Pervaiz to death.

**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.

### ■ Bangladesh: Rohingya

**Theresa Villiers:**

[92640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to prevent an outbreak of covid-19 in the Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK has committed £11 million to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Cox's Bazar and prevent further outbreaks.

UK aid has created treatment facilities, including more than 600 beds for refugees and host communities suffering from severe respiratory infections. UK aid is also adding more than 2,400 handwashing facilities in the camps and raising public health awareness. This includes reaching Rohingya refugees with information and support to reduce rumours, myths, fear and panic about COVID-19, through the Communications with Communities Working Group. In addition, we have supported surge deployments from the UK Emergency Medical Team.

## ■ British Council: Finance

**Neil Coyle:** [\[93604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the British Council is adequately resourced through the transition period to provide an effective representation for the UK.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO remains committed to the British Council, which has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The FCDO remains committed to the British Council, which has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. On 24th September I met with the Chair & CEO, FCDO officials continue to work closely with the Council to address the impact on its operations and to ensure that it can carry out its work throughout the transition period and beyond. Further decisions about long-term funding for the British Council will be taken at the upcoming Spending Review.

FCDO officials continue to work closely with the Council to address the impact on its operations and to ensure that it can carry out its work throughout the transition period and beyond. Further decisions about long-term funding for the British Council will be taken at the upcoming Spending Review.

## ■ Cameroon: Armed Forces

**Harriett Baldwin:** [\[91030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on preventing the flow of money from the UK to armed separatist groups in Cameroon linked to human rights abuses.

**Harriett Baldwin:** [\[91031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to bring in UK visa and travel bans for the leaders of the armed separatist groups in Cameroon who commit human rights abuses.

**Harriett Baldwin:** [\[91032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to bring in Magnitsky-style sanctions on the financial assets of any member of the (a) Government of Cameroon, (b) armed forces and (c) armed groups in Cameroon.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government is deeply concerned about reports of human rights abuses and violations by both armed separatists and security forces in Cameroon. We continue to call for investigations into all such reports. As the UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights set out at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, those who have abused and violated human rights in Cameroon, as anywhere else in the world, must be held responsible.

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. This sanctions regime gives the UK a powerful new tool to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses by stopping them from entering our country, channeling money through UK banks, or profiting from our economy, through the use of both asset freezes and travel bans. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations.

**■ CDC: Finance****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[92854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reduction in the value of 0.7 per cent of GNI, by how much the capital transfers his Department plans to make to CDC will be reduced or increased from the originally planned transfers, for the calendar year (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

**James Duddridge:**

In response to the reduction in value of GNI, capital investment into CDC in 2020 was reduced by 42% compared to that planned at the start of the year. CDC has re-prioritised its investment activities this year in response to the challenges of COVID-19. The capital invested by the Government is focused on ensuring that CDC continues to take a targeted response that preserves, strengthens and helps rebuild economies across Africa and South Asia to mitigate the economic and health impacts of COVID-19.

2021 ODA spending is subject to decisions in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

ODA prioritisation has ensured we remain prioritised on poverty reduction for the 'bottom billion', as well as tackling climate change and reversing biodiversity loss, championing girls' education, UK leadership in the global response to COVID-19, and campaigning on issues such as media freedom and freedom of religious belief.

**■ CDC: Overseas Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[91127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance was due to be transferred to the CDC in 2020 before the announced reduction of £2.9bn in the aid budget; and how much will be transferred to the CDC following that announcement.

**James Duddridge:**

ODA prioritisation has ensured we remain prioritised on poverty reduction for the 'bottom billion', as well as tackling climate change and reversing biodiversity loss, championing girls' education, UK leadership in the global response to COVID-19, and campaigning on issues such as media freedom and freedom of religious belief

The Government originally planned at the start of the year to invest £1,134 million Official Development Assistance (ODA) into CDC in 2020. Following the ODA prioritisation process, the Government decided to invest £650 million into CDC, which is 42% less ODA than initially projected. The FCDO have worked carefully with CDC to re-prioritise its investment activities this year in response to the challenges of COVID-19. The capital invested by the Government is focused on ensuring that CDC continues to take a targeted response that preserves, strengthens and helps rebuild economies across Africa and South Asia to mitigate the economic and health impacts of COVID-19.

**China: Uighurs****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[93565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will commission an independent assessment on the situation of Uyghur Muslims in China.

**Nigel Adams:**

There is a significant body of evidence about the range and extent of human rights violations in Xinjiang, including the Chinese authorities' own publicly-available government documents, and satellite imagery. The UN has made clear recommendations to China, including to release those arbitrarily detained in camps. We have repeatedly called on China to urgently implement those recommendations and allow unfettered access to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN experts.

**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[93567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to assess the treatment of Uyghur Muslim refugees from China in Turkey.

**Nigel Adams:**

We encourage the Turkish authorities to safeguard the welfare and respect the human rights of all refugees in Turkey.

**Tracy Brabin:**[\[93657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the most recent date was that his Department made representations to the Chinese authorities on reports of the mass sterilisation of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

**Nigel Adams:**

Reports of suppression of birth rates add to our deep concern about the situation in Xinjiang. It is noteworthy that the Chinese authorities' own figures show a drastic

decline in birth rates in Xinjiang. We have repeatedly condemned the egregious abuses of human rights perpetrated against Uyghurs in Xinjiang - including at the UN and directly with China.

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[93669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of (a) forced abortions and (b) removal of wombs among Uyghur Muslim women.

**Nigel Adams:**

Reports of suppression of birth rates add to our deep concern about the situation in Xinjiang. It is noteworthy that the Chinese authorities' own figures show a drastic decline in birth rates in Xinjiang. We have repeatedly condemned the egregious abuses of human rights perpetrated against Uyghurs in Xinjiang - including at the UN and directly with China.

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[93670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the treatment of Uyghur children in special orphanages for Uyghur children in China.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are deeply concerned by reports of the mistreatment of Uyghur children in China, including reports of children being forcibly separated from their parents and placed in state run institutions. These reports add to the growing body of evidence about serious and widespread human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang. We continue to raise our concerns at the UN, and directly with China.

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[93671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to (a) establish a relationship with and (b) provide evidence to the Uyghur Tribunal.

**Nigel Adams:**

We have serious concerns about gross violations of human rights occurring in Xinjiang and welcome any work that is rigorous, balanced and raises awareness of the situation faced by Uyghurs and other minorities in China. We are aware of this initiative by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, and will study any resulting report carefully.

## ■ Developing Countries: Water

**Robin Millar:**

[\[92894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote the importance of clean water and good sanitation as part of tackling covid-19 in developing countries.

**Wendy Morton:**

With the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, the UK Government rapidly increased support to hygiene programmes in developing countries. Through the Hygiene, Handwashing and Behaviour Change Coalition on COVID-19 programme, we are working in partnership with Unilever and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 37 countries to provide advice, promote hand and surface hygiene, and deliver supplies including soap and sanitiser to people in urgent need.

The UK is also helping schools worldwide to re-open safely while managing COVID-19 transmission risks. The UK Government-supported Hygiene Hub for COVID-19 has produced specific guidance on reopening schools after lockdown. The hub provides national governments, NGOs and other stakeholders with evidence-based advice and examples of best practice on hygiene and behaviour change.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contracts****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[92855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 September 2020 to Question 84325 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contracts, when his Department plans to finish the process of renegotiating the contracts to take account of the reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has conducted a rigorous ODA prioritisation process to respond to the expected reduction in GNI. Any affected aid delivery partners will be promptly notified of our decision as and when it is made.

We continue to work collaboratively with our supply partners and take a flexible and reasonable approach to find pragmatic solutions to support continuation of delivery where appropriate.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Sustainable Development****Sarah Champion:**[\[91048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress the UK has made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; and whether he plans to work with NGOs to achieve those goals by 2030.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK Government is committed to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both at home and abroad. Last year we published our Voluntary National Review, which comprehensively took stock of progress towards each Goal, as well as identifying challenges and next steps. We currently report data on 78% of SDG global indicators, available on the National Reporting Platform and remain committed to improving data coverage and disaggregation to ensure we leave no one behind.

COVID-19 is already setting back SDG progress and the world must redouble its efforts to meet the Goals by 2030. The UK remains at the forefront of these

efforts - including in its role as co-lead of the UN Financing for Development workstream on Recovering Better for Sustainability. SDG progress is in our national interest and everyone has a role to play. The UK Government continues to work closely with stakeholders including civil society and businesses.

## ■ Greece: Migrant Camps

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[91064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with the (a) Greek authorities and (b) UK's European partners on finding long-term solutions to support asylum seekers and refugees who have been affected by the fire in the Moria refugee camp.

**Wendy Morton:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* We have previously raised our concerns with the Greek government on conditions in overcrowded migrant camps, including with the Foreign Minister. We will continue to raise issues of long term management of migration pressures through our bilateral exchanges.

