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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Anaerobic Digestion

Alan Brown:

[\[95126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to promote the UK's anaerobic digestion sector at COP26.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Biomethane injection to the gas grid offers a low-regrets, cost-effective way of contributing to near term legally binding carbon budgets, and the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) states that biomethane will be valuable across all decarbonisation pathways. The new Green Gas Support Scheme, which will be launching in Autumn 2021, aims to increase the proportion of biomethane in the gas grid, which will deliver greener gas to households in the UK and contribute to carbon budgets 4 and 5.

Alan Brown:

[\[95127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to introduce a sector deal for the anaerobic digestion and biomethane sector; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We welcome conversations with the anaerobic digestion and biomethane industry about future industry development, and their role in the green recovery from covid-19. The Government is supportive of the growth of the anaerobic digestion and biomethane sector, and recognises that it is valuable across future decarbonisation pathways. Government has supported the growth of the AD sector through a number of incentive schemes: the Renewables Obligation (RO); the Feed-in Tariffs (FIT) scheme and Contracts for Difference (CfD) for electricity production and the non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) for biogas and heat production, including the use of biomethane in the gas grid. The non-domestic RHI will end in 2021, and will be followed by the Green Gas Support Scheme which will provide tariff support for biomethane injection to the gas grid. The RO and FIT schemes closed to new applications in March 2017 and 2019 respectively, and the new Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) came into effect on 1 January 2020, allowing small-scale low-carbon generators to sell their excess electricity back to the grid.

Alan Brown:

[\[95128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to improve cross-departmental working on the Government's anaerobic digestion and biomethane strategy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Anaerobic digestion and biomethane policy cuts across several government departments including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department for Transport. These departments are currently working closely together on a number of related policy issues, including the upcoming Green Gas Support Scheme, which is due to launch in Autumn 2021. The recent consultation on this scheme included proposals to allow an effective interaction between the Green Gas Support Scheme and the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation, and to ensure air quality impacts are properly mitigated. Another example is research, where BEIS is working with DfT to study the techno-economics and carbon intensity of gasifying biomass and municipal solid waste to produce either methane, hydrogen or liquid fuels.

Alan Brown:[\[95129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase investment in research and development to improve the efficiency of the anaerobic digestion process and reduce the cost of building and running anaerobic digestion plants.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In March, the Government announced a record increase in public investment in R&D – committing to reaching £22bn per year by 2024/25. At the same time the Government committed to more than double investment in the Energy Innovation Programme to £1 billion.

Through its Networks in Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy programme, UKRI fund the Environmental Biology Network (EBNet) with £1.35m to provide a link between academic researchers and plant operators in industry. This includes mechanisms such as Proof of Concept studies and Business Interaction Vouchers which enable industry to address problems including the efficiency, design and operation of anaerobic digestion plants. Government also provides support to enable UK industry and researchers to access international science on biogas production from anaerobic digestion through the IEA Bioenergy Technical Coordinating Programme.

■ Boilers: Fuel Oil**Matt Western:**[\[95182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to limit repairs being carried out to existing oil boilers.

Matt Western:[\[95183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his officials have had with industry representatives on limiting repairs being carried out to existing oil boilers.

Matt Western:

[\[95184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to use future Building Regulations to prevent end-of-life oil boilers being replaced by condensing oil boilers.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In the 2017 Clean Growth Strategy the government committed to phasing out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating systems in buildings off the gas grid during the 2020s. As we develop policy to deliver this commitment we are engaging with industry to consider how we can best ensure that oil boilers are replaced with low carbon heating systems, rather than being repaired endlessly, so that we can meet our net zero obligations. We are considering the extent to which Building Regulations can help drive this change and we will consult on proposals for decarbonising off gas grid buildings in due course.

■ **Buildings: Insulation**

Sarah Jones:

[\[95188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will ensure that insulation products used in the public sector decarbonisation scheme are aligned with the Government ban on combustible materials.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will invest £1 billion by giving grants to public sector bodies to fund energy efficiency and low carbon heat measures, supporting up to 30,000 skilled jobs.

All measures installed using the scheme must comply with all relevant legislation.

■ **Employment Tribunals Service: Applications**

Owen Thompson:

[\[95144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to implement the Law Commission's April 2020 recommendation that the time limit for making an employment tribunal claim be increased from three to six months.

Paul Scully:

Time limits for bringing claims in the Employment Tribunals are set out in legislation and in most employment cases, claims must be brought within three months.

However in most types of employment claim, the legislation also provides that tribunals have the discretion to extend the time limit if it is satisfied (i) in discrimination claims that it is just and equitable to do so; or (ii) in unfair dismissal and most other employment claims that it was not reasonably practicable to bring the claim within the time limit.

The senior employment tribunal judiciary have published an FAQ to help users understand changes to the current employment tribunal processes during the pandemic, including details on how claims and responses will be handled, and

consideration of time limits. If a claim is presented late, a judge may still allow it to proceed. Employment judges will decide based on the individual circumstances of the case and applying the relevant law. The guidance is available on GOV.UK.

■ Fuel Poverty

Matt Western: [95180]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of off-gas grid households affected by fuel poverty.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The number of fuel poor households not connected to the gas grid in England, in the latest available year (2018), was 495,000, as seen in table 10 of the Fuel Poverty statistics detailed tables (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fuel-poverty-detailed-tables-2020>).

Matt Western: [95181]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of households within £100 of being classed as fuel poor.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The number of households currently classed as fuel poor for whom a reduction of £100 in their modelled fuel costs would remove them from being classed as fuel poor, in the latest available year, was 703,000.

The number of households currently not classed as fuel poor for whom an increase of £100 in their modelled fuel costs would classify them as fuel poor, in the latest available year, was 919,000.

