



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 30 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 30 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	5	■ Music: Coronavirus	15
ATTORNEY GENERAL	5	■ Music: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	15
■ Criminal Proceedings	5	■ Musicians: Free Movement of People	16
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ Overseas Trade: USA	16
■ Age: Discrimination	5	■ Social Media: War Crimes	17
■ ARM: NVIDIA	6	■ Theatres: Coronavirus	17
■ British Patient Capital	6	■ Twitter: Racial Discrimination	17
■ Climate Change	7	EDUCATION	18
■ Companies: Venture Capital	7	■ Assessments	18
■ Energy: White Papers	8	■ Children in Care: Education	19
■ Equal Pay: Age	8	■ Children: Care Homes	20
■ Public Houses: Closures	9	■ Children: Dyscalculia	20
■ Remote Working: Minimum Wage	10	■ Children: Gay Conversion Therapy	20
DEFENCE	10	■ Department for Education: Civil Servants	21
■ Annington Homes	10	■ Educational Institutions: Protective Clothing	21
■ Fleet Solid Support Ships	12	■ Free School Meals: Coronavirus	22
■ Torture	12	■ GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments	23
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	13	■ Nurseries	23
■ ARM: NVIDIA	13	■ Nurseries: Non-domestic Rates	24
■ Arts Council	14		
■ Arts: Coronavirus	14		
■ Gambling: Video Games	14		
■ Internet: Fraud	15		

■ Overseas Students: Quarantine	25	■ Iran: Arms Trade	38
■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus	25	■ Middle East: Peace Negotiations	38
■ Pupil Premium	26	■ Nasrin Sotoudeh	38
■ Pupils: Counselling	26	■ Saudi Arabia: Detainees	39
■ Pupils: Finance	27	■ Sudan: Education	40
■ Sanitary Protection: Universities	28	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	40
■ Schools: Coronavirus	28	■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Internet	40
■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus	29	■ Asthma: Medical Treatments	40
■ Students: Coronavirus	30	■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	41
■ Supply Teachers: Coronavirus	31	■ Care Homes: Dementia	42
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	31	■ Care Homes: Disclosure of Information	42
■ Agriculture: Shrewsbury and Atcham	31	■ Care Homes: Palliative Care	43
■ Apples: Agriculture	31	■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	43
■ Environment Agency: Finance	32	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	43
■ Fisheries: Training	32	■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements	44
■ Fisheries: UK Trade with EU	33	■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists	44
■ Flood Control: Expenditure	33	■ Neurofibromatosis	45
■ Flood Control: Finance	34	■ NHS Trusts: Finance	46
■ Flood Control: Worcestershire	34	■ NHS: Racial Discrimination	46
■ Food: Labelling	34	■ Palliative Care	46
■ Heather Burning	35	■ Supported Housing: Coronavirus	47
■ Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities	35	■ Urgent Treatment Centres	47
■ Veterinary Services: Qualifications	36	HOME OFFICE	48
■ Washing Machines: Microplastics	37	■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus	48
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	37	■ Economic Crime Strategic Board	48
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	37	■ Emergency Calls: Hoaxes and False Alarms	49
		■ Fraud	49

■ Gangs: Young People	49	TREASURY	60
■ Members: Correspondence	50	■ Aerospace Industry and Aviation: Taxation	60
■ Offences against Children	50	■ ARM	61
■ Police: Pay	51	■ Arts: Coronavirus	61
■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes	52	■ Beer: Excise Duties	61
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	52	■ Beer: Small Businesses	62
■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	52	■ Community Care: Finance	62
■ Local Government Finance	53	■ Developing Countries: Debts	62
■ Planning Permission: Local Press	53	■ Duty Free Allowances	63
■ Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	54	■ Employment: Coronavirus	64
■ Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel	55	■ Evictions: Coronavirus	65
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	55	■ Job Support Scheme: Pre-school Education	66
■ EU External Trade: ACP Countries	55	■ Life Sciences	66
JUSTICE	56	■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus	66
■ Business: Fraud	56	■ Nuclear Decommissioning Authority: Redundancy Pay	67
■ Closed Material Procedures	56	■ Pensions: British Nationals Abroad	67
■ Marriage: Coronavirus	56	■ Science: Coronavirus	68
NORTHERN IRELAND	57	■ Service Industries: Coronavirus	68
■ Brexit: Northern Ireland	57	■ Treasury: Sustainable Development	69
■ Coronavirus: Northern Ireland	57	■ UK Government Investments	69
■ Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland	58	WALES	69
TRANSPORT	58	■ Procurement: Wales	69
■ Buses: Electric Vehicles	58	WORK AND PENSIONS	70
■ Buses: Fuels	58	■ Access to Work Programme	70
■ Electric Scooters: Pedestrians	59	■ Children: Poverty	71
■ Ministers: Codes of Practice	59	■ Employment and Support Allowance: Appeals	71
■ Railways: Franchising	60	■ Pension Funds: Science and Technology	72

■ Pension Wise: Coronavirus	73	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	77
WRITTEN STATEMENTS	74	■ The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 – Failure to Lay a Section 46 Report in respect of the Sanctions (EU Exit) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/843)	77
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	74	HOME OFFICE	79
■ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Obligations of Undertakings) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020	74	■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review Response	79
■ Update on Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry	75		
CABINET OFFICE	77		
■ Appointments to the Boundary Commission for Wales	77		

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Criminal Proceedings

Peter Kyle:

[\[95701\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what proportion of cases pursued by the Crown Prosecution Service resulted in unsuccessful outcomes due to victim issues in each quarter since the third quarter of the 2018-19 financial year.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains a central record of the outcomes of completed prosecutions, as a count of the number of defendants finalised, and collates the data collected by quarter. Each non-conviction (or 'unsuccessful') outcome is allocated a reason, indicating the principal reason the defendant was not convicted.

The table below shows the number and proportion of prosecution outcomes resulting in a non-conviction due to victim or complainant issues in each quarter from Q3 2018-19 (October to December 2018) to Q4 2019-20 (January to March 2020).

	18/19-Q3	18/19-Q4	19/20-Q1	19/20-Q2	19/20-Q3	19/20-Q4
Victim Issues	3,594	3,468	3,111	3,286	2,643	2,673
% Victim Issues	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%
Total Prosecution Outcomes	121,191	123,939	115,228	118,896	109,425	107,497

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Age: Discrimination

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[93529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps she has taken to help tackle (a) age-bias in recruitment and (b) ageism in the workplace.

Paul Scully:

The [Equality Act 2010](#) provides strong protection against direct and indirect age discrimination in employment and makes it unlawful for an employer or an

employment service provider such as a recruitment agency, to discriminate against any employee or job applicant because of their age. This applies both to when the employer is making arrangements to fill a job and in respect of anything done during the course of a person's employment. To be lawful, any differential treatment based on age must be objectively justified.

In order to tackle outdated perceptions about older workers, the Government has appointed Andy Briggs as Business Champion for Older Workers, to spearhead the Government's work to support employers to retain, retrain and recruit older workers. His team will actively promote the benefits of older workers to employers across England, both strategically and through the provision of practical advice.

■ ARM: NVIDIA

Daniel Zeichner: [\[93606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, on how many occasions he and his Department have had discussions with (a) Nvidia and (b) Arm on the sale of Arm from Softbank to Nvidia.

Paul Scully:

Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations on GOV.UK. Details for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

The latest published data covers January to March 2020. Data for April to June 2020 will be published in due course.

■ British Patient Capital

Chi Onwurah: [\[92649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average time from application to funding decision is for British Patient Capital.

Chi Onwurah: [\[92650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps British Patient Capital is taking to ensure that the venture capital funds it invests in are supporting UK businesses to reach their potential.

Chi Onwurah: [\[92653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps British Patient Capital is taking to ensure that the venture capital funds it invests in are supporting UK businesses to avoid premature sale.

Chi Onwurah: [\[92654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much money British Patient Capital has deployed by sector to date.

Paul Scully:

As part of the Patient Capital Review, the Government consulted on potential barriers to accessing finance and the means to overcome them. Following the review's conclusion in November 2017, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an action plan to unlock over £20 billion to finance growth in innovative firms over 10 years. The plan included additional resources for the British Business Bank, and the creation of its commercial subsidiary, British Patient Capital.

Established in 2018, British Patient Capital builds on over a decade of investing £1bn in venture and venture growth capital funds. Several of these funds are now major names in UK venture, and many of the British Patient Capital team bring with them the experience, knowledge and relationships gained working in predecessor programmes. These relationships and British Patient Capital's reputation allow it to see and take advantage of opportunities others may not. British Patient Capital predominantly invests as a Limited Partner investor.

At the end of the last financial year, British Patient Capital's portfolio consisted of 31 fund investments, with total commitments approaching £600m, making British Patient Capital the largest domestic investor in this asset class in the UK. Page 21 of British Patient Capital's Annual Report and Accounts 2019 provides a sectoral breakdown and is available here:

https://annualreport2019.britishpatientcapital.co.uk/assets/uploads/BPC_Annual_Report_2019.pdf.

■ Climate Change**Alan Brown:****[93621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer to of 21 May 2020 to Question 47349, what the definition of the target period of well ahead of COP26 is; and what progress he has made on submission of a Nationally Determined Contribution.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced at the UN Climate Action Roundtable on 24th September that the UK will co-host with the UN an event to mark the five-year anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement on 12th December 2020. This will provide an opportunity for all those who are ready to submit bold new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and transformational net zero targets to do so.

■ Companies: Venture Capital**Chi Onwurah:****[92648]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that innovative UK companies can access the scale-up capital from (a) pension funds and (b) other sources of funding that they need to grow in the UK.

Paul Scully:

Building on the success of our £20 billion Patient Capital action plan (announced at Autumn Budget 2017), the Government and regulators have brought forward measures to help ensure the UK's regulatory environment enables Defined Contribution pension schemes to invest as appropriate in innovative, growing companies. Key actions include:

- In March 2020, the Financial Conduct Authority updated their rules governing contract-based pensions investment in illiquid assets, which facilitate investment while ensuring effective consumer protection.
- In September 2020, DWP issued a consultation setting out new arrangements for calculating fees against the charge cap.
- Through the Asset Management Taskforce, the Treasury has been working closely with the industry to explore the feasibility of a long-term asset fund.
- A joint Oliver Wyman and British Business Bank report exploring the case for defined contribution (DC) pension scheme investment in venture capital and growth equity.

In addition, the British Business Bank works to unlock long-term patient finance. Since the Government's response to the 2017 Patient Capital Review, the British Business Bank (BBB) has launched the £2.5bn British Patient Capital (BPC) Programme and the £500mn Managed Funds programme to boost the amount of institutional capital, including from pensions funds, into UK's venture and growth capital markets and channel these funds towards innovative, high-growth businesses and scale-ups.

■ Energy: White Papers**Alan Brown:**[\[95690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the energy White Paper; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Energy White Paper remains a priority for BEIS and it will be published in the autumn.

■ Equal Pay: Age**Jim Shannon:**[\[93593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to reduce the pay gap between (a) young and (b) older people who are doing the same job.

Paul Scully:

For younger workers, the priority in those first years is to secure work and gain experience, and this has always been reflected in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate structure. Distinguishing between younger and older workers is not new:

there have been age-related rates in the NMW structure since its introduction in 1999.

Last year, the Government announced inflation-beating increases to the NMW rates for younger workers and apprentices of between 4.6% and 6.5%. The Government has also announced The Kickstart Scheme, a £2bn fund to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people.

In order to improve fairness for younger workers, the Government has pledged to lower the National Living Wage (NLW) age of eligibility to 23 by 2021 and 21 by 2024.

■ Public Houses: Closures

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[95651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of pubs that have closed in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England in each of the last 10 years.

Paul Scully:

The latest ONS data (as of 28 September 2020) shows the overall number of public houses and bars in Coventry North East, Coventry, the West Midlands and in England from 2010 to 2019. Business closures (VAT de-registrations) are not available at this level of industrial and geographical detail.

Number of Public House and Bar Local Units

DATE	COVENTRY NORTH EAST	COVENTRY	WEST MIDLANDS	ENGLAND
2010	45	145	3,990	37,775
2011	45	135	3,840	36,455
2012	40	125	3,780	35,900
2013	40	120	3,645	34,670
2014	35	115	3,595	34,255
2015	35	120	3,580	34,215
2016	35	115	3,515	33,585
2017	30	110	3,480	33,045
2018	35	110	3,435	32,960
2019	35	110	3,515	33,305

Source: ONS Business Counts

■ Remote Working: Minimum Wage

John Spellar:

[\[92629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that remote digital workers are being paid the National Minimum Wage.

Paul Scully:

Anyone who is deemed to be a “worker” is entitled to be paid at least the relevant National Minimum or Living Wage rate. This applies to all workers, including remote digital workers, who work, or ordinarily work, in the UK.

We are clear that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum or Living Wage should receive it and we will take action where employers have been found to be in breach of the law.

This Government continues to invest heavily in minimum wage compliance and enforcement, more than doubling the budget to £27.5 million for 2020/21, up from £13.2 million in 2015/16.

Any worker who feels that they have been underpaid can contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) helpline for confidential, impartial and free advice on 0300 123 1100 or at www.acas.org.uk. HM Revenue and Customs, which is responsible for enforcing minimum wage legislation, will consider every complaint it receives.

DEFENCE

■ Annington Homes

John Healey:

[\[95593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many leases with Annington Homes are due to be ended in the next 12 months; and if he will publish the locations of those properties.

Jeremy Quin:

To date, the Department has issued notices to Annington Homes to terminate the leases on 217 properties at seven locations in the next 12 months as shown in the following table:

MARHAM	41
Ripon	42
Ternhill	56
Warminster	24
Ilchester	44

MARHAM	41
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Biggin Hill	8
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Wrexham	2
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John Healey: [\[95594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many leases with Annington Homes his Department has ended in the last 12 months; and in what locations those leases were in place.

John Healey: [\[95595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, of the leases with Annington Homes that his Department ended in the last 12 months, how many were for homes of (a) military families (b) veterans.

Jeremy Quin:

In the period covering October 2019 to September 2020, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has terminated the leases on 364 properties owned by Annington Homes in nine locations as shown in the table below.

CANTERBURY	9
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Brampton, Cumbria	19
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RAF Wittering	20
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Ripon	8
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RAF Marham	80
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RAF Henlow	84
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North Luffenham	40
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Lydd	8
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Bordon	96
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Of the 364 Annington Homes property leases terminated in the last 12 months, 288 properties were empty. Of the remaining properties, 44 were let to Service families and 32 to civilians, who were all rehoused in other MOD properties in the local area. No records are held on whether any of the tenants were veterans.