Officials from the British Embassy have been engaging with the Greek authorities locally following the fire in the Moria migrant camp. 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. We will work with our partners to ensure these supplies are fairly distributed and reach those most in need.

The UK has presented a genuine and sincere offer to the EU on a future reciprocal arrangement for the family reunion of unaccompanied children seeking asylum (UASC) in either the EU or the UK, where it is in the child's best interests. Furthermore, individuals who have been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK will continue to be able to be joined by family members under the refugee family reunion rules. These routes are unaffected by our exit from the EU.

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

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[93659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether UK diplomatic and development work will continue to prioritise gender equality after the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[93660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy plans to reference gender equality in its capabilities outputs.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[93661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether funding for gender equality will be referenced in the outputs of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.



**Wendy Morton:**

Advancing gender equality and women and girls' rights are a core part of the UK Government's mission, and Global Britain's role as a force for good in the world, including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education. The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to this agenda. The FCDO will work closely with partners across HMG to leverage the best development, diplomatic, defence and trade approaches to achieve maximum impact.

The Integrated Review is expected to conclude later this year and will provide a strong strategic direction for the new Department. In the meantime, we are carefully considering how best to refresh and build on existing strategies such as the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality and National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security. Both the review and the merger are evidence of the Prime Minister's commitment to a unified British foreign and development policy that will maximise our influence around the world, including on gender equality and women's rights. When the Prime Minister launched the Integrated Review, he was clear that it will set out the way in which the UK will be a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation. Our aim continues to be for an ambitious and bold Integrated Review that is guided by the UK's foreign policy, national security and development objectives. Gender equality will remain a core part of the Government's mission and it is at the heart of the new FCDO.

**■ Maria Shahbaz****Theresa Villiers:**[\[92637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Pakistani Government about the welfare of Maria Shahbaz, the 14-year-old Christian girl who was kidnapped and forcibly married and converted to Islam in Faisalabad in April 2020.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are closely monitoring Maira Shahbaz's case following her reported abduction in April. The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls. We regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, women and girl's rights and gender equality with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. Most recently, on 27 August, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our human rights concerns including Freedom of Religion of Belief with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari. In addition, on 8 September, Lord Ahmad discussed Freedom of Religion Belief with the Governor of Punjab.

**■ Middle East: Diplomatic Relations****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[91009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential of the deal signed by the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel to normalise relations between those countries and the Middle East peace process.



**James Cleverly:**

We warmly welcome the agreement between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. This is a historic step which sees the normalisation of relations between three great friends of the UK. We welcome both the decision to normalise relations, as well as the suspension of plans for annexation - a move the UK has opposed as it would have been counterproductive to securing peace in the region. We profoundly hope that this moment can be used as a step towards direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians, as there can be no substitute in order to reach a two-state solution and a lasting peace.

**Overseas Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[91784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Prime Minister to the Liaison Committee on 16 September 2020, which countries and regions that receive UK aid will be affected by the re-prioritisation process in the Integrated Review.

**James Cleverly:**

As the Prime Minister made clear in his appearance before the Liaison Committee, Global Britain must be more outward looking and more engaged than ever before.

The Integrated Review will set out in detail how we will achieve this, and the Comprehensive Spending Review will allocate the resources to do so. This is about using the totality of resources at our disposal, including our development resource, in an integrated way that delivers greater impact for UK aid; builds modern, strategic partnerships; and delivers on UK diplomatic and political interests.

The Integrated Review will conclude in the autumn; it would not be appropriate to pre-empt its conclusions.

**Overseas Aid: Contracts****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[82262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many termination notices of contracts have been sent to aid delivery partners since his announcement of cuts to the aid budget of £2.9bn on the 22 of July; and in which countries those aid delivery partners are based.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has conducted a rigorous ODA prioritisation process to respond to the expected reduction in GNI. Any affected aid delivery partners will be promptly notified of our decision as and when it is made.

We continue to work collaboratively with our supply partners and take a flexible and reasonable approach to find pragmatic solutions to support continuation of delivery where appropriate.

## ■ Overseas Aid: Fossil Fuels

**Layla Moran:**

[\[91715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government's aid and development strategy will distribute funding to offset the energy support monies spent on fossil fuels abroad between 2010 and 2018 to countries affected by the consumption of those fuels.

**James Duddridge:**

Countries need reliable and sustainable supplies of energy if they are to tackle poverty effectively by growing their economies and creating jobs, and delivering essential services. UK aid increasingly supports renewable energy projects. Since 2011, the UK has provided 33 million people with improved access to clean energy, avoided 31 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and installed 2,000 MW of clean energy capacity.

The Government has announced that the UK will double our international climate finance to £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26. A significant proportion of this funding will be invested in clean energy, including up to £1 billion in developing and testing new technology in areas such as energy storage, innovations in renewable energy and technologies for industrial decarbonisation. This funding for innovation is targeted at supporting the clean energy transition in developing countries, by creating and demonstrating new technologies and business models to deploy them.

In the 2019 Green Finance Strategy, the Government committed to aligning the UK's Official Development Assistance with the goals of the Paris international climate change agreement, including our support for energy. The UK keeps its balance of support for overseas projects under constant review to ensure alignment with government priorities, including on climate change.

## ■ Overseas Aid: Poverty

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[91694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Prime Minister to the Liaison Committee on 16 September 2020, HC 744, whether it is his policy to spend UK aid on tackling poverty.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government will prioritise the bottom billion, the very poorest around the world, as part of our core mission. This is in our national interest and it will project the UK as a force for good in the world.

## ■ Pakistan: Ahmadiyya

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[92638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment for his policies of the findings of the report by the all party

parliamentary group for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on Mon 20 July 2020, entitled The Persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and the Rise of International Extremism.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are considering the recommendations of the APPG for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in their report on Ahmadi Muslims of 20 July. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia, spoke at the launch event for the APPG's report on 21 July. The UK Government remains deeply concerned by reports of discrimination and violence against religious communities in Pakistan, including against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, regardless of their belief. Most recently, Lord Ahmad raised our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, 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.

■ **Pakistan: Human Rights**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[89719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department's policy is that abduction, forced conversions and forced marriages of religious minorities girls in Pakistan constitutes sexual slavery; and what representations he has made to his counterpart in Pakistan on preventing such practices.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 22 September 2020]:* The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office recognises forced marriages and sexual exploitation as an element of modern slavery. The UK Government is committed to the eradication of all forms of modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking (SDG 8.7) by 2030, as unanimously adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015.

The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls from religious minorities in Pakistan. We regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, women and girls' rights and gender equality with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon last raised our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 August. On 8 September, Lord Ahmad discussed our concerns regarding Freedom of Religion or Belief with the Governor of Punjab.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Earwax: Medical Treatments**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[90063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons earwax removal is no longer routinely available on the NHS; and whether he has made an

assessment of the economic effect of that matter on (a) elderly and (b) hard of hearing people who rely on regular earwax removal.

**Edward Argar:**

There are a range of services known as core services that all general practitioner (GP) practices are expected to provide and enhanced services that GP practices are commissioned to provide over and above this. The provision of ear syringing is an example of an enhanced service. If a local clinical commissioning group has decided not to commission an enhanced service, this may relate to population needs and value for money.

If the build-up of earwax is linked with hearing loss, then the GP practice could consider referring the patient into audiology services. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published guidelines in June 2018 on hearing loss at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98>

This contains a specific section on earwax removal which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98/chapter/Recommendations#removing-earwax>

■ **Haemochromatosis: Diagnosis**

**Sir John Hayes:**

**[88825]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve early diagnosis for those suffering from haemochromatosis.

**Edward Argar:**

Steps to improve diagnosis of rare conditions, including genetic haemochromatosis, are being taken through the implementation of the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rare-diseases-strategy>

In October 2019, the national conversation on rare diseases survey was launched to identify the major challenges faced by those living and working with rare diseases. We received almost 6,300 responses which, alongside the lessons learned from the experiences of rare disease patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, will be used to shape the post-2020 UK Rare Diseases Framework which will replace the Strategy.

The Genomic Medicine Service is supported by the National Genomic Test Directory which specifies the genomic tests that are commissioned by the National Health Service in England. Genetic haemochromatosis is included in the Test Directory.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Asylum****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[91769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to increase the asylum support rates, beyond the increase made in June 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

The standard allowance given to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute was raised to £39.60 per week from £37.75 per week with effect from 15 June, an increase of around 5%. This increase was significantly higher than the general rate of inflation, which Office for National Statistics data shows was only 0.5% in the 12 months period to May.

Further work is being done, as it is every year, to ensure the rate is enough to meet the essential living needs of asylum seekers (the legal test) and we will announce the outcome in due course.

The taxpayer also provides free accommodation, with utilities and council tax paid for and there is free access to the NHS and free access to education for their children.

The UK has a generous record in supporting asylum seekers. Last year, we made around 20,000 grants of asylum or protection (one of the higher figures in Europe), as well as offered protection to 3,000 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – the highest number of any country in Europe. In addition, we have directly resettled around 20,000 people from the most dangerous areas of the world (especially Syrians) in the UK over the last 5 years. Finally, we spend around £14 billion per year in Overseas Aid, helping millions of people around the world. This is the highest amount of any country in Europe and we are the only G7 country to meet the 0.7% of GNI Overseas Aid target.

■ **Asylum: Employment****Neil Coyle:**[\[90143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of the time taken for decisions to be made on asylum seekers applications before being eligible to find employment.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office has not made an estimate of this cost.

Asylum seekers can work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months, through no fault of their own. Those allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is published by the Home Office and based on expert advice from the Migration Advisory Committee.

It is important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here, who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Our wider

policy could be undermined if migrants bypassed work visa Rules by lodging unfounded asylum claims here.

As part of the plans to speed up Asylum decision making, over the last 18 months, UK Visas and Immigration have increased the number of Asylum decision makers and support staff as part of a rolling recruitment campaign and mobilised a transformation programme that seeks to simplify, streamline and digitise processes.

### ■ **Asylum: Newcastle Upon Tyne**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[89697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 84230 on Asylum: Newcastle Upon Tyne, how many asylum seekers in Newcastle are accommodated in hotels.

**Chris Philp:**

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.

### ■ **Asylum: Slavery**

**Alex Norris:**

**[91796]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the victims of (a) human trafficking or (b) modern slavery who were granted asylum or humanitarian protection in each of (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018 and (iv) 2019 were granted asylum or humanitarian protection on the grounds of circumstances unconnected to human trafficking or modern slavery.

**Alex Norris:**

**[91797]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of foreign national victims of human trafficking and modern slavery (a) applied for and (b) were granted (i) asylum (ii) humanitarian protection or (iii) Discretionary Leave to Remain in each year from 2016 to 2019 inclusive were EU nationals.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not publish data on how many and what proportion of the victims of human trafficking or modern slavery, and those who are foreign national victims, who were granted asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave for the years 2016 to 2019, as this information is not held in a reportable format. This also includes those who are EU nationals and/or on the grounds of circumstances unconnected to human trafficking or modern slavery.

However, The Home Office can state how many people were granted asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave, and can be found at Asy\_02a of the published Immigration Statistics:

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

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

**[93533]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will include community-based services in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Domestic Abuse Bill, as introduced on 3 March, includes a new statutory duty on tier one local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation. These provisions have been designed in the light of extensive consultation and analysis about how to address the gaps in current provision.

We fully recognise the vital role played by community-based support services in helping victims of domestic abuse and their children to rebuild their lives. However, until we have undertaken a similar analytical exercise in relation to community-based support services, we believe it would be premature to legislate in this Bill.

To enable us to better understand the complex landscape for community-based support for all victims, including children, the designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner has agreed to undertake an in-depth exploration of the current community-based support landscape over 2020/21. The Government will then work with the Commissioner to understand the needs identified and develop options on how best to address them.

The provision of community-based services for victims of domestic abuse and their children in Northern Ireland is a matter for the Northern Ireland Executive.

## ■ Fixed Penalties: Coronavirus

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

**[83879]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued to people returning from countries that are not included in the Government's travel corridors.

**Chris Philp:**

Border Force can issue fixed penalty notices (FPN) to passengers who have failed to complete the Passenger Locator Form (PLF) on arrival. The approach has been to use 4Es (engage, explain, encourage and enforce) to deal with arriving passengers who have not completed the PLF.

To date a total number of 11 fixed penalty notices have been issued.

For PLF completion Border Force do not distinguish between passengers arriving from exempt and non-exempt countries, so it is not possible to break down the FPN data further.



**■ Immigration: Armed Forces****Drew Hendry:** [\[92811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she made of the affordability of armed forces dependents' leave to remain visa applications for armed forces service personnel and their families prior to publishing the proposed 5 October 2020 Immigration and Nationality Fees.

**Drew Hendry:** [\[92812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she made of the cost of the UK citizenship application process for armed forces service personnel prior to publishing the proposed 5 October 2020 immigration and nationality fees.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government highly values the service of all members of HM Forces,

Given this we explicitly provide for non-UK veterans discharged from HM Forces to obtain settlement in the UK after having served for four years or more or having been discharged for medical reasons due to their service.

The Ministry of Defence makes clear to foreign and Commonwealth recruits into the Forces the process by which they and their families can attain settlement in the UK and the costs involved.

Additionally, fee waivers are available for Leave to Remain applications for those making Article 8 claims, based on Family and Private Life, if an applicant is destitute or could be rendered destitute in paying the fee, or where there are exceptional financial circumstances which mean the fees and charges cannot be afforded without detriment to the applicant or their family. This provides for an individual or family to remain here lawfully and to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain and pay the fees, when the funds become available.

Discussions continue between the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence about how we can build on the provisions which already exist in our immigration and nationality system for foreign and Commonwealth nationals serving in the Armed Forces and will confirm further news in due course.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Emma Hardy:** [\[87623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to reply to the letter of 20 August 2020 and follow-up correspondence from the Leader of Hull City Council on the housing of asylum seekers in the Royal Station Hotel in Kingston-upon-Hull.

**Chris Philp:**

We wrote to the leader of Hull City Council on 26 August to thank them for writing and acknowledge receipt. A more comprehensive response has been compiled and will be sent shortly



## ■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[93655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to invite non-government (a) migrant rights and (b) No Recourse to Public Funds experts to contribute to the upcoming review of the compliant environment recommended in the Wendy Williams Windrush Lessons Learned Review, published in March 2020.

**Priti Patel:**

My officials are consulting external experts, community organisations and the very people the Home Office has failed in the past in an extensive programme of engagement to ensure officials understand the change that is needed and that the organisation at every level learns the lessons of what went wrong.

I have accepted the Windrush Lessons Learned review's important findings and I will be updating the House in the coming weeks.

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[93656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she (a) has had and (b) plans to have with organisations to contribute to the review of the compliant environment as recommended by the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.

**Priti Patel:**

My officials are consulting external experts, community organisations and the very people the Home Office has failed in the past in an extensive programme of engagement to ensure officials understand the change that is needed and that the organisation at every level learns the lessons of what went wrong.

I have accepted the Windrush Lessons Learned review's important findings and I will be updating the House in the coming weeks.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### ■ House of Commons: Shops

**John Spellar:**

[\[92625\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, when is it proposed to reintroduce cash payment at outlets in the House of Commons.

**Pete Wishart:**

The reintroduction of cash payments in catering outlets will be reviewed by the Catering Service Management team in accordance with any changes to industry guidance provided by the Government. The current guidance encourages contactless payments, where possible, which the House is adopting as part of its measures to manage the risk of COVID transmission on the Parliamentary Estate.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mark Eastwood:****[91733]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposals in the Planning for the future consultation, published 6 August 2020, on access by communities to green space which is (a) undesignated and (b) part of a growth zone.

**Christopher Pincher:**

*Planning for the Future* proposes significant changes to the focus and processes of planning – to secure better outcomes including improving our precious countryside and environment alongside increasing the supply of land for new, beautiful homes and sustainable places. One key proposal is that local plans place all land into one of three categories: areas for Growth, Renewal or Protection. The consultation proposal is clear that Green Belt and valued green space, which need not necessarily be a designated area, would be included in areas for Protection.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that planning policies and decisions should not only protect and enhance the natural environment but should secure net gains for biodiversity, including wildlife habitat, woods and ecological networks, and recognise the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The reforms we are proposing are designed to support the continuing implementation of this policy by local authorities, in line with our 25 Year Environment Plan and provisions in the Environment Bill.

We also propose to transform how communities engage with plan-making, using new digital tools to make it easier for many more people to understand, engage with and influence development policies and proposals.

After carefully considering all the responses to *Planning for the Future*, the Government will publish its conclusions.

■ **Housing: Construction****Chris Grayling:****[90950]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish a comparative assessment of his Department's housing targets and the Office for National Statistics projections of future household growth by each local planning authority area in England.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government does not set housing targets. It is for local planning authorities to determine how many homes they will plan for through the local plan making process. The national planning policy framework sets out that in doing this strategic plan making, authorities should use the standard method for assessing local housing need as the starting point in this process. The projections of future household growth are published by the Office of National Statistics and are available publicly online.

## ■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Apprentices

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[91622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 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.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

As of 31 March 2020, the Civil Service has 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. On 21 September 2020, the equivalent figure for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was 1.7 per cent. 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. 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 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.

A multi-year approach on apprenticeships from FY 2021/22 will be developed by MHCLG's Early Talent Team in the coming months, which will be aligned to the new apprenticeship strategy and any new targets included within.