John Healey: [\[95596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the criteria are for extending the notice period for tenants where leases with Annington Homes are terminated by his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

The terms of the Common Law Tenancy (CLT) agreement governing the leases stipulates 'two months' notice after the first four months occupancy'.

In respect of the 367 civilian sub-let tenants recently issued with termination notices, 17 have found alternative accommodation, and for all the remaining 350 tenants the Department has decided to extend the notice period to 12 months, expiring at the end of September 2021.

This extension of the notice period reflects the unique current circumstances faced by tenants.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships

Luke Pollard: [\[94539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to classify the new Fleet Solid Support ships as a warship suitable only for UK bids for their construction.

Stephen Morgan: [\[95740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's planned Fleet Solid Support Ships are classified by his Department as warships.

Stephen Morgan: [\[95741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's planned Fleet Solid Support Ships will be eligible for international tender.

Stephen Morgan: [\[95742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date he plans to announce the procurement timetable for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's planned Fleet Solid Support Ships.

Jeremy Quin:

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence said during Defence Oral Questions on Monday 21 September 2020, the procurement timetable for the warships will be announced in due course, after market testing has completed. We are open to the principle of international partners working alongside UK firms for the bid.

Attachments:

1. 20200921 - Fleet Solid Support Ships [Hansard Extract 21 September.docx]

■ Torture

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[93715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the proposed provisions of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill on the UK's international reputation for opposing torture.

Johnny Mercer:

The Government unreservedly condemns the use of torture and we remain fully committed to our obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, including the UN Convention Against Torture.

The Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill does nothing to undermine these obligations and does not prevent allegations of wrongdoing more than five years ago - including war crimes and torture - from being investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.

A decision on whether to prosecute for such criminal offences will continue to be for the independent prosecutor to make - and the Bill does not change this position.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **ARM: NVIDIA**

Daniel Zeichner: [93605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on how many occasions he and his Department have had discussions with (a) Nvidia and (b) Arm on the sale of Arm from Softbank to Nvidia.

Caroline Dinéage:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, on a variety of issues. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Daniel Zeichner: [95656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the national security implications of the Nvidia/Softbank Arm deal.

Daniel Zeichner: [95657]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on the acquisition of Arm by US company Nvidia.

Daniel Zeichner: [95658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what mechanism he will use to make any post-offer undertakings provided by Nvidia with regards to Arm legally binding.

Caroline Dinéage:

Ministers have regular meetings and discussions with their ministerial colleagues, on a range of issues. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

As you would expect, it would not be appropriate to comment on any national security concerns we may or may not have. However, we will be scrutinising the deal in close detail.

■ Arts Council

Rachael Maskell: [\[90179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has been made on implementing the Arts Council 10 Year Plan.

Caroline Dinenge:

The detail of how ACE will deliver the Let's Create strategy is set out through Delivery Plans, lasting for 3-4 years each. ACE was due to publish its Delivery Plan for 2020-23 in May, but this has been delayed due to the current crisis. A new timetable for publication has not yet been set. Given that Delivery Plans are shorter-term documents which set out how ACE will deliver the strategy, reflecting the priorities of the current government, ACE and DCMS are working closely to develop ACE's 2020-23 Delivery Plan and will publish in due course.

■ Arts: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher: [\[94445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of workers who have left the theatre, arts and creative sectors as a result of the effects of the covid-19 outbreak on those sectors; and what steps his Department is taking to help mitigate future skills and labour shortages in those sectors.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Government recognises the massive impact that the current pandemic is having on those working in the arts and cultural sectors. As a result of the grants and loans being made available through the £1.57bn Cultural Recovery Fund, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities. Each organisation that receives money will know how best to support their workforce.

To complement the Cultural Recovery Fund funding for organisations made available by Government, Arts Council England have announced £95m of additional support for individuals, including freelancers. This includes an additional £75m in project grants which will be focused on applications that maximise employment opportunities including those from under-represented groups.

■ Gambling: Video Games

Mr Richard Holden: [\[93703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing greater restrictions on loot boxes in video games.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government launched a call for evidence on loot boxes on 23 September 2020 to seek detailed information on the impact of loot boxes on players, particularly children and young people. The call for evidence will run until 22 November 2020 and will examine concerns that loot boxes may encourage gambling-like behaviour and lead to problem gambling, as well as examining the size and scale of the loot box market in the UK, and the impact of current voluntary and statutory protections.

The government stands ready to take action should the outcomes of the call for evidence support taking a new approach to ensure users, and particularly young people, are better protected.

Internet: Fraud**Yvonne Fovargue:**[\[95067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether illegal fraudulent and scam content will be included within the scope of forthcoming online harms legislation.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government is deeply concerned about the scale and growth of online fraud.

We have consulted widely on our world-leading online harms proposals. Further details about the new regulatory framework will be included in the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation, which will be published this year.

Music: Coronavirus**Tracy Brabin:**[\[92852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many applications have been received for the Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund; and how many of those applications were unsuccessful.

Caroline Dinenage:

236 eligible applications from grassroots music venues were submitted for the Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund. £3.36M was distributed to 136 successful applicants and 100 venues that applied did not receive funding.

Music: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Pete Wishart:**[\[94352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to support music businesses in the event that they cannot reopen when the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends.

Caroline Dinenage:

We appreciate that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the music sector. As you are aware, the Government has provided unprecedented

support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), the Bounceback Loan Scheme and business rates reliefs.

The Chancellor has now announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing SEISS and CJRS come to end. This support includes:

- the new Job Support Scheme;
- an extension to the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme;
- an extension of reduced VAT (from 20% to 5%) on concert tickets to March 2021; and
- further concessions on repayment terms, payment deferrals and application windows.

In addition, the Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This support package will benefit the music sector by providing support to venues and many other organisations to stay open and continue operating.

■ **Musicians: Free Movement of People**

Alison McGovern:

[\[91751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has in place to ensure that musicians working overseas are able to fulfill booked gigs in Europe after the transition period ends in January 2021.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS Ministers and officials continue to engage extensively with representatives from across the cultural sector, including with musicians and music sector representative bodies, on the impact of the end of the transition period on musicians working in EU countries.

Over the coming months, as the transition period concludes, and beyond we will maintain our close dialogue with the sector to assess the challenges and support the opportunities that will arise as we enter into to new trading relationships with Europe and the rest of the world.

■ **Overseas Trade: USA**

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[90151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport what exemptions the Government has sought from the US Office of Foreign Assets Control regulation in order to ensure that UK companies are guaranteed access to their own products.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has not sought exemptions from the US Office of Foreign Assets Control regime.

■ Social Media: War Crimes**Anthony Mangnall:**[\[94546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the report entitled Video Unavailable: Social Media Platforms Remove Evidence of War Crimes, published by Human Rights Watch in September 2020, what recent discussions he has had with social media companies on preserving evidence of war crimes.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including social media companies, on a variety of issues. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](#) website.

■ Theatres: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[89788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he is taking steps to ensure that local authorities support local theatres during the next phases of the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

This Government recognises how severely regional theatres, and the wider Arts sector, have been hit by the COVID-19 crisis.

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

In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government is providing local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, including £3.7bn of non-ring fenced grants. This direct financial support provided by the government is just part of a comprehensive package of support which includes cash flow measures as well as grants and business rates reliefs for businesses.

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

■ Twitter: Racial Discrimination**Chi Onwurah:**[\[96062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Twitter on (a) racial bias in its thumbnail algorithm and (b)

redress for people discriminated against by that algorithm; and what plans he has to tackle racial bias in (i) that algorithm and (ii) other algorithms.

Caroline Dinenege:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including Twitter, on a variety of issues, including their use of algorithms. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

EDUCATION

■ Assessments

Rachael Maskell:

[92825]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans for (a) GCSE, (b) BTEC and (c) A-level (i) exams and (ii) assessments to take place in 2021.

Nick Gibb:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, asked Ofqual in June to consider a short delay to the GCSE, AS and A level exam timetable for the Summer 2021 series. The Department is continuing to work with Ofqual, the exam boards, regulators in the devolved administrations, and groups representing schools, colleges and higher education to consider the best approach, which gives children and schools additional catch-up time but does not hold up progression. We recognise the importance of providing clarity as soon as possible for students, schools and colleges on the timing of exams in 2021, and an announcement will be made once it is appropriate to do so.

The Department has also been working with Ofqual regarding requirements for assessments and examinations for vocational and technical qualifications, which includes BTEC qualifications. Ofqual has also consulted and engaged with awarding organisations to agree revisions to its Extraordinary Regulatory Framework for vocational and technical qualifications (including BTECs) and its associated guidance on how awarding organisations might adapt assessments in 2020/21, including timetabling considerations.

Charlotte Nichols:

[93701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure exam fairness in the 2020-21 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

Ensuring fairness in exams in academic year 2020-21 is the priority. It is for this reason that we have said we expect the summer 2021 exam series to go ahead.

The Department has worked closely with the qualifications regulator, Ofqual, on ways to ensure the 2021 exam series supports catch up as well as complies with public health restrictions. Ofqual has consulted on measures to free up teaching time, as well as to include optionality in some of the most content heavy subjects at GCSE.

These adaptations have been developed to maximise teaching time without compromising the validity of the qualifications. We are also engaging with relevant stakeholders on the timing of examinations and the grading approach with fairness to students and upholding public confidence in qualifications as the overarching drivers. We are also working closely with Ofqual and the exam boards on contingency plans so all students have the opportunity to take exams and to receive a grade. There will be further announcements made before October half term.

■ Children in Care: Education

Cat Smith:

[94461]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the number of children in care who have participated in education (a) at school and (b) online since March 2020.

Vicky Ford:

The government is committed to ensuring that looked-after and previously looked-after children are supported to succeed in education. Being at an early years setting, school or college is vital to prevent vulnerable children from falling behind in their education, and as a protective factor from harm. Educational settings remained open to vulnerable children, including children in care, during the lockdown period. We expect educational providers, local authorities, social workers and other professionals to continue to work together to support families and pupils, including those in vulnerable groups, to return to schools, colleges and early years settings.

During lockdown, we prioritised vulnerable children and young people's attendance. This included raising vulnerable children and young people's attendance from around 5% in early April to over 25% by the end of June through consistent communications, guidance and local-level support, including working with schools and Virtual School Heads to encourage attendance. The department is continuing to publish data on attendance, including the attendance of vulnerable children, on a regular basis and the latest figures are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity. We have also invested over £100 million to support remote education and have delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets to children who would not otherwise have access. In the summer term, we provided over 50,000 4G wireless routers to local authorities and academy trusts for care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school, and disadvantaged children in year 10 who did not have internet connections to support remote education. We are now supplementing this support by making an initial 150,000 additional devices available in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions.

■ Children: Care Homes**Emma Hardy:** [\[94527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue updated covid-19 guidance to children's residential care homes.

Vicky Ford:

On Friday 25 September, we published updated COVID-19 guidance for children's social care services, which includes guidance on residential provision for children.

The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>.

■ Children: Dyscalculia**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[94494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's policy is on supporting children with dyscalculia; and what Government guidance is available on that policy.

Vicky Ford:

Our ambition is for every child, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life. We want all children and young people, no matter what their special educational need or disability (SEND), to be able to reach their full potential and receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life.

In line with the SEND Code of Practice, where a pupil is identified as having a SEND, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. A four-part cycle 'graduated approach' should begin. Through the graduated approach earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil is making good progress and securing good outcomes. It draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to match interventions to the SEND of children and young people. The SEND Code of Practice is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>.

■ Children: Gay Conversion Therapy**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[94503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effect of conversion therapy on children.

Vicky Ford:

The government has committed to end conversion therapy and is exploring both legislative and non-legislative action to end this abhorrent practice. These practices

degrade lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and can isolate them from their families, this is of course a particular concern for children and young people. Where these practices are not already unlawful, we will examine the best ways to prevent them being conducted, without sending them underground.

This work is led by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and they are engaging widely before bringing forward proposals. This includes discussions between officials at the GEO and the Department for Education. The GEO will set out next steps in due course to ensure that the actions taken by government are proportionate and effective.

■ Department for Education: Civil Servants

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[83714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that all civil servants are back at work at his Department.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[83715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of his civil service staff are back at work at his Department.

Nick Gibb:

Staff in the Department have been working remotely since the middle of March and have been focused on dealing with the challenges posed by COVID-19.

In recent months, the Department has been working to ensure all our buildings are COVID-secure and putting in place plans to welcome staff safely back to the office.

Phase 1 saw a small number of volunteer staff return to the larger offices in August. Phase 2 started on 1 September, opening up to 20% capacity across our seven largest offices. Phase 3 is being planned and will enable 30-40% of capacity to be opened up, including at the Department's smaller sites.

For the week commencing 14 September, approximately 13.5% of staff attended one of our offices. Since the Prime Minister announced a new series of measurements on Tuesday 22 September, the Department has advised staff to work from home where they can. Offices will remain open to support those colleagues without easy access to high quality home working facilities such as those in shared accommodation, and for new starters and colleagues earlier in their careers in need of more support. This is alongside a number of our colleagues who have continued to operate in their usual workplace throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, delivering vital public services.

■ Educational Institutions: Protective Clothing

Daisy Cooper: [\[93689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the veracity of World Health Organisation guidance on staff aged over-60 or vulnerable that medical grade masks should be provided for clinically vulnerable staff in schools and colleges.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's priority has been to get pupils and staff back to schools and colleges safely, which is why at each stage of our response to the COVID-19 outbreak we have listened to the latest medical and scientific advice. Staff who are clinically vulnerable whilst in schools and colleges should follow the sector specific measures in the Department's guidance to minimise the risks of transmission. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> and here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term>.

If staff with significant cumulative risk factors are concerned, we recommend that schools and colleges discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in their school or college. School and college leaders should try as far as practically possible to accommodate additional measures where appropriate.

The majority of staff in education settings will not require personal protective equipment (PPE) beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, which are set out clearly in the Department's guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>.

■ Free School Meals: Coronavirus**Marsha De Cordova:****[93677]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support children in receipt of free school meals in the event that their school is closed as a result of covid-19.

Vicky Ford:

As schools and their kitchens are now open, all children should be able to access a healthy, nutritious meal at school, free to those that are eligible for infant free school meals or benefit-related free school meals. If children are eligible for benefit-related free school meals but are self-isolating we expect catering providers to be in a strong position to support any eligible pupils through food parcels, be those daily or weekly. We have put guidance in place for schools on how they can support children in these circumstances, which is complemented by advice from the schools food trade organisation LACA, and Public Health England on what a good food parcel should comprise. Our latest guidance for schools is set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

If a school closes, we would expect its catering team to remain available to assist, and free school meal funding remains available to schools, as it has done throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. We encourage schools to work creatively with their food suppliers on these arrangements. We understand that parcels may not be feasible in all situations and, while this remains the preferred method, schools also have the freedom to make alternative local arrangements.

■ GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:

[\[95008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to address the concerns of schools who state that the Centre Assessed Grades at GCSE and A level allocated to them were fair and balanced in contrast to other schools where predicted grades were inflated and resulted in a skewing of the overall results.

Nick Gibb:

All centre assessment grades in England were signed off by head teachers or college principals who confirmed that they honestly and fairly represented the grades that these students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams as planned.

Following the release of A level results based on calculated grades, it became clear that there were far too many inconsistent and unfair outcomes for students. The Department agreed with Ofqual that grades for A levels and GCSEs should be awarded to students in England on the basis of students' centre assessment grades or their calculated grades, whichever was higher. The Department believes this to be the fairest approach in the exceptional circumstances of this year, to avoid some students in England receiving grades that did not reflect their prior performance.

There was scope for schools to appeal where they believed that there had been errors of process, and students could also raise complaints if they had evidence of bias or discrimination. Schools have also been able to enter candidates for the exceptional autumn series to sit exams if they remain dissatisfied with their result.

The approach taken in Northern Ireland this summer was a matter for the Northern Ireland government and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment Regulation.

■ Nurseries

Navendu Mishra:

[\[94576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure grant maintained nurseries remain an integral part of early years provision.

Vicky Ford:

Maintained nursery schools are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services, especially in disadvantaged areas. On 24 August, the government announced that up to £23 million of supplementary funding will be provided to local authorities, to enable them to continue protecting the funding of

maintained nursery schools during the summer term in 2021. This provides maintained nursery schools with certainty about funding for the 2020-21 academic year.

In addition, support has been provided for the whole early years sector during the COVID-19 outbreak, designed to help providers to remain sustainable. We have continued to fund local authorities for childcare this autumn term at the same levels as seen prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of whether fewer children are attending. If providers are open but caring for fewer children as a result of low demand, either from parents or due to public health reasons, they can continue to be funded for the autumn term at broadly the levels that they would have expected to see had there been no COVID-19 outbreak. Furthermore, along with other businesses, early years providers have also been able to access a comprehensive package of business support.

What happens to the funding of maintained nursery schools after the 2020-21 academic year will be determined by the next Comprehensive Spending Review in the context of our priorities across early years as a whole.

This government remains committed to the long-term funding of maintained nursery schools and any reform to the way they are funded will be accompanied by appropriate funding protections.

■ Nurseries: Non-domestic Rates

Tulip Siddiq:

[95709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of extending the business rates holiday for nurseries to 2021-22.

Vicky Ford:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and other ministers in the department, meet regularly with colleagues to discuss the department's agenda.

In March, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that childcare providers would be eligible for a business rates holiday for one year.

Guidance on this is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-nursery-childcare-discount-2020-to-2021-coronavirus-response-local-authority-guidance>.

Further guidance on business support grant funds is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-grant-funding-guidance-for-businesses>.

There are no current plans to further extend the business rates holiday, but we will continue to monitor the market.

■ Overseas Students: Quarantine

Jim Shannon:

[94423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that foreign students are quarantined upon entry to the UK; and who is responsible for overseeing that process.

Michelle Donelan:

We have worked closely with Universities UK and other sector representatives to ensure that international higher education students are welcomed to the UK and that their fellow students' health and wellbeing is being catered for. Those students travelling from countries not on our exemption list will need to self-isolate for 14 days. We expect these students to be supported by their chosen university as soon as they arrive in the country, if not before.

While it is for individuals to abide by all regulations, universities have a duty to ensure their students are safe and well looked after during the 14-day self-isolation period. The government has produced guidance on isolation for residential educational settings, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings>.

Universities UK have also produced bespoke guidance for universities on how to prepare for and care for students who are required to self-isolate on arrival in the UK. This guidance sets out the principles to consider in ensuring students are fully and properly supported throughout this period. We would encourage them to have regard for this guidance when planning for the arrival of international students who need to isolate. The guidance is available here: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2020/self-isolation-guidance.pdf>.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq:

[95708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on ensuring that early years providers can access support through the (a) Job Support Scheme and (b) other measures announced on 24 September 2020.

Vicky Ford:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and ministers at the department, meet regularly with colleagues to discuss the department's agenda.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 25 September 2020 to Question [95158](#).

On 24 September, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, outlined additional government support to provide certainty to businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19 across the UK. Further details of the Job Support Scheme

and extension of the Self Employment Income Support Scheme are available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-outlines-winter-economy-plan>.

■ Pupil Premium

Kate Green: **[95625]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that there is no reduction in the per pupil allocations of the Pupil Premium for each year of the 2019 Parliament.

Vicky Ford:

We are committed to levelling up opportunities to make sure everyone has a fair chance to realise their potential and no-one is left behind. The pupil premium furthers this objective by helping schools improve the academic attainment and wider outcomes of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Since the pupil premium was introduced in 2011, it has provided more than £18 billion of additional funding for schools and has played an important role in contributing to the narrowing of the disadvantaged attainment gaps at the ages of 11 and 16 years.

Pupil premium allocations for the 2020-21 academic year were published in June and the first quarterly instalments were paid out in June and July. Announcements on pupil premium funding for the 2021-22 academic year will follow later in the year, in line with the usual timetable. Announcements for future years will be made in due course.

■ Pupils: Counselling

Nickie Aiken: **[93684]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will (a) provide access to counselling for all children in secondary schools and (b) extend access to counselling in further education colleges.

Vicky Ford:

It is important for schools and colleges to have the freedom to decide what support to offer pupils based on their particular needs and drawing on an evidence base of effective practice. Our survey of mental health provision in schools and colleges in 2016 and 2017 found that 61% of schools and colleges (56% of primary schools, 84% of secondary schools and 93% of colleges) reported offering a counselling service for their pupils.

The department have published guidance on how to put in place effective school-based counselling, which schools can use to identify where further counselling support is appropriate for their pupils. The guidance is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

As children and young people return to school and college, staff need to be equipped to understand that some pupils may be experiencing feelings, such as anxiety, stress or low mood, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation, and how to respond.

From September, the government is investing £8 million to launch the new Wellbeing for Education Return training programme, which will provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and practical skills they need to support teachers, students and parents, to help improve how they respond to the emotional impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The programme is providing £8 million to local authorities to enable schools and colleges in England to have access to training during the autumn and spring terms, and expert advisers who will be able to support schools and colleges and can make links to available local authority provision, including counselling.

We have worked hard to ensure that all pupils and learners were able to return to a full high-quality education programme in September. Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package, with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020-21 academic year, is supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place.

In further education, the department has provided £5.4 million of competitive grant funding to certain colleges through the College Collaboration Fund. Five of the projects funded support student and staff mental health and wellbeing through online programmes and remote support.

Outside of school and college, access to mental health support has been more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. Leading mental health charities are being supported to deliver additional services through the £5 million Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. During Mental Health Awareness Week, the government also announced that a further £4.2 million will be awarded to mental health charities, including the Samaritans, Young Minds, and Bipolar UK.

All NHS mental health trusts have ensured that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. Public Health England and Health Education England have also developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

In the long-term, we remain committed to our joint green paper delivery programme with the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS England. This includes introducing new mental health support teams linked to schools and colleges, providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges, and testing approaches to faster access to NHS specialist support.

■ Pupils: Finance

Mr Richard Holden:

[93705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance the Government provides to local authorities required to provide support for children who live in their authority but attend school in a different local authority.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible children. A child is eligible if they are of compulsory school age, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than the statutory walking distance from their home. The statutory walking distance is 2 miles for children under the age of 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over. A child is also eligible if they live within the statutory walking distance but could not reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, or because the nature of the route means it would be unsafe for them to do so. There are additional entitlements to free home to school transport for those children who are eligible for free school meals, or if a parent they live with receives the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit.

The duty applies even if the school an eligible child attends is in the area of another local authority.

Sanitary Protection: Universities**Alberto Costa:**[\[89750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to work with the university sector to introduce free sanitary products on campuses.

Vicky Ford:

On 20 January 2020, the department launched a new scheme which makes free period products available for state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England. The scheme remained in operation during partial school and college closures, and these organisations are still able to order a range of period products and distribute them to learners.

Higher education providers such as universities are autonomous bodies, independent from the government. It is for each individual provider to make their own decisions about how best to support their students. However, many providers may choose to provide certain services to support inclusion.

Schools: Coronavirus**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[93673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support and resources he is providing to schools to allow children who have had a tracheostomy or require other aerosol generating procedures to return to school during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

As I set out in my letter of 2 September to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their families and carers and those who work to support them, we know that it is critical that all pupils and students can once again benefit from a full-time on-site education 5 days a week. There are a small number of children with complex needs that require aerosol generating procedures

(AGPs) to be undertaken where risks need to be carefully managed in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Schools, health, and local authority partners need to work together on how the current guidance applies in their setting and to the specific children they are working with to enable them to return to school safely. We have heard examples of good practice locally and are working with Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England to establish whether any changes to the guidance or further information about practice principles are needed.

It is important that schools communicate clearly with parents on progress towards supporting children who need AGPs to return to school safely and provide remote education, and support if they are unable to do so.

As part of their risk assessment, schools will need to consider measures so that specialists, therapists, clinicians, and other support staff for their pupils can continue to provide support that is needed. Schools should refer to the guidance for special schools, specialist colleges, local authorities and any other settings in managing the needs of children and young people with complex needs, such as AGPs. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

The government's guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), provides further support on preventing and controlling infection and contains a section on caring for children who need AGPs at Annex A. This guidance reflects advice from PHE and is updated as necessary to reflect current advice. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>.

■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[93674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to allocate additional ring-fenced funding in the Comprehensive Spending Review to support children with SEND to (a) catch up on lost learning and (b) receive the therapies and social care support they require.

Vicky Ford:

The department is currently working hard with HM Treasury as part of the Spending Review to understand what resources the education and children's social care sectors in England need over the coming years. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will set out the department's settlement when the Spending Review concludes.

In advance of the Spending Review, we have introduced a COVID-19 catch-up premium worth £650 million to support mainstream and special schools to make up

for lost teaching time. There is additional weighting for specialist settings, in recognition of the significantly higher per pupil costs they face. Headteachers will decide how this premium is spent, according to the needs of their pupils. Our expectation is that this funding will be spent on additional activities required to support children to catch up. We have also introduced a new £350 million National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils. This will increase access to high-quality education for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackling the attainment gap between them and their peers. This includes a £96 million fund for tuition for students aged between 16 and 19 years.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy: [\[94525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take to provide additional financial support to higher education students in response the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 outbreak will have on some students. Officials are working with the sector to continue to monitor the situation.

The government has already worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to provide hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Providers were able to use the funding, worth around £23 million per month for April to July this year and £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 starting from August, towards student hardship funds, including for the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support, as well as to support providers' access and participation plans.

Emma Hardy: [\[94526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, (a) how and (b) what steps he is taking to monitor changes in the level of drop-out rates among higher education students due to the covid-19 outbreak in the 2020-21 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

Data on students leaving their higher education studies and not continuing their studies following their year of entry are collected and published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

We have set up a Higher Education Task Force, involving representatives from across the government and the higher education sector. The taskforce meets weekly to explore the challenges currently facing the sector as it continues to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Where there is emerging evidence of increasing drop-out rates presented by or to the taskforce, its members will seek to understand and address the possible impact of COVID-19.

■ Supply Teachers: Coronavirus

Mr Richard Holden:

[93714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he is providing additional (a) financial and (b) other support to supply teachers who have been adversely affected by the closure of schools as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

State funded schools continued to receive their budgets as usual last academic year, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. This ensured that they were able to continue to pay their staff and meet their other regular financial commitments.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the guidance made clear that schools should continue to pay any directly hired staff, including supply staff, as normal.

Schools were also advised to support financially at-risk employment agencies, with whom they had existing agreements, to ensure these agencies could continue to pay their workers where assignments had been curtailed. Supply teachers employed by private agencies who were not on a live assignment, or who were unable to source new assignments, were able to access financial support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Now that schools are fully reopen for all pupils, we anticipate the demand for supply teachers to return to normal.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Shrewsbury and Atcham

Daniel Kawczynski:

[93560]

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

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 September 2020 to Question 90985.

[<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-16/90985>]

■ Apples: Agriculture

Jim Shannon:

[94427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what financial support his Department is providing to apple growers in response to reductions in demand from pubs and restaurants for their produce as a result of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Victoria Prentis:

Apple growers can access an unprecedented package of financial support options available, such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

On 24 September, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced updated terms to the financial support package, including extended loan application deadlines to 30 November, longer loan repayment times and further extensions to the grant scheme for the self-employed.

Environment Agency: Finance**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[95727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for the Environmental Agency.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency has the resources to deliver its statutory duties. It receives grant in aid from the Government plus charge income for its regulatory services. In 2019/20 the Environment Agency had a budget of £1.377 billion and in 2020/21 the Environment Agency's budget is £1.742 billion.

In the spring Budget the Chancellor announced record funding of £5.2 billion for flood defences between 2021 and 2027, offering better protection from flooding for 336,000 homes and non-residential properties. The Environment Agency also received £120 million for repairs following winter flooding.

Fisheries: Training**Anthony Mangnall:**[\[94549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support upskilling in the fishing sector.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra works with a range of organisations on supporting upskilling, including Seafish who provide opportunities such as skills and compliance training courses. Defra also strongly supports the 'Seafood 2040: A Strategic Framework for England' initiative, which aims to deliver a single cross-sector seafood training and skills plan. The purpose of this plan is to support businesses in the seafood supply chain to recruit and retain workers with suitable skills.

The Government has also committed to putting in place new funding after the end of the Transition Period comparable to the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund which will go towards funding skills training and supporting economic regeneration.

As skills policy is a devolved matter, the Northern Ireland Executive, Scottish Government and Welsh Government are responsible for taking forward actions in their jurisdictions on this policy area.

■ Fisheries: UK Trade with EU

Luke Pollard:

[93679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the UK applied to the EU for third country status on fisheries.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 September 2020 to Question 90242.

[<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-15/90242>]

■ Flood Control: Expenditure

Stephanie Peacock:

[95728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much the Environmental Agency has spent on flood defence measures in each year since 2010.

Rebecca Pow:

Expenditure on flood and coastal erosion risk management by the Environment Agency 2010/11 – 2018/19 can be found in table 2 (page 5) of the document available at the following link: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/funding-for-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-in-england.