## ■ New Homes Ombudsman: Public Appointments

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[91073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, by what date he plans for the New Homes Ombudsman to be appointed.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The New Homes Ombudsman scheme will enhance consumer protection for new build homebuyers. Published on 20 July 2020, the draft Building Safety Bill includes provision for the New Homes Ombudsman scheme to resolve disputes between developers and consumers. The legislation is currently undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny. Alongside introducing legislation, we continue to work with the industry-led New Homes Quality Board to consider the appointment of a voluntary New Homes Ombudsman scheme.

## ■ Planning Permission: Local Press

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[93517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what regulatory impact assessment he has carried out on the proposal to remove statutory

requirements for planning applications to be publicised in local newspapers; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Local planning authorities are required to publicise certain types of planning applications in local newspapers as set out in Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. In response to coronavirus restrictions, temporary regulations have been introduced to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications. Local planning authorities now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirement for newspaper publicity – for instance, if the local newspaper is not now in circulation. These steps can include the use of social media and other electronic communications, such as local online news portals, and must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development. However, if a local planning authority is required to publicise a planning application in a local newspaper, and that paper is still in circulation, then they must continue to do so.

■ **Property Development: Floods**

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[93709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance the Government provides to local authorities on planning permission rules for roof terraces on buildings on flood plains.

**Christopher Pincher:**

National planning policy and guidance on managing flood risk is clear that inappropriate development in areas at current or future risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, including floodplains, towards areas at least risk. Only water compatible or essential infrastructure developments are allowed in the functional floodplain, where water has to flow or be stored during times of flood. Where development is necessary in a flood risk area, and where there are no suitable sites available in areas with a lower risk of flooding, it should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and be appropriately flood resistant and resilient.

Policy is clear that householder applications for minor development and changes of use require a site-specific flood risk assessment for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Furthermore, the Environment Agency are a statutory consultee for minor development in Flood Zone 3 that is within 20 metres of a main river, and also provide advice for minor development in other areas.

We are reviewing our policy for building in areas at flood risk, and alongside the Government's £5.2 billion investment in additional flood defences announced at Budget, this will seek to ensure that communities across the country know that future development will be safe from floods. We will assess whether current protections in

the National Planning Policy Framework are enough and consider options for further reform .

## ■ Sleeping Rough

**Neil Coyle:**

**[91056]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the difference between the number given of 14,610 rough sleepers housed under the emergency Everyone In scheme and his Department's latest figures showing 4,266 rough sleepers in England, what steps his Department plans to take to improve the quality of data collected on the number of people sleeping rough.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

On 3 June the Government published the management information that supports the announcements that nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been accommodated by local authorities in response to COVID-19 via the Everyone In scheme.

The separate annual rough sleeping snapshot provides a way of estimating the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn. In 2019 this provided an estimate of 4,266 individuals sleeping rough on a single night; down 9 per cent on the previous year. This does not include people in hostels or shelters and records only those people seen, or thought to be, sleeping rough.

In July this year, the Office for Statistics Regulation, conducted a review of the compliance of MHCLG's Rough Sleeping Snapshot official statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics. The review welcomed the new management information being collected on the numbers of homeless and rough sleepers in England being assisted into emergency accommodation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a range of positive features that demonstrate the quality and value of the rough sleeping statistics.

For further information please see the following link:

<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/mark-pont-to-sandra-tudor-compliance-check-of-rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england/>

**Neil Coyle:**

**[91057]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department plans to take to prevent rough sleeping in (a) London and (b) England in winter 2020-21.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic almost 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation.

We are taking steps to protect vulnerable rough sleepers from COVID-19 and we are continuing to work hard to move vulnerable people away from the streets and into long-term, sustainable accommodation.

The Next Steps Accommodation Programme makes available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent those accommodated from returning to the streets. £161 million will deliver 3,300 units of longer-term move-on accommodation in 2020/2021. This is part of a total of £433 million to provide 6,000 long term, safe homes for those in need.

£105 million will pay for immediate support and interim accommodation to ensure that people do not return to the streets. On 17 September we announced allocations for the short-term aspect of this fund. 274 local authorities will now share £91.5 million of funding, helping to make life-changing differences to our most vulnerable by helping to support them to rebuild their lives and addressing complex needs such as substance misuse and mental health issues. We will continue to work with local authorities to allocate remaining funds to new or emerging challenges.

In 2020/21, £112 million has also been allocated to 276 local authorities through the Rough Sleeping Initiative, supporting the establishment or enhancement of coordinated local services for rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough.

## ■ Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[91058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to help shelters for rough sleepers plan for the winter with covid-19 social distancing rules in place.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation since the start of the COVID-19 lockdown period. This includes people coming in directly from the streets, people previously housed in shared night shelters and people who have become vulnerable to rough sleeping during the pandemic.

The Next Steps Accommodation Programme makes available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent those accommodated from returning to the streets. £161 million will deliver 3,300 units of longer-term move-on accommodation in 2020/2021. This is part of a total of £433 million to provide 6,000 long term, safe homes for those in need.

£105 million will pay for immediate support and interim accommodation to help ensure that people do not return to the streets.

We are working closely with the homelessness sector and health experts to explore how to best support people at risk of sleeping rough going forward.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Food: Import Duties

**Ben Everitt:**

[\[93720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effect of the UK global tariff on food prices if the UK ends the transition period (a) with a tariff-free agreement and (b) without an agreement with the EU.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK Government intends to achieve a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU and therefore does not expect the UK global tariff (UKGT) to apply to EU imports.

The UKGT was developed following an extensive public consultation in which over 1,300 responses were received, providing vital information.

As such, the UK Government has sought a balance between the interests of consumers and producers to benefit the UK economy as a whole.

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

### ■ Trade Agreements

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[93555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 18 September 2020 to Question 89629, whether the 21 trade agreements referred to in that Answer include those with Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[93556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 18 September 2020 to Question 89629, whether the £142 billion referred to in that Answer includes the £26.95 billion of trade in 2019 with Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

We are continuing our programme to replicate the effects of existing EU trade agreements with trading partners to secure continuity for British businesses following the transition period. An up-to-date list of trade continuity agreements, signed and in discussion, is publicly available on GOV.UK ([LINK](#)) – and this will be updated to reflect a change in status for agreements in discussion when they are signed.

### ■ Wines: Import Duties

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[93602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the UK does not levy new tariffs on wine from the EU; and if she will cancel the planned extension of the requirement for VI-1 forms to EU wines at the end of the transition period.



**Greg Hands:**

The UK Government intends to achieve an FTA with the EU therefore does not expect tariffs on wine, under the UK Global Tariff (UKGT) regime, to apply to EU imports.

Businesses can check what tariffs will apply after the transition period on GOV.UK, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-tariffs-from-1-january-2021>.

As referred to in answers 78691 and 78692, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 will transfer existing EU wine regulations such as these to the UK statute book. As a result, EU wines will also now become subject to the same import requirements as wine arriving from countries like Australia, USA, Chile and South Africa, which currently account for 50% of wine on UK shelves.

**JUSTICE****■ Child Trust Fund: Disability**

**Ian Murray:** [\[93573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made on the number of families with disabled children are unable to access their child's child trust fund account when that child turns 18 years.

**Ian Murray:** [\[93574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the mechanisms by which parents of children with learning disabilities are able to access their child's child trust fund account when that child turns 18 years.

**Ian Murray:** [\[93575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on families of disabled children as a result of being required to apply to the Court of Protection to access their child's child trust fund account.

**Alex Chalk:**

In order for anyone to make decisions on behalf of an adult who lacks mental capacity in relation to their financial affairs, they must be granted legal powers to do so, either by a Lasting Power of Attorney or by authorisation from the Court of Protection - the specialist court that deals with issues concerning a lack of capacity.

We do not hold data on the proportion of holders of child trust funds who have a disability. However, we are working with the financial institutions to ensure that the parents of young people who do not have the required mental capacity to make the decision to access a Child Trust Fund at age 18, are made aware of Lasting Powers of Attorney and the possible need to make applications to the Court of Protection.

Fees are payable to register Lasting Powers of Attorney and for applications to the Court and we recognise that these fees may be difficult for the families of disabled children to afford. Help with Lasting Power of Attorney registration fees, Court of

Protection fees and deputy supervision fees is available, depending upon the financial circumstances of the person who lacks mental capacity, and in some cases a full fee exemption may be available.

We consider that our processes for applying for a Lasting Power of Attorney, court applications, the structure of court fees and the policy around Help with Fees are adequate and we keep these under regular review.

## ■ **NHS: Negligence**

**Nicola Richards:**

[\[91197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress his Department has made in contributing to the cross-government strategy on tackling the drivers behind the rising cost of clinical negligence cases; and what assessment he has made of potential legal reforms that can contribute to that strategy.

**Alex Chalk:**

In 2017 the National Audit Office (NAO) published their report 'Managing the costs of Clinical Negligence in Trusts' which challenged the Government to publish a co-ordinated strategy to control the increasing cost of clinical negligence claims.

The Ministry of Justice continues to work jointly with the Department of Health and Social Care, the Treasury, Cabinet Office, NHS Resolution and others, to respond to the challenge from NAO. We are looking at all the drivers of costs and a wide range of options are being considered as part of the strategy to reduce clinical negligence costs.

This is a complex issue and the work is ongoing. The Department of Health and Social Care will bring forward a publication in due course.

## ■ **Offences against Children: Internet**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[92636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what comparative assessment he has made of the number of adults convicted of offences involving the online grooming of children in 2018 and 2019.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Justice publishes statistics on proceedings and outcomes for a range of offences relating to grooming including: sexual communication with a child; and meeting a child aged under 16 following sexual grooming. Offences relating to online grooming are not distinguished from all grooming offences in court data.

Data on these offences is published up to December 2019 and available in the Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx)

Filter 'detailed offence' for:

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**ENGAGE IN SEXUAL COMMUNICATION WITH A CHILD**

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Meeting a female child aged under 16 following sexual grooming etc. - offender aged 18 or over

Meeting a male child aged under 16 following sexual grooming etc. - offender aged 18 or over

Or filter 'offence' for:

88A Sexual Grooming

■ **Prisons: Coronavirus**

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[93698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy on private prisons of the adequacy of covid-19 sick pay policies implemented by G4S in private prisons.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Whilst they may mirror those set by HMPPS in public sector prisons, all staffing matters in privately managed prisons, including sick pay and related policies, are the responsibility of individual contractors. There is no requirement in the contracts to agree such matters with the Ministry of Justice.

Private providers play an important role in the prison estate and we continue to monitor them to ensure they maintain safe, decent and secure prisons.

■ **Sexual Offences**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[91570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps is he taking to help ensure that women who have experienced sexual assault feel able to report it.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government recognises that sexual violence is a devastating crime and is committed to ensuring that every victim has access to the specialist support they need. We want victims to have the confidence to report these crimes, knowing they will get the support they need and that everything will be done to bring offenders to justice. We expect every report of sexual assault to be treated seriously from the point of disclosure, every victim to be treated with dignity and every investigation and every prosecution to be conducted thoroughly and professionally.

To that end, a review of the criminal justice response to rape and serious sexual offences was commissioned in March 2019 by the National Criminal Justice Board (CJB), and it continues to gather and analyse detailed views from key groups and agencies across the Criminal Justice System to enable us to better understand how the system's response to sexual assault cases can be improved. The Government intends to publish its initial findings in the autumn.

To provide support to victims, the Ministry of Justice also directly commissions rape support centres across England and Wales and has committed to investing to recruit more Independent Sexual Violence Advisers - who play a critical role in ensuring that victims feel informed, supported and engaged throughout every stage of the criminal justice process. In addition, during the Covid-19 outbreak the Government ringfenced £10 million of funding for sexual violence support services to ensure they could continue to provide vital services.

The Government has also committed to delivering a new communications campaign to raise awareness around sexual violence and inform victims of their rights to support, and this campaign will be launched later this year.

### ■ **Suicide: Veterans**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[93576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require coroners statistically to record veteran suicides.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government takes the welfare of Armed Forces veterans very seriously and we are committed to improving our understanding of the risk of suicide and its prevalence among veterans.

To achieve this, the government has already taken a number of initiatives, including a new study into the causes of death, including suicide, amongst those who have served in the Armed Forces since 2001, and a Government-funded study conducted by Manchester University which is looking at the factors in the year leading up to any confirmed suicide in the Armed Forces community in the last five years.

However, given the importance of this issue, we are continuing to explore further options. My department is currently working with the Office for Veterans' Affairs on this matter.

As you will be aware, an e-petition calling for coroners to be required statistically to record veteran suicides closed on 3 September 2020 and we will provide a response to it in due course.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ **Imports: Northern Ireland**

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[93629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what (a) guidance and (b) other information the Government has issued to businesses in Northern Ireland regarding requirements for (i) the labelling of goods with the details of the importer, (ii) the correct conformity assessment procedures for goods, (iii) the correct technical documentation from manufacturers after the end of the transition period.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

On 7 August, the Government published guidance on gov.uk for businesses engaging with the new processes and arrangements that will be in place in Northern Ireland under the Protocol. This guidance sets out that the effect of the Protocol is to maintain the existing requirements for placing manufactured goods on the market in Northern Ireland, in line with relevant EU rules. It also explains the steps businesses will need to take to put these goods on the market in Northern Ireland. This includes information on labelling requirements, conformity assessment and technical documentation.

For goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain, the Government has made a clear commitment to Northern Ireland's unfettered access to the rest of the UK, and this is also reflected in the published guidance.

The Government has committed to providing extensive support and information to businesses in order to help them get ready in areas where there will be changes to the movement of goods and the actions that UK businesses may need to take. We will be publishing further detailed guidance for businesses on elements of the Protocol over the coming months; some of which remains subject to ongoing discussions with the EU. We are working hard to resolve outstanding issues with the Northern Ireland Protocol through the Joint Committee and will continue to approach these discussions in good faith.

**SCOTLAND****■ Government Departments: Edinburgh**

**Tommy Sheppard:** [\[93616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what proportion of the cost of the recent refit of Queen Elizabeth House was borne by (a) his Department and (b) HM Treasury.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

HMRC is responsible for the construction and fit out of Queen Elizabeth House which will house nearly 3,000 civil servants from over 13 UKG departments.

My department will be responsible for part of the overall running costs of the building, supported by funding from HM Treasury as part of our annual settlement.

**■ Scotland Office: Pay**

**Tommy Sheppard:** [\[93614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on salaries for staff based in (a) Scotland and (b) London in each of the last five financial years.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland spend on salaries for staff based in Scotland and London in each of the last five financial years is shown below:

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Scotland</b>	2,137	2,326	2,309	2,690	2,849
<b>London</b>	1,612	1,708	1,817	2,016	2,421
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,749</b>	<b>4,034</b>	<b>4,126</b>	<b>4,706</b>	<b>5,270</b>

### ■ Scotland Office: Staff

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[93613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many staff were employed in his Department who were based in (a) London and (b) Scotland on (i) September 2020 and (ii) 1 April in each year from 2015 to 2020.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly. All staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies; principally the Scottish Government and the Ministry of Justice, who remain the employers.

Staff on assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies to the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland were based as follows:

DATE	LONDON	SCOTLAND
<b>31 March 2015</b>	27	44
<b>31 March 2016</b>	35	41
<b>31 March 2017</b>	34	38
<b>31 March 2018</b>	32	42
<b>31 March 2019</b>	40	45
<b>31 March 2020</b>	34	47
<b>31 August 2020*</b>	37	48

\*Data provided from 31 August as nearest recorded information held to the requested dates.

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[93615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what the absence rate was for staff of his Department based in (a) Scotland and (b) London in each of the last five financial years.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not employ staff directly, all staff that join do so on an assignment, loan or secondment from other government bodies, who remain the employer. All absence is reported to and recorded by the parent employers, who retain and manage the detailed absence data relevant to their staff.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Aviation: Fuels****Dan Carden:**[\[92876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department is making on supporting the UK's aviation sector in the development of sustainable aviation fuels.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government is committed to promoting the use and production of sustainable aviation fuels. To help overcome barriers to the sector's development in the UK the Department for Transport's Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition (F4C) has made up to £20m of matched capital funding available. As part of this competition we are currently supporting two projects looking to build plants capable of supplying advanced fuels at a large scale for use in aviation.

In addition, we are incentivising the production and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO). Such fuels are eligible for support under the RTFO and can be categorised as a development fuel, thereby potentially benefiting from a higher tradeable certificate value. DfT officials are also working closely with industry to explore further options for how we can support the UK's development of sustainable aviation fuels.

■ **Boats: EU Countries****Ms Nusrat Ghani:**[\[91086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to protect the interests of UK recreational boaters who travel to the EU after the end of the transition period.

**Robert Courts:**

Recreational vessels bought in the UK after the end of transition or another non-EU country will be subject to VAT rules when entering the customs territory of the EU. To avoid payment of customs duties or VAT, owners would be able to use the EU's temporary admission procedure. The rules for temporary admission are confirmed in the EU Commission guidance.

In addition, national rules will apply to recreational vessels in individual EU Member States. In most cases these will not be affected by the end of the Transition Period. We are aware that prospective changes to these rules in some EU Member States



might affect UK recreational boaters. The Government is making representations to these Member States on behalf of recreational boaters affected by such national legislation. However, it is for recreational boaters to ensure they meet national rules that apply in the relevant Member State.