Environment Agency spend taken from the above reference document is as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	EA RESOURCE (£M)	EA CAPITAL (£M)	TOTAL (£M)
2010/11	291.6	360.0	651.6
2011/12	287.8	260.7	548.5
2012/13	268.0	269.1	537.1
2012/14	250.6	315.3	565.9
2014/15	282.6	466.7	749.3
2015/16	274.5	390.7	638.2
2016/17	314.6	446.9	761.5
2017/18	339.2	403.1	742.3
2018/19	304.8	453.0	757.8

Figures for 2019/20 spend are still in the process of being audited and will be available in an updated document on the GOV.UK website soon.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[95729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimates the Environment Agency has made on funding needed for future flood risk mitigation.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency's [Long Term Investment Scenarios](#) for England estimate that an average spend of over £1 billion per year is needed on flood and coastal protection over the next 50 years. Investment at this level will avoid existing flood and coastal erosion risk increasing and illustrates the challenge of managing these risks in the face of climate change.

The estimated investment need refers to all sources of funding and not just central Government investment.

■ Flood Control: Worcestershire

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[94409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what payments have been made from the Flood Recovery Fund to farmers in (a) West Worcestershire and (b) Worcestershire.

Victoria Prentis:

The window for applications to the Farming Recovery Fund closed on 1 September 2020 and claims under successful applications can be submitted by farmers into spring 2021. Payments are made once the recovery work has been completed and claimed. All applications from the Worcestershire area have been from farmers in West Worcestershire.

To date, one agreement has been paid in full, totalling around £750. There are 35 successful applications, from which we expect to pay around £217,000. We have a further 19 applications, valued at around £300,000, in appraisal.

These figures will continue to change as projects move through their lifecycle.

■ Food: Labelling

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[94553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress the Government has made on undertaking a consultation on food labelling requirements relating to animal welfare standards.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has committed to a serious and rapid examination of what can be done through labelling to promote high standards and high welfare across the UK market. The consultation is currently being drafted for a planned launch at the end of the transition period.

■ Heather Burning

Olivia Blake: [\[95766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 September 2020 to Question 92945 on heather burning, how many site visits (a) his Department and (b) Natural England made to assess the environmental effect of moorland burning per year in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Reports of visits are held by Natural England in Site of Special Scientific Interest files. Most visits to assess sites are to carry out routine site condition assessments and not specifically related to moorland burning. Therefore, to obtain the requested data would require extensive records analysis and this would incur disproportionate costs.

■ Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

Luke Pollard: [\[95218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many times his Department has issued guidance to individual Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities since 2010.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra issued guidance notes to the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) in March 2011 describing how they should make a contribution to sustainable development and implement their statutory duties using evidence-based marine management and risk-based enforcement. Guidance was issued on annual planning and reporting obligations including success criteria and high-level objectives so that all IFCA's annual plans and annual reports have a common framework against which IFCAs can demonstrate performance.

To be exact, IFCAs have been issued with the following guidance which is published on GOV.UK:

- Guidance on the byelaw making powers and general offence under Part 6, Chapter 1, Sections 155 to 164 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009;
- Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development given in accordance with section 153 (4) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009;
- Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on Annual Planning and Reporting given in accordance with section 177 and section 178 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009;
- Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on evidence based marine management given in accordance with section 153 (3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009;

- Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on monitoring and evaluation, and measuring performance given in accordance with section 153 (3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009;

- Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on the establishment of a common enforcement framework given in accordance with section 153 (3) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

■ Veterinary Services: Qualifications

Tim Farron:

[\[95612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many veterinary surgeons hold the required qualifications to carry out export health certification by (a) type of qualification and (b) geographic area.

Victoria Prentis:

The number of Official Veterinarians (OVs) holding Official Control Qualifications (OCQs) for export certification are listed below. OCQs permit OVs to certify exports for specific commodities only but OVs may hold more than one OCQ. OVs may work across geographical boundaries. In addition, 1043 Food Competent Certifying Officers working in 153 different Local Authorities across Great Britain can certify some exports and therefore contribute towards certification capacity.

OCQ	ENGLAND	WALES	SCOTLAND	TOTAL
<i>EX – EXPORTS</i>				
<i>GENERAL*</i>	2004	189	295	2448
AX - Avian Exports	143	6	28	177
CA - Companion Animals	5971	447	610	7028
EQ - Equine Exports	422	14	11	447
GX - Germinal Products Exports	92	4	7	103
PX - Product Exports	970	118	149	1237
SX - Small Animal Exports	324	36	77	437
UX - Ungulate Exports	441	69	132	642

**This course is a prerequisite for the other exports courses and may be sufficient in cases where no further training is required (e.g. for the export of insects or live fish).*

■ **Washing Machines: Microplastics**

Andrew Griffith:

[92662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to make mesh filters in washing machines compulsory to prevent microbeads entering rivers and oceans.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government currently has no plans to require manufacturers to install mesh filters on new washing machines but is working with industry to encourage improved environmental outcomes and reduce water pollution. We will continue to assess new and emerging evidence and consider the need for legislation in the future if industry approaches are not successful.

With our world leading microbeads ban in place, we are exploring how other microplastic sources enter our marine environment. In 2018 we pledged £200,000 for scientists at the University of Plymouth to explore how microfibrils and tyre particles enter our waterways and oceans. The findings of their research include that particles released from vehicle tyres could be a significant and previously largely unrecorded source of microplastics in the marine environment ([GOV.UK press release](#)). The Government has also launched the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance to help address marine plastic pollution across the Commonwealth.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

John Spellar:

[92631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has made to support (a) effective refrigeration capacity and (b) refrigerated transport to enable other countries to operate effective vaccine programmes against covid-19.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to supporting rapid and equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. A multilateral response is needed to deliver effective vaccines at the speed and global scale needed to end the pandemic. FCDO is working with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF, and the World Health Organisation to ensure that countries have support to plan and prepare for vaccine introduction, including potential refrigeration needs for supply chains. These will be dependent on the characteristics of any successful COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The UK is leading international efforts to mobilise funding to support vaccine procurement and delivery for low and middle-income countries, including through a commitment of £48 million to the Gavi-managed COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC).

■ Iran: Arms Trade**Dr Jamie Wallis:** [\[93687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the upcoming expiry of the UN conventional arms embargo on Iran.

James Cleverly:

The UK has been clear that the scheduled expiry of the UN conventional arms embargo in October 2020 would have major implications for regional security and stability. The UK Government continue to engage regional partners, the US, and others, to find a solution to Iranian proliferation in the region, whilst upholding the authority and integrity of the UN Security Council. In the meantime, the EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions on Iran will remain in place until at least 2023. We will also continue to enforce sanctions regimes including those under UNSCRs 1540, 1701, and 2216 which prohibit the proliferation of weapons to Lebanese Hizballah and the Houthis in Yemen. The UK encourages all states to implement national export control best practice in support of these regimes.

■ Middle East: Peace Negotiations**Dr Jamie Wallis:** [\[93688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Israel-UAE and Israel-Bahrain peace agreements on stability in that region.

James Cleverly:

We warmly welcome the agreement between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. This is an historic step which sees the normalisation of relations between three great friends of the UK. 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. The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution and is strongly supportive of a regional approach to peace. We profoundly hope that this moment can be used as a step towards direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

■ Nasrin Sotoudeh**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[95098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart on the case of Nasrin Sotoudeh.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: The UK Government has repeatedly expressed its concern at Nasrin Sotoudeh's ongoing detention. This was most recently raised with the Iranian Ambassador on 22 September, when we handed over a letter from E3 Foreign Ministers about the human rights situation in Iran. On 25

September the UK also joined 46 other countries in calling for her release at the Human Rights Council. Iran's record on human rights is of serious and longstanding concern to the UK, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has designated it as one of its Human Rights Priority Countries. We regularly raise human rights with the Iranians at all levels and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

■ Saudi Arabia: Detainees

Alyn Smith:

[\[93681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Saudi counterpart on (a) Loujain al-Hathloul and (b) other women's rights campaigners who are on trial in Saudi Arabia.

James Cleverly:

We remain concerned about the continued detention of women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia. We have raised the detention cases, including Loujain al-Hathloul, at senior levels with the Saudi authorities. We regularly raise areas of concern with the Saudi authorities through Ministers, our Ambassador and Embassy in Riyadh. The UK, along with other embassies in Saudi Arabia, consistently attempt to attend the trials of women's rights defenders, and have been denied access since October 2018. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, calling for the release of women's rights defenders. Lord Ahmad raised the women's rights defenders during his call with Dr Awwad al-Awwad, the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, in June. The Foreign Secretary also raised their cases in March when he visited Riyadh.

Alyn Smith:

[\[93682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the detainment of human rights campaigners by Saudi authorities on the (a) UK-Saudi diplomatic relationship and (b) sale of British arms to that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK's relationship with Saudi Arabia is one of great importance, covering a broad range of UK national security and economic interests. Our close relationship with Saudi Arabia allows us to raise our concerns about human rights, including on human rights defenders, in private and in public. Saudi Arabia remains a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office human rights priority country. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Ahmad and I regularly discuss human rights concerns with the Saudi authorities, and the UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September noting our concerns in Saudi Arabia. The Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and assesses all export licences in accordance with strict licensing criteria. We will not issue any export licences where to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria.

■ Sudan: Education**Harriett Baldwin:** [\[94411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding he has allocated to support education in Sudan.

James Duddridge:

The UK is the largest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the largest education-specific multilateral, providing approximately 15% of its funds. GPE is providing a five-year grant to Sudan worth US\$62.62 million, which focuses on expanding access and improving the quality of basic education. Sudan has also received a US\$11 million GPE grant specifically for COVID-19 education response, which includes support for distance learning and enhanced water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. In addition, FCDO has allocated almost £1 million to the UN's Refugee Agency, UNHCR, to support their work on education in Sudan. UK support will help provide primary education to over 38,000 refugee children and construct two schools.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Internet****Jim Shannon:** [\[84243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of online A&E appointment slots to reduce the volume of people physically attending A&E units during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

NHS 111 is trialling a new programme to book appointments for patients before they attend urgent and emergency care services. The booking system will enable a better flow of patients into emergency departments and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. It has received broad support from the royal colleges and patient groups.

■ Asthma: Medical Treatments**Rachael Maskell:** [\[89771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 22 June 2020 to Questions 58768 and 58769, what assessment he has made of the effect of waiting times on patients awaiting (a) assessment and (b) treatment for severe asthma in order to understand potential regional variation; and what plans he has to reduce waiting lists for those patients.

Rachael Maskell: [\[89772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 58769, what assessment he has made of the reduction in

severe asthma patients beginning biologic therapies from January to March 2020; and what steps he is taking to increase uptake of those therapies to pre-covid-19 levels.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Chief Executive wrote to the National Health Service in July 2020 setting clear expectations about the need to accelerate the return to near-normal levels of non-COVID-19 health services, with target dates for both outpatient and inpatient services. Prior to this, all regions were tasked with restoring services which included developing COVID-19 safe pathways for all patients. Regions have access to local data and national data to assist in this process. Patients with severe asthma disease have been considered within these plans.

Further to this, NHS England's specialised services commissioners identified restoration of respiratory services as a priority within its portfolio of responsibilities and considered mitigations in the event of a further waves of the pandemic. NHS England and The Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme have produced guidance to support commissioners and hospitals in restoring specialist respiratory services following the first wave of the pandemic. The development of this guidance was led by specialists, and involved NHS England's clinical reference group, and the GIRFT clinical lead.

Further work is being undertaken to share best practice on providing care to people with severe asthma to ensure ongoing provision of high-quality care and to accelerate the initiation of biologics where required. A severe asthma toolkit has been developed and will be circulated to teams shortly.

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[90220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for the Government's strategy on tackling the covid-19 outbreak of recent trends in the number of care home residents testing positive for covid-19.

Helen Whately:

Testing in care homes is a crucial part of our strategy to help prevent and control outbreaks. We are continuing to prioritise Care Home Testing, and we are issuing more than 100,000 tests a day to care homes across the country prioritising high priority outbreak areas.

We have met our 7 September target of providing testing kits to all care homes for older people and people with dementia who have registered for regular retesting kits. In addition, all other care homes have been able to place orders for test kits from 31 August. Since they were eligible to apply for regular repeat testing on 31 August, 4,576 specialist homes in England have applied for tests.

Where an outbreak has been identified, we test all staff and residents as a priority, with all those who test negative being tested again four to seven days later. Any

home with a current outbreak can continue regular testing of staff and residents who have previously tested negative.

■ Care Homes: Dementia

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[93716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support care home residents who suffer from dementia.

Helen Whately:

Equipping the health and social care workforce with the skills they need is crucial for providing high quality care for those living with dementia. The requisite training needs are set out in The Dementia Training Standards Framework. Since 1 April 2015, newly appointed health care assistants and social care support workers, including those providing care to people with dementia, have been undergoing training as part of the national implementation of the Care Certificate. Since 2012, over one million care workers have completed the Care Certificate, or common induction standards. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have issued a range of guidance for care homes. In particular, The Social Care Institute for Excellence has published advice on COVID-19 and dementia in care homes in collaboration with NHS England and NHS Improvement (12 May 2020).

■ Care Homes: Disclosure of Information

Rachael Maskell: [\[86104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) relatives, (b) carers and (c) staff are able to raise concerns about concerns apparent in care home settings.

Helen Whately:

By law, all health and social care services are required to have complaints procedures. Anyone who has seen or experienced poor quality care has the right to complain to the organisation that provided or paid for the care. In addition, a crucial part of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) regulatory approach is to listen to the voices of relatives, carers and staff. The CQC encourages people to contact them by telephone, email or through their online 'Give Feedback on Care' web form. This allows the CQC to immediately respond to poor care, abuse and neglect. The CQC's inspectors routinely talk to Local Healthwatch and others who represent, or act on behalf of, people who use services. The CQC also encourages staff to speak up by following their own service-specific internal whistleblowing policies, as well as directing them to relevant whistleblowing helplines.

■ Care Homes: Palliative Care

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[90025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that Do Not Resuscitate instructions are not imposed on care homes in winter 2020-21.

Helen Whately:

The Department remains clear that the blanket application of do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation decisions (DNACPRs) is unacceptable and that standards and quality of care should be maintained even in pressurised circumstances. The Adult Social Care Winter Plan published on 18 September 2020 reiterates this.

Agreement to a DNACPR is an individual decision and should involve the person concerned or, where the person lacks capacity, their families, carers, guardians or other legally recognised advocates. We have been working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to take national action across a number of fronts and continue to work with stakeholders to understand what more we can do nationally, to stop inappropriate DNACPR decisions being made for individuals.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Sir George Howarth:

[\[90946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hospital laboratory staff were furloughed in each hospital trust in each month since March 2020.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold information in relation to whether National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts have furloughed staff. This information would be held by those employing organisations, not the Department.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Geraint Davies:

[\[76562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the precautionary principle is adhered to in his Department's guidance and preparations for (a) a potential second wave of coronavirus and (b) potential future pandemics.

Helen Whately:

The Government takes the precautionary principle into account but recognises it must be flexible. In planning for a potential second wave and future pandemics, the Government is taking the principle into account, alongside the available evidence in order to balance the risks between taking action or taking none.

To prepare the National Health Service for winter, the Government is providing an additional £3 billion of funding. This includes funding to allow the NHS to maintain the

Nightingale surge capacity and continue to use the extra hospital capacity available within the independent sector.

Effective local management of any outbreaks is the first line of protection against a second wave that might overwhelm the NHS. To support local authorities, we made £300 million available and they already have robust plans in place to respond to outbreaks.

NHS winter preparations include delivering a very significantly expanded seasonal flu vaccination programme for priority groups.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Catherine West:

[\[94505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effects on (a) the use of European Health Insurance Cards and (b) other medical insurance for British citizens at the end of the transition period in the event of (i) an agreement being reached and (ii) no agreement being reached with the EU.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: From January 2021, those people protected under the Withdrawal Agreement will continue to be entitled to a United Kingdom issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). For those not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, their EHIC may not be valid from January 2021.

For people not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, the future of reciprocal healthcare arrangements between the UK and European Union are subject to negotiations.

The UK has set out that it is ready to work to establish practical, reciprocal healthcare provisions with the EU for the future. The UK is open to arrangements that provide healthcare cover for tourists, short-term business visitors and service providers. These arrangements could benefit UK nationals and EU citizens travelling or moving between the UK.

The Department will be continuing to monitor the impact of future reciprocal healthcare arrangements including on the groups which may be most affected.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[94443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England have been waiting for more than one year for hospital treatment.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: The number of incomplete referral-to-treatment pathways where a patient is waiting over 52 weeks for treatment in

Coventry, the West Midlands and England is provided in the following table. Data provided is for July 2020 and is the most recent available:

PROVIDER/NATIONAL	NUMBER WAITING OVER 52 WEEKS
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust	475
Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust	142
Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust	177
The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	24
University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust	1,599
Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust	293
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust	9
George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust	473
South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust	49
Wye Valley NHS Trust	262
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	481
England	83,203

NHS England collects and publishes referral-to-treatment performance data at both a local and national level. Data is available via the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/>

■ Neurofibromatosis

Greg Smith:

[87683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to improve awareness amongst nurses and general practitioners of neurofibromatosis Type 1.

Helen Whately:

Over the last few years, there has been an increase in the awareness of neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1) through more training of doctors and nurses, particularly through community paediatricians, development of guidelines with nurses, and links with genetic and neurology clinics. Professionals at the expert NF1 centres, based in Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and Manchester University

NHS Foundation Trust, including consultants and specialist nurses also undertake the usual range of activities to raise awareness of the condition by giving lectures and presentations, attending conferences and publishing papers in medical journals.

■ NHS Trusts: Finance

Karin Smyth: [\[93612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to inform NHS trusts of their financial settlement for the remainder of 2020-21, for the period October 2020 to March 2021.

Edward Argar:

On 15 September 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to integrated care system and sustainability and transformation partnership leaders to confirm their individual system financial envelopes for the period October 2020 to March 2021. Each system will identify how to deploy the envelopes to the individual organisations in the system including National Health Service trusts. NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided detail at organisation level, which systems may wish to use as a starting point for their work, but all organisations are expected to work together to ensure resources are used to deliver maximum benefit for patients and value for taxpayers across the system as a whole.

■ NHS: Racial Discrimination

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[76923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 July 2020 to Question 62691 on NHS: Racial Discrimination, what steps his Department has taken to protect NHS staff who have been assessed as high risk.

Helen Whately:

A number of resources are available to support organisations to protect staff who have been assessed as being at high risk. These include a risk reduction framework published by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine published in response to COVID-19 and the adult social care risk reduction framework. Additionally, NHS Employers have published guidance on how to enhance existing risk assessments. Risk is best managed at a local level in discussion between individuals and their managers.

There are a range of steps employers are taking to mitigate risk. These include stringent infection prevention and control assurance such as prioritisation of fit testing, rota adjustments, and regular health checks including COVID-19 testing. Personal protective equipment is also being procured, which addresses concerns about fit for some groups of people.

■ Palliative Care

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[91013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has issued instructions to medical staff in hospitals and care homes to apply Do Not

Resuscitate notices on (a) patients over the age of 45 years and (b) all disabled people regardless of their age suspected of having covid-19.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have confirmed that there has never been an instruction or directive issued by the National Health Service to put in place blanket do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation decisions for any group of people in hospitals or care homes.

■ **Supported Housing: Coronavirus**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[84978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to enable residents in supported living facilities for disabled people to be tested for covid-19.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: We are rolling out testing of all staff and residents in extra care and supported living settings which meet certain risk-based criteria. These settings must be a closed community with substantial facilities shared between multiple people and, where most residents receive personal care (rather than help with cooking, cleaning and shopping).

If a supported living or extra care setting has a suspected outbreak, they should contact their local health protection team immediately who will undertake an initial risk assessment, provide advice on outbreak management and decide what testing is needed.

Our testing policy is based on clinical advice on relative priorities and available testing capacity and our testing policies continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

■ **Urgent Treatment Centres**

Jim Shannon:

[\[89703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to consult with (a) patient groups and (b) the public on plans to introduce a call before you walk system into urgent care in all NHS regions by December 2020.

Jim Shannon:

[\[89704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to include the needs of people living with cancer in plans to roll out a booking system for emergency departments in England in winter 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

NHS 111 is trialling a new programme to book appointments for patients before they attend urgent and emergency care services. It has received broad support from the royal colleges and patient groups.

The booking system will enable a better flow of patients into emergency departments and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, which is vitally important to vulnerable and immunosuppressed patients, such as those living with cancer.

HOME OFFICE

■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[95655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in levels of domestic abuse during the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

Victoria Atkins:

We are in regular contact with the police, Domestic Abuse Commissioner and domestic abuse organisations to assess and monitor any trends in domestic abuse during the Covid-19 outbreak. However, some data is provisional and not readily available in relation to individual cities or regional areas.

Domestic abuse helplines have reported significant increases in calls during lockdown, although it is not possible to determine the incidence of domestic abuse from these. Some of the increases may for example be due to increased awareness or enquiries from friends or families. What is critical is that victims are able to reach out for advice or support if they need to do so. The government has provided support to domestic abuse organisations to help ensure that this continues to be the case.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) May, June and July 2020 releases of demands on the police forces in England and Wales during the Covid-19 pandemic indicated a rise in domestic abuse incidents during the lockdown period compared to the same periods last year using provisional data from police forces. In the four weeks up to 5 July this was 6% higher than the same period last year.

■ Economic Crime Strategic Board

Dan Carden:

[\[95737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the need to increase independent input on the Economic Crime Strategic Board (ECSB).

Kit Malthouse:

The Economic Crime Strategic Board (ECSB) includes independent representatives, with senior private sector members from the legal, accountancy, insurance, estate agency and financial sectors.

In the July 2019 Economic Crime Plan, published by this Board, the need for additional engagement and input from non-government organisations, academia, victims' groups and civil society was specifically noted under Action 52.

To meet this action, Government has worked with civil society organisations including Global Witness, Transparency International, Fraud Advisory Panel, Spotlight on Corruption and RUSI to form the independently run Civil Society Organisations Steering Group, which has met twice since its inception in March 2020. This body provides a mechanism for civil society organisations to comment on the delivery of the Economic Crime Plan and work of the ECSB and proactively raise issues which it thinks the ECSB should consider.

■ Emergency Calls: Hoaxes and False Alarms

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[95103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the (a) number of hoax calls made to the emergency services and (b) prosecution rate for those hoax calls.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not collect this data. Law enforcement, including the handling of 999 calls is an operational matter for the police. It is for elected Police Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to decide how best to manage their communications and response to the public and gather the data they need to inform those decisions.

■ Fraud

Daisy Cooper:

[\[95750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of police resources have been allocated to fraud investigation in each of the last 10 years.

James Brokenshire:

The decision on whether to investigate a crime rests solely with the police who will take into account available resources, the likely eventual outcome and other criminal cases already under investigation. Additionally, it is the duty of Police and Crime Commissioners to set out their priorities for their police force in a Police and Crime Plan. As such, there is no ringfenced resource allocated to fraud investigation alone, and for this reason, the data requested is not held centrally.

The department is committed to tackling the devastating impact of fraud. Setting police budgets for 2020 to 2021, this government has prioritised £150 million to tackle serious and organised crime. This includes substantial investment on fraud.

■ Gangs: Young People

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[95652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the steps schools can take to reduce the number of young people joining gangs.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government's Manifesto set out ambitious reforms to tackle crime, including gang activity, serious violence, and county lines. The Prime Minister and Home Secretary are driving a united government response with a new cross-Whitehall Crime and Justice Task Force to ensure we use every lever at our disposal to fight crime, with clear commitments and Ministerial representation from the Department for Education.

In addition:

- Relationships, Sex and Health Education will become compulsory from September. Schools can build on the core content to address local issues such as gang activity and recognising and avoiding exploitative relationships.
- DfE are implementing the recommendations from the Children in Need review so that vulnerable children are seen, and their needs are recognised. At the PM's Hidden Harms Summit (May 2020), DfE announced nearly £10m for the What Works for Children's Social Care to test a range of interventions to improve the outcomes for children in need, including £6.5 million to expand and further test embedding social workers in more than 150 schools in 21 local authorities.

Schools, AP and colleges are also working closely with Violence Reduction Units around the country to prevent involvement in serious violence and gang activity.

Members: Correspondence**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[52655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood of 17 February 2020 on the regulation of shisha lounges, reference SK/Badley/SM17964.

Kit Malthouse:

A reply was sent by the Minister for Crime and Policing on 25 September 2020.

Offences against Children**Alexander Stafford:**[\[93724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle child sexual abuse (a) at home and (b) online.

Victoria Atkins:

Nothing is more important than the safety of our children. The UK Government is committed to stamping out all forms of child sexual abuse (CSA) and continuing to be a global leader in tackling CSA.

Last year we announced an additional £30 million to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation and abuse, both at home and online. This includes £9.86 million to the National Crime Agency to improve its ability to tackle perpetrators seeking to offend against children via the Dark Web and £3.36 million to further improve our understanding and tackle all aspects of the CSA threat.

To increase support for children at risk at home, we have made funding £1.6 million available for the NSPCC to expand and promote its national helpline for adults with concerns about a child, and disseminate safeguarding messaging to key community partners to raise awareness of how and where they can raise concerns and seek advice about children's safety and wellbeing. Recognising the unprecedented challenge posed by COVID-19 and restrictions to prevent its spread, Prime Minister hosted a cross-Government Hidden Harms Virtual Summit, to bring together key decisions makers and agree actions to combat hidden crimes, including child sexual abuse. We have also worked across government, with law enforcement and the third sector to provide information and advice about CSA to schools, parents, carers and children and to ensure that victims and survivors continue to have access to the greatest possible support.

Alongside this we continue to work to prevent offending by supporting the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's Stop It Now! campaign, signposting people concerned about their own behaviour, or the behaviour of others, towards effective and anonymous help provided by the Foundation.

We have also driven work to respond to the risk of children coming to harm online by educating teachers as well as parents and carers and ensuring they have access to the support they need to help keep children safe online, as well as by galvanising industry and international partners to formally launch the set of Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Work to tackle online harms, including CSA online, remains a top Government Priority. Protecting children from abuse and exploitation online as a central component of the Online Harms White Paper, which sets out a range of ambitious legislative and non-legislative measures to tackle online harms and set clear responsibilities for tech companies to keep UK citizens safe online, especially children.

The Government is committed to publishing a first of its kind national strategy on tackling child sexual abuse, outlining our long-term ambition to drive a whole system response to tackle this heinous crime in all its forms.

■ **Police: Pay**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[93636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on police force finances of funding the long-term salaries of new police officers.

Kit Malthouse:

The police funding settlement for 2020/21 sets out the biggest increase in funding for the policing system since 2010. The Government will provide a total police funding settlement of up to £15.2 billion in 2020/21, which is an increase of up to £1.1 billion compared to 2019/20. As part of this, police forces will receive £700 million to recruit up to 6,000 additional officers by the end of March 2021.

Further to this, there is a set range for starting salaries for new officers and the decision on which pay point to appoint is a decision for each force for which this generous funding package will effectively allow the force to meet.

■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes

Jim Shannon:

[\[93596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to provide practical support to people discovered in modern slavery rings by police sting operations.

Victoria Atkins:

Police forces are designated First Responders and are trained to spot the signs of modern slavery, and on how to refer potential victims into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM); the UK's system for identifying and supporting victims.

Support to victims of modern slavery is a devolved matter. In England and Wales, potential victims of modern slavery are supported through a mixture of mainstream support and specialist support through the Victim Care Contract delivered by The Salvation Army. In Northern Ireland, Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid and Migrant Help are the two specialist support providers, contracted by the Department of Justice.

In terms of the practical support on offer, potential adult victims can receive accommodation, financial support, assistance in accessing mental and physical health care including counselling, and access to legal support, compensation and protective measures in court to enable them to support the Government in prosecuting their exploiters. This support provision is replicated in Northern Ireland.

A new Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract was awarded in June for services across England and Wales. During the first year of the contract the government will work with law enforcement partners to test the set-up and operation of a new provision of Places of Safety. The service is aimed at the most vulnerable victims rescued from exploitation and will provide them with a safe place for up to three working days to consider if they want to enter the NRM.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Steve Reed:

[\[95650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much of the £60 million announced by his Department to support the enforcement of covid-19 regulations in local areas will be allocated to local authorities.

Luke Hall:

On 22 September the Government announced that £60 million of further funding would be provided to the police and local authorities to support a range of additional

enforcement and compliance activity. Further information will be set out in due course.

■ Local Government Finance

Stephen McPartland:

[\[93582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authority accountable officers have indicated to his Department that they may have to consider issuing Section 114 notices in the financial year 2020-21.

Luke Hall:

The department recognises the additional costs and pressures councils are facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout, the department has encouraged local authorities with concerns about unmanageable financial pressures to approach MHCLG in the first instance. If the Section 151 officer of a council judges that the council is unable to set or maintain a balanced budget, they must consider the possibility of a Section 114 notice. As is appropriate, that judgement rests with individual authorities.

The department has worked closely with CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) who have temporarily amended their guidance on the use of Section 114 notices to further encourage local authorities to make contact with the department in the first instance to advise it of any immediate financial concerns. In advance of a decision from the relevant Section 151 officer, the department would treat such conversations as confidential in nature.