#### ■ **Cars: Hire Services**

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[93554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 September 2020 to Question 90961 on Cars: Hire Services, and the Prime Minister's statement on covid-19 measures on 22 September 2020, whether it is now mandatory for private hire and taxi drivers to wear face coverings at all times when working.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Face coverings are now mandatory for customers using taxi and private hire vehicle services, unless they are exempt from wearing one. Face coverings are not mandatory for drivers.

#### ■ **Diesel Fuel: Renewable Fuels**

**John Spellar:**

[\[92630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's policy is on the use of (a) food and (b) animal feed crops for the production of renewable diesel.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government recognises that some crop derived biofuels can lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions due to indirect land use change factors, and concerns regarding the potential for increases in food prices as land and crops are diverted to fuel rather than food production.

Given these concerns the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), a certificate trading scheme which promotes a market for sustainable renewable fuels, limits the contribution crop based biofuels can make towards a suppliers obligation (both bioethanol and biodiesel). This sliding cap on crop based biofuels decreases from 4% in 2020 to 2% in 2032. The RTFO provides additional support for low carbon fuels that do not compete with food and save significant greenhouse gas emissions compared to fossil fuels. Biofuels made from wastes and residues receive twice number of tradeable certificates than would be rewarded for the supply of biofuels made from crops.

#### ■ **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Correspondence**

**Nick Smith:**

[\[93570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether there is a backlog in (a) opening and (b) responding to postal enquiries at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The DVLA's 6,000 staff are largely based at a single site in Swansea and to adhere to Welsh Government social distancing requirements the number of staff on-site had been greatly reduced. While there are not generally delays in opening paper applications, processing them may take longer as they have to be dealt with in person. The DVLA has reconfigured its accommodation to maximise staff numbers while meeting the requirement in Wales to maintain the two-metre social distancing and ensure it remains Covid secure.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has a range of online services available which offer quick and easy ways of transacting. The DVLA's online services have worked well and as normal throughout the pandemic. Between March and the end of August, the DVLA has issued nearly seven million vehicle registration certificates and three and a half million driving licences.

The DVLA has also accelerated the development of additional online services to further reduce the number of paper applications and supported the take up of these through a publicity campaign. In June, the DVLA launched a new service allowing vehicle keepers to change their address online. This service was developed and introduced at pace and has been very successful with more than 213,000 change of address transactions completed online by the end of August. Further digital service enhancements are underway.

Additionally, drivers with a licence that expires between 1 February and 31 December 2020 have been given an automatic extension from the date of expiry. This means they will not need to renew their entitlement to drive until 11 months after the original expiry date.

**■ Electric Scooters****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[91776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the safety of e-scooters; and what discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Government, (b) road safety campaign and (c) scooter manufactures on the safety of e-scooters.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has set out a series of technical standards for e-scooter models to comply with, in order to participate in trials, and have been working closely with operators of e-scooters to ensure their models demonstrate compliance with these standards.

Officials and Ministers have met with a wide range of stakeholders in developing and implementing e-scooter trial policy, including the Scottish Government, manufacturers and safety groups.

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[93549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has made an estimate of the number of private electric scooters being used illegally on the streets.

**Rachel Maclean:**

No, the Government has not made such an assessment. Anecdotally, we are aware that a large number of private e-scooters are being ridden illegally in the UK, and retailers have reported an increase in sales across the period of the COVID pandemic. In May this year we announced that trials of e-scooters would be fast tracked in order to gather evidence to inform decisions about the future legal standing of this new mode of transport.

#### ■ **Electric Scooters: Hire Services**

**Jack Dromey:** [\[91600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to consult organisations representing disabled people as part of the evaluation of the pilot e-scooter rental schemes.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department and local authorities have engaged with organisations representing disabled people in the design of e-scooter trials. We will continue to meet with them throughout the trial period and when considering what steps to take after trials.

The trials are to gather evidence on what impacts e-scooters have on the road. It is important that we gather evidence about the impacts on all road users including disabled people. We will be working with our evaluation contractor to do this, working with disabled persons' groups where possible. We also want to work with them to learn how e-scooters can be a mobility aid for those less able to get around.

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[93547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what criteria the Government will be assessing the success of the rental electric scooter pilot schemes.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Data sharing agreements are being put in place between the Department and all rental e-scooter operators prior to trials commencing. This will provide a large amount and breadth of data, for example, on journeys completed by e-scooter users, mode shift to e-scooters, the demographics of users and safety. A third party research contractor will undertake detailed analysis of this data for the Department. We will also engage closely with local areas throughout the trial period to understand how successful they perceive trials to be.

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[93548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the success of the roll-out of the rental electric scooter pilot schemes to date.

**Rachel Maclean:**

To date, six e-scooter trials have launched, with a number of further trials due to begin shortly. Officials are in close and regular contact with local areas and e-scooter operators to understand how early stage deployment is progressing. Data sharing agreements are being put in place between the Department and all rental e-scooter operators prior to trials commencing. This will provide a large amount and breadth of data, for example, on journeys completed by e-scooter users, mode shift to e-scooters, the demographics of users and safety. A third party research contractor will undertake detailed analysis of this data for the Department.

**Public Transport: Hydrogen****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[93525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of progress in the development of hydrogen technology and how it could be applied to public transport.

**Rachel Maclean:**

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

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

**Railways: Pensions****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[93665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his announcement of 21 September 2020 on ending rail franchising, whether the Government has taken over the obligations from franchised operators for paying pension contributions to the Railway Pension Scheme.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As was previously the case under the Emergency Measures Agreements, train operating companies remain liable for employer contributions to the Railways Pension Scheme under the Emergency Recovery Management Agreements (ERMAs) announced on September 21. The Department will be taking the financial risk on those costs during the period of the ERMAs.

**Railways: West Midlands****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[90983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much carbon dioxide is emitted annually by diesel-only trains between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department does not collect data on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on a route by route basis.

**■ Transport: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[92813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent comparative assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of the use of private transport prior to the start of the covid-19 outbreak and during the covid-19 outbreak; what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for those trends; and whether he plans to take steps to encourage people to reduce their use of private transport.

**Rachel Maclean:**

To monitor the use of the transport system during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Department for Transport provides statistics on transport use by mode, published every Wednesday. Data on usage of the different transport modes is available on GOV.UK. We're creating a Transport Decarbonisation Plan for publication later this year setting out a pathway to decarbonisation which will consider measures to accelerate modal shift to public and active transport. We have already invested £2 billion to rejuvenate cycling and walking across the UK – the largest investment ever made in this area.

**■ Transport: Hydrogen****Ben Lake:**[\[92863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2020 to Question 85098 on a hydrogen hub, what assessment his Department has made of the role of hydrogen passenger vehicles in hydrogen transport.

**Rachel Maclean:**

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 refueling stations. The programme is delivering new refueling 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.

**■ Transport: Protective Clothing****Dan Jarvis:**[\[93601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he is taking steps to extend Government guidance on face coverings to include privately run school transport.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The regulations relating to the use of face coverings on public transport do not apply to school transport services. Government guidance already strongly recommends face coverings in any enclosed spaces where it is difficult to maintain social distancing, subject to exemptions. The Department for Education's guidance on school re-openings further recommends that local authorities advise children and young people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated transport from the autumn term, whether on the public network or procured by the local authority, schools or parent groups.

**TREASURY**■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

**Martin Docherty-Hughes:** [\[91654\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what analysis he has made of the possible different methods of taper that could be used for the Small Brewers Relief scheme.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

There are several methods employed internationally for tapering small producer reliefs. The Government will undertake a further consultation on its reforms of Small Brewers Relief later this autumn, which will consider technical matters such as this.

■ **Companies: Coronavirus**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[91601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 77560 on companies: coronavirus, if he will publish either a copy of the text of the conditions imposed with commercially sensitive or identifying details redacted or an overview of the conditions required.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[91602\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 77560 on companies: coronavirus, whether steps have been taken to (a) ensure compliance and (b) penalise non-compliance.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

As confirmed at the Summer Economic Update, the government has announced support for one firm, Celsa Steel (UK) Ltd, to enable the company to continue trading. The details of that loan were announced on 2 July 2020 in the BEIS SoS WMS (HCWS332).

Any future companies will be considered on a case by case basis and will be expected to agree to appropriate conditions. As with any agreement, commercial and policy conditions are monitored using a variety of appropriate mechanisms.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[90954\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support people on an annual pay period where the last payment notified to HMRC via PAYE was before 5 April 2019 and no further payments were notified until after 19 March 2020 which has meant that they are ineligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The CJRS has had to be set up to operate at significant scale and with limited manual intervention. The requirement for there to be a payment of earnings in the 2019/20 tax year applies for any employee being claimed for, irrespective of how frequently they are paid; whether weekly, monthly, or annually. The 19 March cut-off date allows as many people as possible to be included by going right up to the day before the announcement of the scheme, and protects taxpayers' money against the risk of fraudulent claims that existed as soon as the scheme became public.

Those who are not eligible for the scheme can benefit from the wider package of measures in the Plan for Jobs, as well as temporary welfare measures announced in March.

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[91096\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to employees of sectors that are not able to fully reopen.

**Jesse Norman:**

It would be challenging to target the CJRS to specific sectors in a fair and deliverable way, and it may not be the case that this is the most effective or sensible way to provide longer-term support for those sectors most affected by coronavirus. It would also be difficult to target the CJRS at specific sectors without creating distortion, particularly as some firms work across multiple sectors. Specific firms may benefit from other measures including the Small Business Grant Fund and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. It is the case that some firms will be affected by coronavirus for longer than others and the Government will continue to keep the situation under review.

This week the Government published its Winter Economy Plan, a targeted package of measures to support jobs and business through the winter months. As part of that Plan, the Job Support Scheme will support viable businesses who are facing lower demand due to COVID-19 to keep their employees in work and attached to the workforce.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[93516\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 90033 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, whether a business that repays a furlough grant to which it is entitled is liable for tax upon that grant notwithstanding its voluntary repayment.



**Jesse Norman:**

A business that repays a furlough grant to which it is entitled is not liable for tax upon that grant. However, the employer will still need to record the grant in their forthcoming tax return.

**■ Duty Free Allowances****Henry Smith:**[\[91609\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department conducted an impact assessment of the potential effect of changes to tax-free sales in airports of goods for passengers travelling to non-EU countries announced on 11 September 2020 on the aviation sector.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage to or from Great Britain. The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom will be able to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.
- Personal allowances will apply to passengers entering Great Britain from a destination outside of the United Kingdom, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales of non-excise goods and the VAT Retail Export Scheme will not be extended to passengers travelling to the EU, and will be withdrawn for all passengers.

The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales currently affects airports that fly to non-EU destinations. The extension of duty-free sales to EU bound passengers will be a significant boost to all airports in England, Scotland and Wales, including Gatwick and smaller regional airports which have not been able to offer duty-free before.

The Government also recognises the challenges the aviation sector is facing as it recovers from the impacts of Covid-19 and has supported the sector throughout the pandemic, and continues to do so, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

**■ Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[92634\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Department's news story Duty Free extended to the EU from January 2021, published on 11 September 2020, whether those new arrangements will apply to airports in Northern Ireland.

**Jesse Norman:**

Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage, arriving from or going overseas (passengers). The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

- Personal allowances will apply to passengers entering England, Scotland and Wales from a destination outside of the United Kingdom, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- Passengers travelling from England, Scotland and Wales to any destination outside the United Kingdom will be able to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.
- The VAT Retail Export Scheme in England, Scotland and Wales will not be extended to passengers travelling to the EU, and will be withdrawn for all passengers.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales for non-excise goods will be removed across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**■ Financial Institutions: Taxation****Dan Carden:**[\[93666\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2020 to Question 89824, whether his Department holds information collected by UK financial institutions to meet UK commitments under international agreements as set out in section 222 of the Finance Act 2013, the International Tax Compliance Regulations 2015, the International Tax Compliance (Amendment) Regulations 2015, the International Tax Compliance (Amendment) Regulations 2017 and the International Tax Compliance (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

**Dan Carden:**[\[93667\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 89825, which ministerial or non-ministerial Government Department holds data collected by UK financial institutions to meet UK commitments under international agreements as set out in section 222 of the Finance Act 2013, the International Tax Compliance Regulations 2015, the International Tax Compliance (Amendment) Regulations 2015, the International Tax Compliance (Amendment) Regulations 2017 and the International Tax Compliance (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

Information reported by UK financial institutions under the International Tax Compliance Regulations 2015 (as amended) is not held by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Department but by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

## ■ Gyms and Leisure: Coronavirus

**Paula Barker:**

[\[91185\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what further support he plans to provide to safeguard (a) public gyms, (b) leisure centres and (c) indoor sports courts due to restrictions in place during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors like public leisure. We are working intensively alongside the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport to understand the long-term challenges facing the sector.

The Treasury has already announced unprecedented support during this pandemic for individuals and businesses, to protect against the current economic climate; including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, bounce-back loans and a year-long business rates holiday for all eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Where eligible certain public leisure services may further have benefited from the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund; and the Discretionary Grant.

The Government has also provided a comprehensive package of support for councils to help with their response to Covid-19. Over £3.7bn in additional grant funding has been announced for councils in England, which can be used flexibly across all their services, including public gyms and leisure facilities. On 2nd July, the Government also announced an income guarantee scheme which will reimburse local councils for 75% of eligible irrecoverable income from sales, fees and charges, above 5% of planned income for 2020/21.

We will continue to monitor the impact of government support with regard to supporting public leisure as we respond to this pandemic.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Personal Care Services

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[\[93721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of self-employed workers in the beauty industry throughout (a) England, (b) Wales and (c) the UK who have applied for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The information is not held in the form requested. The beauty industry forms part of the "Other service activities" sector.

The number of individuals who have claimed a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant working in that sector are:

	1 <sup>ST</sup> SEISS GRANT (BY 31 <sup>ST</sup> JULY 2020)	2 <sup>ND</sup> SEISS GRANT (BY 31 <sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2020)
England	158,500	128,100
Wales	8,100	6,500
United Kingdom	188,000	152,000

These figures were taken from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme statistics published on 21 August and 18 September respectively.

### ■ Treasury: Carbon Emissions

**Paula Barker:**

[\[91176\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will place in the Library his Department's plan to reduce its carbon emissions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Detailed information on the steps the Treasury is taking to reduce our carbon emissions is contained in [Chapter 6 – Sustainability Report](#) of our most recently published Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19.

## WALES

### ■ Devolution: Wales

**Nia Griffith:**

[\[93558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his oral contribution of 16 September 2020, Official Report, column 296, if he will list the 70 new policy areas for which the Welsh Government will become responsible.

**Simon Hart:**

The Government published the Frameworks Analysis 2020 on 24 September. It describes 66 policy areas returning from the EU which intersect with the devolution settlement in Wales and can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/frameworks-analysis>

The Government's Frameworks Analysis published in April 2019, set out 70 policy areas which intersect with the devolution settlement in Wales. Since then, intergovernmental discussions on the Common Frameworks Programme have considered whether these policy areas should be merged to reflect the way in which frameworks will operate in practice. These changes have been agreed with the Welsh Government and result in 4 fewer policy areas in total. This does not change the total number of powers that will transfer to Welsh Ministers at the end of the Transition Period.

**■ United Kingdom Internal Market Bill: Wales****Nia Griffith:** [\[93557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, on how many occasions he has met with Welsh Government Ministers to discuss the UK Internal Market Bill.

**Simon Hart:**

I have regular discussions with Welsh Ministers on a range of issues, including the UK Internal Market Bill. Discussions between the two governments on the UK Internal Market proposals have taken place at Ministerial, official and special adviser level.

I have also engaged with Welsh businesses and their representative organisations on the Government's internal market proposals and have heard their broad support at first-hand. This was reflected in the response to the Government's Internal Market White Paper. The Government is keen to engage constructively with the Welsh Government as we take forward this vital legislation.

**■ Welsh Government****Nia Griffith:** [\[93559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the oral Answer of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales of 16 September 2020, Official Report, column 298, on the Future Relationship with EU, if he will list the occasions on which he has discussed preparations for the end of the UK-EU transition period with Welsh Ministers since 1 January 2020.

**Simon Hart:**

The UK Government has regular discussions with Welsh Ministers on preparations for the end of the Transition Period. The main ministerial forum for discussing preparedness is the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) which has met on five occasions this year. Preparedness is also discussed at quadrilateral meetings with Ministers from the Devolved Administrations chaired by my Rt hon Friend, the Paymaster General.

The UK Government has extensive, constant and wide-ranging engagement with the Welsh Government. This includes discussions on our Covid-19 response, and areas of joint work between our governments such as on city and growth deals, as well as preparations for the end of the Transition Period. Discussions are constructive and their frequency will increase further as we approach the end of the year.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Department for Work and Pensions: Apprentices****Robert Halfon:** [\[91619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 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.

**Mims Davies:**

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 Department for Work and Pensions has achieved 1.8% of the total staff employed within the department. The Department is looking to recruit more apprentices over the coming months, and current forecasts predict we could achieve the target in 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.

**■ Kickstart Scheme: Small Businesses****Conor McGinn:**[\[93617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) guidance and (b) support her Department is providing to gateway organisations to assist them in helping small and medium-sized businesses make effective use of the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

Guidance for Kickstart gateways and small employers has been provided through the Kickstart site and related gov.uk pages. Material is also available online to help employers advertise that they are active participants of Kickstart.

There has been active engagement with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to encourage their participation as Kickstart gateways and over 400 have stepped forward indicating their interest in the role. Their details have been published on gov.uk.