The department is continuing to engage closely with local government to understand what further support is needed to help them manage the impact of the pandemic. This includes monthly data collection, as well as a proactive approach to speaking with individual councils at an early stage.

■ Planning Permission: Local Press

Julian Sturdy:

[\[94408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the removal of the statutory requirement to publicise planning applications in local newspapers on (a) transparency and (b) local accountability in the planning process.

Christopher Pincher:

Local planning authorities are required to publicise certain types of planning applications in local newspapers as set out in Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. In the response to coronavirus restrictions, temporary regulations have been introduced to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications. Local planning authorities now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirement for, for instance, newspaper publicity, 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.

■ Reopening High Streets Safely Fund

Steve Reed: [\[95647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much has been allocated to local authorities from the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to date.

Luke Hall:

We have provided £50 million to councils across England to help them ensure that high streets are able to safely reopen during the pandemic. The funding is coming from the European Regional Development Fund and has been allocated to all local authorities in England with responsibility for managing high streets (314). The amounts available to each local authority is based on the size of their populations. A minimum grant of £30,000 has been set to ensure those areas with very low populations do not get nominal amounts of funding. The full list of allocations was published on 29 May and can be found in Annex A of the Fund Guidance.

Steve Reed: [\[95648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have received money from the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to date.

Luke Hall:

Local authorities are reimbursed for eligible expenditure incurred in arrears once a Reopening High Streets Safely Fund contract has been agreed. This occurs through a quarterly payment cycle with the first one commencing in October.

Local authorities have been able to deliver activities supported by the fund from 1 June 2020. The funding allocated will be made available until 31 March 2021.

However, we would expect funding to be spent before then, as the focus is to develop a safe trading environment for companies and consumers as quickly as possible.

Steve Reed: [\[95649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have applied for funding from the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to date.

Luke Hall:

The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund has been allocated to all local authorities in England with responsibility for managing high streets (314). Local Authorities have until 31 March 2021 to spend their allocation. The full list of allocations was published on 29 May and can be found in Annex A of the Fund Guidance.

■ Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel

Neil Coyle:

[\[93603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2020 to Question 91059 on the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel, how many times the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel has met in the last 12 months.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 25 September 2020]: The Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel last met in June. Owing to the General Election and COVID-19 related pressures, this was the only panel held in the last 12 months.

Ministers and officials have had numerous meetings with panel members over the last 12 months. We are committed to continuing regular conversations and following through on actions taken.

We are scheduling another meeting of the panel, which will take place before the end of the year

This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping to before the end of this Parliament and will continue to update Advisory Panel members on progress.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ EU External Trade: ACP Countries

Gareth Thomas:

[\[93505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department made of the EU-ACP European Partnership Agreements before completing continuity trade agreements with countries that took part in the EU-ACP European Partnership Agreement; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government is seeking to secure continuity with our African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners, as part of our work to provide as much certainty as possible to businesses and consumers. As such, any new bilateral agreements with ACP partners will replicate, as far as possible, the effects of the current EU trade agreements.

Economic Partnership Agreements have been shown to have a positive effect on two-way trade flows, development and production for both Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and non-LDCs. These range from creating new business, trade and investment opportunities, to good new jobs, with protections for farmers and producers.

JUSTICE**■ Business: Fraud**

Dan Carden: [\[95735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department will publish a response to its corporate liability for economic crime: call for evidence consultation, which closed on 31 March 2017.

Chris Philp:

The Government is still considering the case for reforming the law on corporate criminal liability for economic crime but expects to publish a response to the Call for Evidence shortly.

■ Closed Material Procedures

Mr David Lammy: [\[93511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to appoint a reviewer of closed material procedures.

Mr David Lammy: [\[93512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to confirm a reviewer of closed material procedures in post.

Mr David Lammy: [\[93513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has implemented the review of Closed Material Procedures in accordance with the statutory duty under the Justice and Security Act 2013.

Mr David Lammy: [\[93515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 4 April 2019 to Question 240976, whether his Department made an announcement in relation to a review of the operation of sections 6 to 11 of the Justice and Security Act 2013.

Alex Chalk:

I note the Hon. Member's interest and indeed that of other Members in this matter, and would seek to provide assurances that discussions are taking place on establishing the statutory review, which will be brought forward as soon as possible.

■ Marriage: Coronavirus

Mr Richard Holden: [\[93706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans the Government has to extend the marriage licence during the covid-19 outbreak.

Alex Chalk:

We understand the frustration couples who have had to postpone their wedding or civil partnership must be feeling.

The requirement to solemnize a marriage within twelve months of giving notice to marry is set out in primary legislation, which does not provide for extending this period. It would require primary legislation to change this. In the meantime, the fees charged by local authorities for giving notice can be reduced, waived or refunded on compassionate grounds or in cases of hardship. It is for each local authority to determine when this can be applied.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Brexit: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna: [\[906641\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on preparations for the end of the transition period.

Mr Robin Walker:

Northern Ireland Ministers and officials continue to engage regularly with the Northern Ireland Executive as we get on with delivering the Protocol and preparing for the end of the transition period.

The Devolved Administrations are critical partners and our engagement is intended to enhance understanding of approach and ensure appropriate planning.

In addition, the Northern Ireland Executive attends meetings of the Joint Committee and Specialised Committees on Protocol implementation and are represented at our meetings of the Business Engagement Forum.

■ **Coronavirus: Northern Ireland**

Stuart Anderson: [\[906639\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on a UK-wide approach to tackling covid-19.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is in regular contact with the First and Deputy First Minister for Northern Ireland.

The Government and devolved administrations continue to work closely together to ensure a coordinated approach across the United Kingdom, such as the four nations approach to PPE and the National Testing Initiative.

Each devolved nation has its own unique set of circumstances and it is only right that devolved nations take the approach that is right for them at the right time.

■ Duty Free Allowances: Northern Ireland**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[906670\]](#)

If he will make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on ensuring that the extension of duty free arrangements to the EU from January 2021 includes Northern Ireland airports.

Mr Robin Walker:

I regularly speak to Treasury Ministers to discuss opportunities for the economy in Northern Ireland. The Government continues to work through the implications of the Northern Ireland Protocol and the unique situation it creates for VAT and excise. Guidance will be provided on how the Protocol will work, including for duty-free goods ahead of the transition period.

TRANSPORT**■ Buses: Electric Vehicles****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[93524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the economic viability of electric buses.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government will use the £50 million All-Electric Bus Town pilot to put in place new infrastructure and work with local authorities to understand what can be achieved when there is a real commitment to move all buses in a place to electric zero emission. This is to better recognise the challenges of running a wholly electric bus fleet and obtain better insight into the impact that an electric fleet can have on running costs for bus operators.

The £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for regions outside London will include investment for at least 4,000 British built new zero emission buses, which may include electric buses.

■ Buses: Fuels**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[93523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of buses running public routes in the UK are using (a) diesel and (b) petrol engines.

Rachel Maclean:

Data on the fuel type used by buses running public routes in the UK is not available. However, at the end of 2019, for all licensed buses & coaches (including minibuses) in the UK, (a) 97% used diesel engines and (b) 2% used petrol engines.

■ Electric Scooters: Pedestrians

Jim Shannon:

[\[93594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his strategy is on preventing e-scooters from adversely affecting pedestrians on footpaths.

Rachel Maclean:

In May the Government announced that trials of rental e-scooters would be brought forward to support local areas in the green restart of local travel and to build evidence about this new form of transport to inform longer term policy. In trial areas, rental e-scooters will not be allowed to be ridden on pavements as it is a long-established principle that vehicles are not permitted on the pavement, with the exception of mobility scooters. All e-scooter operators provide training – both via apps and in person – to instruct users of the rules and the potential consequences if caught committing an offence, which include fines of up to £300, up to 6 points being put on the user's licence, as well as confiscation of the vehicle. Operators are also using geofencing technology where necessary to create 'no ride zones'.

Jim Shannon:

[\[93595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what regulations are in place to prevent e-scooters from causing an obstruction to pedestrians; and whether anti-social behaviour regulations can be applied to the misuse of e-scooters.

Rachel Maclean:

In May the Government announced that trials of rental e-scooters would be brought forward to support local areas in the green restart of local travel and to build evidence about this new form of transport to inform longer term policy. In trial areas, rental e-scooters will not be allowed to be ridden on pavements as it is a long established principle that vehicles are not permitted on the pavement, with the exception of mobility scooters. E-scooters continue to fall within the statutory definition of a motor vehicle. As such, users must have a driver licence, for example, and the police have powers to enforce the full range of motoring offences, such as dangerous driving and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Police also have powers to fine users up to £600 and to place up to 6 points on a licence if, for example, a user is riding an e-scooter carelessly, and can confiscate the vehicle if the user is committing an offence. It would be a matter for the local police to determine whether anti-social behaviour offences were also applicable to any particular incident.

■ Ministers: Codes of Practice

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[93662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of levels of compliance by Ministers of his Department with the Ministerial Code.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Paragraph 1.6 of the Ministerial Code sets out that "Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the Code and for justifying their actions and conduct to Parliament and the public."

■ **Railways: Franchising****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[93663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason he announced changes to his policy on rail franchising first to the media; what advice he (a) asked for and (b) received on the compliance of that decision with section 9.1 of the Ministerial Code; what assessment he has made of the compliance of that decision with that code; whether he noted the point of order and response from the Deputy Speaker of 21 September, Official Report, column 641, on the matter; and whether he plans to make future policy announcements first to Parliament when the House is sitting.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The announcement of Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements was commercially sensitive and it was therefore appropriate to publish the decision at 7am when markets opened. As the Deputy Speaker noted in response to the Point of Order My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Transport updated the House with a Written Ministerial Statement later the same day.

TREASURY■ **Aerospace Industry and Aviation: Taxation****Gavin Newlands:**[\[95116\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the change in tax revenues originating from aviation and aerospace-related activities in (a) 2020-21 and (b) the next three financial years.

Kemi Badenoch:

Forecasts of future receipts are produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) on a regular basis as part of their Economic and Fiscal Outlook series. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has asked the OBR to prepare an economic and fiscal forecast to be published in November.

Air Passenger Duty (APD) is the UK's principal tax on the aviation sector. The OBR's Fiscal Sustainability Report, published in July, has estimated APD receipts over the next five financial years under various scenarios. Under the central scenario, the OBR estimated that APD would raise: £1.3bn in 2020-21; £3.7bn in 2021-22; £3.8bn in 2022-23; £3.9bn in 2023-24 and; £4.1bn on 2024-25. The report acknowledges that these figures are "hugely uncertain".

■ ARM**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[93607\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on how many occasions he and his Department have had discussions with (a) Nvidia and (b) Arm on the sale of Arm from Softbank to Nvidia.

Kemi Badenoch:

Neither the Chancellor nor HM Treasury have held discussions with Nvidia or Arm on the sale of Arm from Softbank to Nvidia. The Government recognises the vital role ARM plays in the UK's tech sector and its contribution to the economy.

The Government monitors acquisitions and mergers closely. We will be scrutinising the Arm deal in close detail to understand the implications for the UK, and if further action is required.

■ Arts: Coronavirus**Gareth Thomas:**[\[93507\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on support for businesses operating in the creative industries supply chain which do not qualify for the £1.57 billion support package for cultural and heritage organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the disruptive impact of necessary actions to combat Covid-19 on sectors such as the creative industries. The £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will provide a lifeline to cultural and creative organisations of international, national and regional importance. The Government has announced unprecedented support for businesses across the economy during the pandemic. This includes Business Interruption Loans and Bounce Back Loans, and a reduction in VAT until March 2021 which will reduce the cost of admission to concerts, theatres, exhibitions and similar events. In addition, the Government has announced the Job Support Scheme to protect viable jobs in businesses which are facing lower demand over the winter months due to Covid-19.

■ Beer: Excise Duties**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[95003\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of a reduction in Beer Duty on small and medium sized brewers in West Yorkshire.

Kemi Badenoch:

No such specific assessment has been made. The Government froze beer duty at the most recent Budget, and five of the six Budgets before that, in order to support consumers and brewers. Beer duty is now at its lowest level for over 25 years in real terms.

Stephen Morgan: [\[95739\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of flattening the taper down of Small Brewers Duty Relief on the development of small brewers.

Kemi Badenoch:

As announced in July, the Government will seek to smoothen the taper for Small Brewers Relief. A technical consultation, which will look at the best manner of doing so, will be launched later this Autumn.

■ **Beer: Small Businesses****Owen Thompson:** [\[95147\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information his Department holds on the number of small breweries at each level of production in hectolitres (a) 0-1000, (b) 1001-2000, (c) 2001-3000, (d) 3001-4000, (e) 4001-5000, (f) 5001-6000, (g) 6001-7000, (h) 7001-8000, (i) 8001-9000, (j) 9001-10,000 and (k) above 10,000.

Owen Thompson: [\[95148\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the production costs of small brewers in the UK at each level of production in hectolitres (a) 0-1000, (b) 1001-2000, (c) 2001-3000, (d) 3001-4000, (e) 4001-5000, (f) 5001-6000, (g) 6001-7000, (h) 7001-8000, (i) 8001-9000, (j) 9001-10,000 and (k) above 10,000.

Kemi Badenoch:

Further information about small breweries will be published with the technical consultation on Small Brewers Relief this Autumn.

■ **Community Care: Finance****Abena Opong-Asare:** [\[94587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide ring fenced funding in the Comprehensive Spending Review for community social care services.

Steve Barclay:

Decisions on Local Government spending beyond 2020-21 will be taken as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which will be published in the autumn.

■ **Developing Countries: Debts****Dan Carden:** [\[95736\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with (a) his international counterparts, (b) global financial institutions and (c) private creditors on developing a debt relief plan for low-income countries.

John Glen:

The UK is strongly supportive of work to safeguard debt transparency and sustainability in low-income countries. In April 2020 the G20 and Paris Club of official

creditors announced a historic joint Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) for low income countries. The DSSI has supported 43 countries which have requested suspensions by freeing up \$5 billion in fiscal space to fund their COVID-19 responses. Given the depth of liquidity needs in these countries, the UK supports an extension of the DSSI into 2021.

Given the significant pre-existing debt vulnerabilities in many low income countries, in some cases further debt relief will be required after the DSSI. This should be on a case-by-case basis in the context of an IMF programme to ensure it is tailored to need, with equitable burden sharing among all official and private creditors.

Last week the Chancellor met with his G7 counterparts to discuss the possibility of both an extension of the DSSI and a future Common Framework for debt relief between the G20 and Paris Club. A joint statement detailing this discussion is available on the US Treasury website. Discussions in the G20 are ongoing, and there is regular engagement with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank Group, and other Multilateral Development Banks. The Paris Club is coordinating closely with the Institute of International Finance, as the primary membership group for private creditors to low income sovereigns

■ Duty Free Allowances

Gavin Newlands: [\[95113\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department had with representatives of the aviation industry regarding tax-free sales at UK airports to non-EU nationals after the closure of his Department's consultation that matter.

Gavin Newlands: [\[95114\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on employment levels of the proposed ending in January 2021 of tax-free sales in airports to travellers to non-EU countries.

Gavin Newlands: [\[95115\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the change in tax revenues as a result of the proposed ending of tax-free sales at airports to travellers to non-EU destinations.

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 Government published a consultation which ran from 11 March to 20 May. During this time the Government held a number of virtual meetings with stakeholders to hear their views and received 73 responses to the consultation. The Government has also continued to meet and discuss with key stakeholders following the announcement of these policies.

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 Glasgow Airport and smaller regional airports which have not been able to offer duty-free before.

The final costing will be subject to scrutiny by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility and will be set out at the next forecast.

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

■ Employment: Coronavirus

John Redwood:

[\[94318\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is planning to take to help cover employment costs for businesses in the hospitality, tourism, sport and entertainment sectors affected by required closures and social distancing rules due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on businesses and sectors like hospitality, tourism, sport and entertainment across the UK.

We are introducing a new Job Support Scheme from 1 November. Employees must work a minimum of 33% of their normal hours, and in return, will receive at least 77% of their salary. For every hour not worked, the government and the employer will each pay one third of their remaining salary up to a cap of £697.92. Large businesses will be required to demonstrate that their turnover has suffered as a result of COVID-19.

The Government has provided unprecedented support for individuals and businesses during the pandemic, and on 24 September the Government announced additional

support measures as part of the Winter Economy Plan. In addition to the new Jobs Support Scheme, the Winter Economy Plan includes measures such as:

- The SEISS Grant Extension, which provides additional taxable grant funding to self-employed individuals who are currently eligible for the SEISS and are actively continuing to trade, but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19;
- An extension to the temporary VAT cut for hospitality and tourism businesses to March 2021;
- An extension to the deadline for new applications to four of the COVID-19 loan schemes to 30 November; and
- Help for businesses in repaying loans from Government-backed schemes through the Pay as you Grow scheme and allowing lenders to extend the terms of CBILS loans to up to 10 years.

Earlier this month, the Government also announced the Local Lockdown Grant Fund (now called the Local Restrictions Support Grants), to enable Local Authorities in England to provide business properties which are required to shut due to nationally-imposed local lockdowns with grants of up to £1,500 for each three week closure period.

We will continue to monitor the impact of government support with regard to supporting public services, businesses, individuals, and sectors such as hospitality, tourism, sport and entertainment as we respond to this pandemic.

■ Evictions: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[\[94382\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to provide one-off funding of £270 million to (a) support and (b) extend tenancies for people at risk of homelessness due to eviction during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support for tenants, and we will continue to monitor closely the impacts of Covid19 for renters. This included increasing the local housing allowance rate to the 30th percentile, providing nearly £1bn of additional support for private renters claiming Universal Credit or Housing Benefit in 2020/21.

We also introduced a stay on possession proceedings to ensure no one needed to be concerned about the threat of eviction over the summer. Now that courts are hearing possession hearings again, in addition to steps led by the Judiciary to prioritise the most serious cases, the Government has increased notice periods to six months in all but the most egregious cases. This means that renters now served notice can stay in their homes over winter, with more time to find alternative support or accommodation. There will also be no enforcement of evictions in areas of local lockdown or over the Christmas period in England and Wales.

■ Job Support Scheme: Pre-school Education

Tulip Siddiq: [\[95706\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether early years providers will be able to use the Job Support Scheme announced on 24 September 2020 if those providers also receive early entitlement funding through local authorities.

Steve Barclay:

As the Chancellor said when announcing the scheme on 24th September, we will be publishing full guidance on the Job Support Scheme in due course; this will include detail on who is eligible to access the scheme.

■ Life Sciences

Chi Onwurah: [\[92651\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Life Sciences Investment Programme is planned to be launched; and whether he plans to increase that programme's budget in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Kemi Badenoch:

The UK has an extremely competitive life sciences industry, and the Government is committed to building on the success of this sector by ensuring that life sciences firms can secure the finance they need to grow.

The Spring Budget provided the British Business Bank with £200m for a dedicated Life Sciences Investment Programme, which will enable the Bank to finance equity investments into the UK's most innovative health technology and life sciences firms over the next five years. This is expected to attract approximately £400m of additional private investment, which will allow these companies to grow and ensure the UK remains a world-leader in life sciences innovation.

The Budget promised that the Life Sciences Investment Programme would launch within a year, and the Government remains on track to honour that commitment. The programme will support large-scale venture growth funds investing in the life sciences, and is an important step in making the UK the best place for businesses to access the long-term finance that they need to scale up. It builds on the 10-year Patient Capital action plan, announced at Budget 2017, to unlock over £20 billion investment in innovative firms.

No decisions have been taken on any further allocations to the Life Sciences Investment Programme beyond the £200m already committed.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [\[95707\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the business rates holiday for (a) businesses in retail, leisure and hospitality and (b) nurseries to 2021-22.

Jesse Norman:

As part of the Government's package to support businesses affected by coronavirus, the Government has provided a business rates holiday for eligible properties in retail, hospitality and leisure, worth £10 billion.

As set out in the Call for Evidence for the fundamental review of business rates, the Government anticipates setting out preliminary conclusions from the review on the most pressing areas, including reliefs, in the Autumn, ahead of final conclusions in Spring 2021.

■ Nuclear Decommissioning Authority: Redundancy Pay**David Mundell:**[\[95602\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether people working in nuclear decommissioning for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will be exempt from the provisions of the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020.

Steve Barclay:

The Office for National Statistics classifies the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority as public sector and therefore it is appropriate that they are in scope of the cap.

However, we recognise that the function of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is time-limited. Therefore, all employees are covered by a mandatory waiver. This means employees whose employment is terminated as a result of the decommissioning programme and for a reason which amounts to redundancy can receive, without seeking ministerial approval, certain pension related payments above the 95K threshold.

This was agreed between HM Treasury, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Unions and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority in 2017.

This ensures the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority can continue to effectively fulfil their function and employees receive suitable remuneration for the important work they do.

■ Pensions: British Nationals Abroad**Sir Roger Gale:**[\[95584\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make provision to ensure that UK citizens resident in the remaining EU 27 countries are able to have British Civil Service and other state pensions paid into overseas bank accounts.

Steve Barclay:

The Civil Service pension scheme offers the facility for members to have their pension paid into a foreign bank account. The amount received by overseas members is their pension entitlement in pounds sterling converted to the local currency using business exchange rates at the time the payment is made.

The UK state pension will continue to be paid worldwide following our departure from the EU, either into a bank in a pensioner's country of residence or a bank or building society in the UK.

■ Science: Coronavirus

Derek Twigg: [\[94336\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the financial support required to help ensure that Science and Discovery Centres do not close permanently as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Chancellor receives frequent updates on the economy to ensure that he is sighted on developments across all sectors. These include science and discovery centres.

Science and Innovation is a priority for this government which is why in June we announced a support package for universities with a range of measures to protect our excellent institutions from the impact of coronavirus.

We will continue to monitor the impact of the restrictions necessary to curb the spread of Covid-19 on businesses and the economy and the need for further support.

■ Service Industries: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell: [\[95020\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he is providing for the (a) events, (b) hospitality and (c) nightlife industries which are unable to reopen as a result of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on businesses and sectors like events, hospitality and nightlife industries across the UK. We are working intensively alongside the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to understand the long-term challenges facing these sectors.

The Government has announced unprecedented support for businesses and individuals during the pandemic, including those in events, hospitality and entertainment industries. This includes the deferral of VAT payments, a yearlong business rates holiday for eligible businesses, a range of government-backed and guaranteed loan schemes, the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund, and the Discretionary Grant.

Additionally, many events are able to reopen at a small scale with social distancing measures, and nightclubs may consider repurposing as bars or restaurants in order to reopen.

While we will not be able to protect every single job or save every single business we will continue to monitor the impact of government support with regard to supporting

public services, businesses, individuals, and sectors such as events, hospitality and nightlife industries as we respond to this pandemic.

■ Treasury: Sustainable Development

Paula Barker:

[\[95245\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to consult with (a) recognised trade unions and (b) HMRC on environmental sustainability issues at his Department.

Kemi Badenoch:

The UK is a world leader in tackling climate change, becoming the first major economy in the world to legislate to end its contribution to global warming by 2050.

The Treasury has a robust process for assessing the impact of spending decisions on achieving our environmental goals. Our world-leading Green Book mandates the consideration of climate and environmental impacts in spending.

Under the policy partnership between HMT and HMRC the two departments collaborate closely on areas of tax policy, including where this relates to the environment. We also engage regularly with a wide range of stakeholders outside the Government on these issues.

■ UK Government Investments

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[95601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to Question 86572, Answered on 24 September, whether the list of UKGI register of interests is publicly accessible.

John Glen:

UKGI's register of declared interests of its staff and non-executive directors is not publicly accessible. UKGI's website and annual report and accounts contains short biographies of its non-executive directors which includes disclosure of significant external appointments.

WALES

■ Procurement: Wales

Stephen Crabb:

[\[94376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the legislative competence of Welsh Government to issue procurement advice notes regarding foreign countries.

Stephen Crabb:

[\[94377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the implementation of the Procurement Advice Note on public bodies divesting from foreign countries.

Simon Hart:

Procurement undertaken by devolved Welsh authorities is a devolved matter and it is therefore the responsibility of the Welsh Government to provide procurement advice in respect of these authorities. In doing so it should ensure compliance with domestic law and should not erect barriers to trade by excluding some of the world's largest companies from bidding for contracts with devolved bodies in Wales.

I have not discussed the implementation of the Procurement Advice Note on public bodies with Welsh Government.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Access to Work Programme****Wendy Chamberlain:****[95225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have received Access to Work grants in each of the last five years.

Justin Tomlinson:

The 2019/20 Access to Work statistics show that over 43,000 people with disabilities and health conditions are receiving tailored and flexible support to do their job.

During this period Access to Work has continued to expand its reach to underrepresented groups including those with Mental Health conditions, seeing the highest ever number of people approved for support: up 95% on the previous year.

Full details of Access to Work expenditure is published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/915547/access-to-work-statistics-april-2007-to-march-2020-tables.ods

Wendy Chamberlain:**[95226]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to promote the Access to Work grant scheme.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Access to Work grant scheme has recently been extended in response to the Coronavirus outbreak, and now includes support for working from home, travel costs where public transport cannot be used, and for personal protective equipment. We're currently delivering a communications plan to promote the extended flexible Access to Work offer and aim to reach disabled people through various communications channels. We've very recently promoted the flexible offer through national DWP/Local JCP social media channels, through a proactive press release, and amongst key stakeholders through newsletters and articles. In addition to these channels, we will continue to communicate through our Disability Confident employer network (18k+ employers), to our employer partnership and job centre plus teams to promote the Access to Work grant scheme available throughout the coronavirus outbreak. We'll be monitoring the requirement for future communications to promote Access to Work

dependent on the demand for grants. This will be ongoing throughout the remainder of this year and into 2021.

■ Children: Poverty

Kate Green:

[\[95624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Action for Children's report, Childhood during coronavirus: protecting children from the effects of poverty, published in September 2020, what plans she has to implement a UK-wide child poverty strategy.

Will Quince:

Our recent focus has been on supporting people financially during these unprecedented times. We have injected more than £9 billion into the welfare system in response to Covid-19, increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by up to £1,040 for this financial year. Our overall ambition is unchanged. We plan to tackle child poverty through our welfare system which works with the labour market to encourage parents to move into, and progress in work, wherever possible.

Our approach is based on clear evidence that work, particularly where it is full-time, substantially reduces the risks of poverty. The most recent data showed that there was only a 3% chance of children being in absolute poverty (before housing costs) if both parents worked full-time, compared with 47% where one or more parents in a couple was in part-time work. To support economic recovery, the Chancellor recently announced a £30 billion Plan for Jobs to protect, support and create jobs.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Appeals

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[95151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of time taken was for her Department to undertake a mandatory reconsideration of its decision to refuse employment and support allowance in each year since 2013.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statistics on Employment and Support Allowance Work Capability Assessment (WCA) Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) clearance times by reason for raising an MR are published quarterly and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

The relevant table is: ESA Work Capability Assessments – Mandatory Reconsideration Clearances – Table 4, Median Clearance Times by Date of Decision.

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The MR average clearance times is derived using calendar days by calculating the median of the time taken from the date the Benefit Centre (BC) has decided the MR

to be valid, having considered any new information, until the date the decision is cleared by the decision maker at the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT).

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[95152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether (a) she or (b) the Minister of State for Disabled People authorised her Department's decision to contest Mr Connor's legal challenge against its policy of withholding payment of employment and support allowance while it determines a request for mandatory reconsideration of that benefit.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[95153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the High Court judgment in the case of Connor v SSWP, if she will take steps to ensure that people who have requested a mandatory reconsideration of her Department's decision to refuse their claim for employment and support allowance (ESA) are paid the assessment rate of ESA while they await the outcome of that mandatory reconsideration.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department for Work and Pensions has not appealed against the High Court judgment in the case of Connor v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and is in the process of implementing the judgment. Claimants who are entitled to ESA payment pending appeal will no longer need to pursue a mandatory reconsideration before lodging an appeal at the First-tier Tribunal.

As with all such challenges against a departmental policy, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is the Respondent.

■ Pension Funds: Science and Technology

Chi Onwurah: [\[92652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of changes to the fee cap proposed in her Department's consultation entitled Improving outcomes for members of defined contribution pension schemes on the ability of pension funds to invest in venture capital-backed science and technology businesses.

Guy Opperman:

The Government is ambitious about investment in science and technology which is why we issued our Consultation this month

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/defined-contribution-pensions-investments-and-consolidation>. We want to enable schemes to invest in venture capital-backed science and technology, and welcomes the continued growth of investment in these asset classes by pension schemes. All scheme members should have the opportunity to benefit from a broader range of assets to improve the returns they achieve, and to drive new investment in important sectors of the economy.

The Government consulted in February 2019 on an additional assessment method to enable trustees of Defined Contribution pension schemes to account for performance fees incurred when investing in some less liquid assets, while retaining scheme member protection under the charge cap. The proposal was supported by the

majority of consultation respondents as a measure to enable greater investment in these asset classes.