**■ Kickstart Scheme: St Helens North****Conor McGinn:**[\[93618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness among small and medium-sized businesses in St Helens North constituency of the different local and national gateway organisations helping to facilitate Kickstart scheme access.

**Mims Davies:**

The department has published a list of organisations willing to act as gateway organisations, nationally and by region, to better allow small and medium-sized employers to find a Kickstart gateway. This list is available, online, through the gov.uk pages.

Officials have held a number of discussions with representatives from the Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership, which represents businesses in the St Helens area. And local JobCentre Plus staff are also meeting with employers and organisations in their area. This engagement will promote and encourage participation in the Kickstart Scheme.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment

**Jessica Morden:**

**[90093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer on 8 September 2020 to Question 81700 on Personal Independence Payment, how many of the 7,260 claimants who died after registering a personal independence payment claim since April 2018 but prior to her Department making a decision on their claim applied under (a) Normal Rules and (b) Special Rules.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* 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 were being cleared in 4 working days on average in April 2020. This is compared to an average of 16 weeks for New Claims cleared under Normal Rules in April 2020, down by 62% from their peak of 42 weeks in July 2014.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department. There is no evidence in this data to suggest someone's reason for claiming PIP was the cause of their death and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise. People claim PIP for various reasons, the majority of which are non-life threatening.

Of the 7,260 claimants who died after registering a PIP claim but prior to a decision being made on their case between April 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 5,520 applied under (a) Normal Rules and 1,740 applied under (b) Special Rules.

**Notes:**

**Sources: PIP ADS, Customer Information System**

- These figures include new claims and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP reassessment claims.
- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- 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.
- Figures include registrations made from April 2018 – April 2020 and clearances made up to April 2020 (as recorded on the system at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020) and claimant deaths from April 2018 – April 2020 (as recorded on the system at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020) and may be subject to retrospection.
- The latest PIP Official Statistics, including data to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, were published on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020. We have provided figures here as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 for consistency with the original answer to PQ 81700.



- Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
- 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.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Ms Karen Buck:**

**[93509]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Information Commissioner's letter to her Department of 10 April 2019 which stated that explicit consent for universal credit was unduly restrictive, if she will make it her policy to (a) remove the requirement for explicit consent for universal credit and (b) enable representatives to speak on a client's behalf.

**Will Quince:**

The Universal Credit (UC) system is structured around an online personal account which contains all the information relevant to the claim. This includes claimants' bank account details, savings, capital, medical history, family relationships and address information, which means that we have a responsibility to ensure that a high level of security and protection is in place, and that we take all reasonable steps to protect our claimants and their data which includes ensuring that consent is explicitly given to share it.

As the amount of personal data available on UC is far greater than in the legacy benefit systems, any data breach has far reaching consequences for claimants, and so we need to balance consent against this risk. Therefore, a policy of explicit consent exists to help reduce the risk of fraud by ensuring that claimants' data is kept safe from unscrupulous organisations and individuals. The emphasis here is not to hinder people receiving support to help them make and manage their claim, but to make sure we protect claimants' personal data and other information.

Where explicit consent is needed it can be quickly given in different ways; over the phone or via the online journal, at any time during a UC claim. This is a far simpler and more straightforward process than in the legacy benefit systems. Once consent is given, we will work with claimants' representatives.

Following the Social Security Advisory Committee's report into consent in UC on 8 September 2020, the Department continues to consider how best to safeguard personal data moving forward, whilst allowing those claimants needing support from representatives to do so in a safe and secure manner.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ Asylum

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[92768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether asylum applicants are required to claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 24 September 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Chris Philp:**

~~We believe that those who reach safe countries should stay and claim asylum without delay, rather than make further, unnecessary and often dangerous journeys in order to claim asylum in a country of their own choosing.~~

~~Illegal migration from safe countries undermines our efforts to help those most in need – controlled resettlement via safe and legal routes is the best way to protect such people and disrupt the organised crime groups that exploit migrants and refugees.~~

~~To support these principles, the UK, the EU and other countries in the world employ legal procedures to return people to the safe countries through which they have passed. In the case of the UK, the majority of such returns presently take place under the Dublin Regulation, but from 1 January, such returns will take place according to our domestic rules.~~

~~Where the UK considers the claim of someone who has failed to take advantage of a reasonable opportunity to make an asylum claim or human rights claim while in a safe country, the law requires that behaviour to be taken into account as damaging to the claimant's credibility.~~

**We believe that those who reach safe countries should stay and claim asylum without delay, rather than make further, unnecessary and often dangerous journeys in order to claim asylum in a country of their own choosing.**

**Illegal migration from safe countries undermines our efforts to help those most in need - controlled resettlement direct from conflict zones via safe and legal routes is the best way to protect such people and disrupt the organised crime groups that exploit migrants and refugees.**

**To support these principles, the UK, the EU and other countries in the world employ legal procedures to return people to the safe countries through which they have passed. In the case of the UK, the majority of such returns presently take place under the Dublin Regulation, but from 1 January, such returns will take place according to our domestic rules.**

**Where the UK considers the claim of someone who has failed to take advantage of a reasonable opportunity to make an asylum claim or human rights claim while in a safe country, the law requires that behaviour to be taken into account as damaging to the claimant's credibility.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Covid-19 update

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):** [\[HCWS470\]](#)

As the Covid-19 incidence rate continues to rise across the country, a suite of local and national actions is required to break the trains of transmission and enable people to maintain a more normal way of life.

The Government will act swiftly and decisively to limit further spread, reduce disruption and contain local outbreaks. The Local Action Committee Command structure has been reviewing the latest evidence, working with local leaders and the scientific community to assess the data and whether further evidence is required.

The latest data shows a sharp increase in incidence rates per 100,000 population in Leeds, Blackpool, Wigan and Stockport, which are significantly above the national average.

As a result, we are making regulations which take effect from Saturday 26 September and will impose restrictions on inter-household mixing in private dwellings and gardens in Leeds, Stockport, Wigan and Blackpool. This is in line with measures seen elsewhere in the country, such as Leicester and the West Midlands. People who live in these areas will not be allowed to gather in a private dwelling or garden with any other household unless in a support bubble. People from anywhere else will also not be allowed to gather with another household in a private dwelling or garden in these areas.

We have also reviewed the position in Leicester, the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Bolton, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and the remaining local authorities in Greater Manchester and have decided to maintain their position on the watchlist as areas of intervention, as well as the current restrictions in these areas.

This will be difficult news for the people living in these areas, profoundly affecting their daily lives. These decisions are not taken lightly, and such measures will be kept under review and in place no longer than they are necessary. There are exemptions to these measures so people can still meet with those in their support bubble. There are other limited exemptions such as for work purposes or to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person. Through the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Protected Areas and Linked Childcare Households) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, people may create an exclusive childcare bubble for the purposes of informal childcare for children under 14, helping ease pressure on those living under local restrictions so they can get to work.

The guidance on GOV.UK covering these areas will also be amended to fully reflect these changes.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Homelessness Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for rough sleeping and housing (Kelly Tolhurst):** [\[HCWS469\]](#)

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018, is the most ambitious reform to homelessness legislation in decades and our manifesto committed to enforce the Act in full. It is a key lever for reducing homelessness as we seek to end rough sleeping within the lifetime of this Parliament.

The Act placed new duties on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to try to prevent and relieve a person's homelessness, and introduced a new duty on named public authorities to refer users of their service who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to their chosen local housing authority. For the first time, local authorities and other public bodies must work together to actively prevent homelessness for people at risk.

During the passage of the Homelessness Reduction Act through parliament, a commitment was made that a review of the Act would be undertaken within two years of commencement. This commitment was reaffirmed in the Rough Sleeping Strategy. This was delayed by COVID-19. However, today we are publishing this review. A copy will be deposited in the Library of the House and will be published on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/homelessness-reduction-act-2017-call-for-evidence>.

The review found that the Act has significantly strengthened England's homelessness safety net at the national and local level. The findings indicate positive change with more people being helped to prevent and relieve their homelessness than ever before, in particular single people who prior to the Act would have received much more limited support. Since the introduction of the Act, 365,000 single households (almost two thirds of the total number of households who were owed a prevention or relief duty), including 28,000 people with a history of rough sleeping and over 15,000 people who were rough sleeping at the time of the assessment, have been assessed as owed help to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

As you would expect for legislation in its infancy, there remain challenges to full and effective implementation. There are changes under the Act that will take a longer time to fully embed such as the development of the local homelessness workforce and engagement with public authorities under the duty to refer. The Government is committed to fully enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act and we will continue to work with the homelessness sector, local authorities and their partners to ensure the Act is working effectively for all involved. In 2020/21, the Government has provided an additional £63 million through the Homelessness Reduction Grant for local authorities to implement the Act. Taken together, the overall amount spent on rough sleeping and homelessness this year is over half a billion pounds.