A further consultation published earlier this month^[1] sets out draft regulations, building on our earlier consultation, which propose amendments to the way that compliance with the charge cap is measured in relation to performance fees. We also propose developing an additional, multi-year approach to calculating performance fees. Further assessment and discussion of the effects of the proposal with industry is taking place over the next few weeks. Following this our intention is to bring this legislation into force in 2021.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-outcomes-for-members-of-defined-contribution-pension-schemes>

■ Pension Wise: Coronavirus

Henry Smith:

[93571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have had a (a) telephone and (b) digital appointment with the Pension Wise service since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

Between 1 March 2020 and 22 September 2020, the following number of Pension Wise appointments were held:

- Total combined complete/incomplete telephone appointments: 53,370
- Fully completed telephone appointments: 46,928
- Incomplete telephone appointments: 6,442
- Digital appointments (self-service): 30,443

An incomplete appointment is where a customer attended an appointment, but it was not completed fully due to a variety of reasons.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Obligations of Undertakings) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Business and Industry) (Nadhim Zahawi):

[\[HCWS478\]](#)

On 26 March 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force, imposing restrictions on people's movements and gatherings, and requiring the closure of certain retail and public premises, in the interest of public health in light of the coronavirus pandemic. A review of these Regulations must take place at least every 28 days to ensure the restrictions remain necessary. Those Regulations are now referred to as the No.2 Regulations, given amendments made. They were last amended on Thursday 24th September 2020. Separately, BEIS' regulations: **the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Obligations of Hospitality Undertakings) (England) Regulations 2020** came into force on Saturday 18th September, where hospitality sector business had placed on them obligations which had previously only featured in HMG guidance.

Taking into account scientific advice, and taking into consideration the Government's assessment, we now require further amendments to the Regulations to give effect to changes as announced by the Prime Minister on 23 September 2020 to take effect at midnight on Sunday evening/Monday morning 28 September 2020.

The changes coming into effect are:

- That where relevant premises are identified by the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings in a Relevant Place) (England) Regulations 2020, that businesses will have to display signage or use other means to remind people of their legal obligation to wear face coverings;
- That in cafés, restaurants, bars and public houses, that singing, dancing and loud music are not permitted, save for specific exceptions being permitted;
- That provisions which were included in BEIS original coronavirus regulations regarding respecting the rule of six in relation to taking bookings, admitting parties or allowing mingling of groups, this has been extended beyond hospitality as it was originally drafted, to mirror the scope of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Collection of Contact Details etc and Related Requirements) Regulations 2020.

These Regulations should come into force after midnight on 28 September 2020. The hope was to have laid before Parliament on 25 September 2020 but we were timed out as Parliament rose at 15 00hrs.

These Regulations follow the made affirmative procedure. These changes are being made under the emergency procedure, approved by Parliament, because it is necessary

for government to respond quickly to the reduced rate of transmission and our assessment of the current situation. While any restrictions and requirements imposed by law place a significant burden on business, the rising R number in England, and other more restrictive measures elsewhere, mean that it is incumbent on government to act swiftly to prevent more onerous restrictions or closures being required.

The provisions outlined in these new regulations are necessary to prevent, protect against, control or provide a public health response to the incidence or spread of infection in England with the coronavirus. These additional restrictions offer an opportunity for business operate with restrictions, rather than close. These amendments have been prepared urgently. In order to provide urgent clarity and certainty to the public and businesses of the changes being made and what activity is and is not allowed, I have decided that it is necessary for these Regulations to come into force on 28 September 2020 and to then be laid before Parliament forthwith.

Under section 45R of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, the relevant instrument may be made without a draft having been laid and approved by Parliament if it contains a declaration that the person making it is of the opinion that, by reason of urgency, it is necessary to make it without a draft being so laid and approved.

I have included such a declaration in these amending regulations.

I hope you understand why we proceeded in this way, and stand ready, as ever, to answer any questions you may have.

Publicly available Government guidance on Gov.uk is being updated to ensure it fully corresponds with the amended Regulations. These remain strict measures, but they are measures that we must take in order to protect our NHS and to save lives.

■ **Update on Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry**

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS477\]](#)

I am today announcing final Terms of Reference for the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry. The Inquiry follows the conclusion of the group litigation involving postmasters and Post Office Limited (Post Office Ltd) in December 2019, the Prime Minister's commitment on 26th February 2020 and my Written Ministerial Statement of 10th June 2020.

The Horizon dispute and court case has been ongoing for many years and has had a hugely negative impact on affected postmasters and their families. In his judgments in the "Common Issues" and "Horizon Issues" trials, Mr Justice Fraser identified significant failings at Post Office Ltd and with the Horizon IT system over a number of years.

The Government has formed this Inquiry to fully understand these events, gather available evidence and ensure lessons have been learnt so that this cannot occur again. Having listened to affected postmasters, the Government has expanded the scope of the Inquiry to ensure it gets answers to questions that postmasters and others are seeking. The Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has therefore invited Sir Wyn Williams FLSW to conduct an Inquiry following the

judgments of Mr Justice Fraser in the Bates V Post Office Group Litigation into Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system and other related issues arising from the findings of Justice Fraser and the settlement reached following this trial.

To reflect the additional focus of Sir Wyn's work to that announced in June, it will be called an Inquiry, rather than a Review. Following commitments from both Post Office Ltd and Fujitsu UK to cooperate with the Inquiry, the Inquiry will be run on a non-statutory basis and have the following Terms of Reference:

Government wants to be fully assured that through the Inquiry there is a public summary of the failings that occurred, which were associated with Post Office Ltd's Horizon IT system. The Inquiry will draw on the findings made by Mr Justice Fraser from the Bates V Post Office Group Litigation (in particular Judgment (No3) "Common Issues" and Judgment (No 6) "Horizon issues") and other evidence, listen to those that have been most affected, understand what went wrong, and assess whether lessons have been learned and concrete changes have taken place or are underway at Post Office Ltd.

The Inquiry shall:

A : Understand and acknowledge what went wrong in relation to Horizon, leading to the Group Litigation Order, by drawing on evidence from the Horizon judgments and affected postmasters' experiences and identify what key lessons must be learned for the future;

B : Build upon the findings of Mr Justice Fraser, by obtaining all available relevant evidence from Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu and BEIS to establish a clear account of the implementation and failings of Horizon over its lifecycle;

C : Assess whether Post Office Ltd has learned the lessons from the criticisms made by Mr Justice Fraser in the "Common Issues" and "Horizon Issues" trials and those identified by affected postmasters and has delivered or made good progress on the organisational and cultural changes necessary to ensure a similar case does not happen in the future;

D : Assess whether the commitments made by Post Office Ltd within the mediation settlement – including the historical shortfall scheme – have been properly delivered;

E : Assess whether the processes and information provided by Post Office Ltd to postmasters are sufficient i) to enable both parties to meet their contractual obligations; and ii) to enable postmasters to run their businesses. This includes assessing whether Post Office Ltd's related processes such as recording and resolving postmaster queries, dispute handling, suspension and termination are fit for purpose. In addition, determine whether the quality of the service offer for postmasters and their relationship with Post Office Ltd has materially improved since the conclusions reached by Mr Justice Fraser; and

F : Examine the governance and whistleblowing controls now in place at Post Office Ltd and whether they are sufficient to ensure that the failings that led to the Horizon case issues do not happen again.

The Inquiry will consider only those matters set out in the preceding sections A – F. Post Office Ltd's prosecution function, matters of criminal law, the Horizon group damages settlement, the conduct of current or future litigation relating to Horizon and/or the

engagement or findings of any other supervisory or complaints mechanisms, including in the public sector, are outside the Inquiry's scope.

The Inquiry will be led by Sir Wyn Williams FLSW, as the Chair of the Inquiry. He will be supported by up to four Independent Advisers. These Independent Advisers will support Sir Wyn Williams by providing advice on the sources, content and interpretation of evidence received as appropriate. They may also provide independent scrutiny and challenge in relation to emerging findings and recommendations.

The Inquiry should make any recommendations it sees fit, including actions that may, in its view, be appropriate as a result of its findings. The Inquiry will aim to submit its findings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy at the latest by Summer 2021. The final report will be published by the Secretary of State and the Government will respond in due course.

In order to understand the range of issues fully and provide constructive challenge, the Inquiry will undertake engagement with significant stakeholder groups, including current and former postmasters, Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu UK, BEIS and other third parties to identify information that is relevant to and within the scope of the Inquiry.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Appointments to the Boundary Commission for Wales**

Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith):

[\[HCWS481\]](#)

I should like to inform the House that my Rt Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove), has made the following appointments under Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 following a competition run in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments:

- Huw Vaughan Thomas, appointed as a Member of the Boundary Commission for Wales, effective from 5 October 2020 until 4 October 2025; and
- Sam Hartley, appointed as a Member of the Boundary Commission for Wales, effective from 5 October 2020 until 4 October 2025.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 – Failure to Lay a Section 46 Report in respect of the Sanctions (EU Exit) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/843)**

Minister for Asia (Nigel Adams):

[\[HCWS479\]](#)

My Honourable Friend, the Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

Section 57(3) of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (“the Act”) provides that, if any report required by the Act is not laid before Parliament at the relevant time, the appropriate Minister must publish a written statement explaining the reasons.

On 11 April 2019 the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office laid before Parliament the Sanctions (EU Exit) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/843) (“the correction regulations”) to correct minor errors in a number of sanctions regulations that had been made under the Act during March 2019.

In making the correction regulations, the Minister was required by section 45(2)(b) of the Act to consider in respect of each discretionary purpose (i.e. a purpose which is not in compliance with a UN or any other international obligation) of the sanctions regulations being amended by the correction regulations:

- a) that carrying out that purpose would meet one or more of the conditions in paragraphs (a) to (i) of section 1(2) of the Act,
- b) that there are good reasons to pursue that purpose, and
- c) that the imposition of sanctions is a reasonable course of action for that purpose.

The Minister was further required by section 46(2) of the Act to lay a report before Parliament at the same time as the correction regulations explaining why he was of that opinion that the discretionary purposes had been met.

In this case, the Minister reached the conclusions in respect of section 45(2)(b) for substantially the same reasons as set out in the statutory reports that the Minister had laid before Parliament, in the preceding month, alongside the following Statutory Instruments:

- on 7 March in respect of the Iran (Sanctions) (Nuclear) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/461) (available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/461/pdfs/ukxi0d_20190461_en.pdf);
- on 8 March in respect of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/411) (available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/411/pdfs/ukxi0d_20190411_en.pdf);
- on 15 March in respect of the Counter-Terrorism (International Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/573) (available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2019/573/pdfs/ukxi0d_20190573_en.pdf).

However, due to a regrettable administrative oversight in the department, the report required by section 46(2) of the Sanctions Act was not laid before Parliament. The responsible department has amended its practices to ensure that all statutory reports are laid before Parliament as required.

HOME OFFICE**■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review Response****The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):****[\[HCWS480\]](#)**

Today we are publishing the Home Office's Comprehensive Improvement Plan, in response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review. We have worked closely with community leaders and the Cross-Government Windrush Working Group to get this important work right, and I am pleased to have the backing of co-chair Bishop Derek Webley on the steps we are taking. I am also grateful to independent reviewer Wendy Williams for the help she has given in shaping our approach.

The Windrush Lessons Learned Review, published in March, exposed unacceptable failings in the Home Office over many years and an 'institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards the issue of race and the history of the Windrush Generation'. I have already accepted Wendy Williams' important findings and repeated my heartfelt apology for the suffering that members of the Windrush Generation endured.

The Comprehensive Improvement Plan sets out the action we are taking to put this right and to ensure the mistakes of the past can never be repeated.

It details the work taking place across the Department under the five themes I previously laid out.

Righting the Wrongs and Learning from the Past

We are determined to ensure the Windrush Generation have the full help and support they deserve. More than £2.5 million has now been offered through the Windrush Compensation Scheme and over 13,300 documents have been provided to over 11,500 individuals confirming their status or British citizenship. We are doing more to reach those affected and encourage them to come forward, via a new national communications campaign.

Every member of Home Office staff will also undertake mandatory training on the history of migration and race in the UK so that they better understand the impact of departmental decisions, including when developing and applying immigration policy.

An Inclusive Workforce

We have relaunched our Race Action Plan to help improve the diversity of staff in senior roles and ensure the Home Office reflects the diverse communities it serves. The Permanent Secretary has commissioned an overhaul of how performance is managed to better support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues. To provide robust challenge to our plans to make the Home Office more diverse, external experts will also be invited to join the refreshed strategic advisory board we have established.

Openness to Scrutiny

I have directed my officials to engage with community leaders, civil society and the public throughout the policymaking process to understand real-life impacts. It is crucial that the department is receptive to outside challenge, so I am creating a new Community and

Stakeholder Engagement Hub at the centre of the Home Office. This will draw on best practice to build knowledge and skills across the department.

We recognise the particular circumstances of those who travel to this country to work and live and so we are consulting with the Cross-Government Windrush Working Group to recommend how best to engage with migrant communities directly and facilitate their feedback into our policy development and operational activity.

In addition, we are overhauling the department's risk management framework to ensure all staff have the knowledge and responsibility to act upon risks that are identified.

Inclusive and Robust Policy Making

We are improving how we assess the effect of our policies on people from different backgrounds, including by carrying out more training for staff on how to do this well. We have worked with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on its investigation into how the department fulfilled its Public Sector Equality Duty on policies affecting the Windrush Generation. Following the publication of their report, we will work with them to ensure this important duty is fully considered in all our work.

We are also putting in place a set of policy tests to ensure the key findings from the Windrush Lessons Learned Review are applied as new policy is developed.

A More Compassionate Approach – People Not Cases

This theme is the crux of the cultural change the Permanent Secretary and I want to see. The Home Office must embrace the human impact of its work and empower staff throughout the department to do the same. To support this, I have launched a new mandatory 'Face Behind the Case' training course for all UK Visa and Immigration staff, with plans to expand this to other areas. A Young People's Board is being established to gain crucial insight from those who have recently experienced the immigration system. We are also making rapid progress on the new vision for the Home Office, consulting staff on the core values we all want to embody.

I have already committed to a full review and evaluation of the compliant environment. Whilst it is right that the department acts against those who are in the UK illegally, we continue to look closely at how innocent people were wrongly caught up in policies designed to target law breakers. The system must be strong, but it also must be just, so if problems are found, I will fix them.

The Comprehensive Improvement Plan will help transform the Home Office and deliver the lasting and meaningful change the Windrush Generation deserve. We will monitor our progress and welcome Wendy Williams' return in September 2021 where I'm confident she will see the start of a genuine culture shift.

More detail is available in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan, which has been laid before Parliament (CP 293), available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-lessons-learned-review-response-comprehensive-improvement-plan>

Copies are also available from the Vote Office.