These figures are based on the 2018 fuel poverty dataset that is derived based on the English Housing Survey.

■ Heating: Housing

Matt Western: [95185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) oil and (b) LPG Aga appliances that are fitted in UK homes.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

There are 1.9m households in the UK using oil and LPG as their main heating fuel and hot water requirements. We estimate that 1.7m use Oil and 220k use LPG.

The Department does not have information on the number of (a) oil and (b) LPG Aga appliances that are fitted in UK homes.

■ Parental Leave

Owen Thompson: [\[95140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the outcome of his Department's evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme.

Paul Scully:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy had made significant progress in evaluating the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme. Work has included commissioning and interrogating information collected through large scale, representative, surveys of employers and parents and a consultation on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay. We also commissioned a qualitative study of parents who have used the scheme. The various data sources will help us to better understand the barriers and enablers to parents taking Shared Parental Leave.

The evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme remains important for Government and we will publish our findings in due course.

■ Sustainable Innovation Fund

Chi Onwurah: [\[95073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications to Innovate UK's iSustainable Innovation Fund (temporary framework), round 2, were rejected because the applicant entered the wrong start date.

Amanda Solloway:

Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, is investing up to £26 million to fund single and collaborative research and development projects as part of The Sustainable Innovation Fund. The aim of this competition is to help all sectors of the UK rebuild after the effects of COVID-19.

The number of applicants to Innovate UK's Sustainable Innovation Fund (temporary framework), round 2 (De Minimis) is 1161. Twenty-seven of these were rejected for assessment because the applicant entered an ineligible start date.

Chi Onwurah: [\[95074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications to Innovate UK's iSustainable Innovation Fund (temporary framework), round 2, came from each region; how many such applications were successful in each such region; and what the value was of funding awarded to each region in that round.

Amanda Solloway:

The number of applications to Innovate UK's Sustainable Innovation Fund (temporary framework), round 2 (De Minimis) based on the applicants specified work address from each region is indicated in the table below.

REGION	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS
1. Scotland	77
2. Northern Ireland	20
3. Wales	27
4. North East	15
5. North West	95
6. Yorkshire and the Humber	50
7. West Midlands	66
8. East Midlands	54
9. South West	122
10. South East	180
11. East of England	83
12. Greater London	372

Information on success rates at this stage is currently unavailable. This is because the competition closed to applications on the 2nd September 2020 and bids are currently in the process of being assessed.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Civil Servants: Redundancy Pay

Daisy Cooper: [\[95229\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants received severance packages in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020 to date.

Julia Lopez:

Departments publish details in their Annual Report and Accounts each year.

■ Customs: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh: [\[95692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has received legal advice on the potential consequences of not having in place adequate checking facilities in relation to the UK's obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol by 1 January 2021.

Louise Haigh: [\[95693\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what contingency plans his Department has made with the Northern Ireland Executive in the event that the facilities required under the Northern Ireland Protocol are not in place by 1 January 2021.

Louise Haigh: [\[95694\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if contractors have been appointed to build the facilities required under the Northern Ireland Protocol and outlined in the Command Paper on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK Government is committed to upholding its obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol. That includes, as we have set out previously including in our Command Paper, expanding some existing Northern Ireland points of entry for agrifood goods. Further to the answer to [PQ 92635](#) on 28 September, we are working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, port authorities, district councils, and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland to take this work forward, and to take all measures possible in a timely way. As has been the case under successive administrations, detailed legal advice and whether or not it has been sought, is not normally disclosed.

■ Elections: Internet

Owen Thompson: [\[95695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the Electoral Reform Society's Democracy in the Dark: Digital Campaigning in the 2019 General Election and Beyond report.

Owen Thompson: [\[95696\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to further empower voters to access information on online adverts by non-party campaign groups.

Owen Thompson: [\[95697\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to introduce further means of (a) scrutinising and (b) regulating online adverts by non-party campaign groups.

Owen Thompson: [\[95698\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to implement the ten key recommendations of the Electoral Reform Society's Democracy in the Dark: Digital Campaigning in the 2019 General Election and Beyond report.

Chloe Smith:

The Government is committed to upholding and protecting the integrity of elections. We are taking forward a programme of work that will strengthen and update the UK's electoral regulation to ensure it is fit for the modern age; provides a robust framework for campaign finance; and supports public confidence in our processes.

We have already launched a consultation on digital imprints which will require political parties, campaigners and others to clearly show who they are when promoting campaign content online. We continue to work closely with social media companies, and welcome steps they have taken to improve transparency.

Across all of this work the intention is to improve transparency to ensure voters can make informed choices, and to enforce spending rules that ensure an even playing field. Policy or political arguments which can be rebutted by rival campaigners or an independent free press as part of the normal course of political debate are not regulated. The Government does not support creating a regime which would seek to police the accuracy or truthfulness of content.

■ Government Departments: Remote Working**Justin Madders:**[\[94456\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Government departments and agencies have issued written instructions to their employees to work from home after 22 September 2020.

Julia Lopez:

It is essential that we continue the business of government. In the Cabinet Office, as in all Departments, we have ensured COVID-secure workplaces are in place so that civil servants can do so safely.

■ Members: Correspondence**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[95018\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for East Londonderry of 20 August 2020 on the official status of the Ulster Banner.

Julia Lopez:

This letter was transferred to the Northern Ireland Office who will be issuing a response shortly. May I apologise for the delay in considering and responding to the issues the hon. Member has raised.

■ UK Trade with EU**James Grundy:**[\[906897\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on the UK's trade negotiations with the EU.

Allan Dorans:

[\[906906\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Ministers of the Scottish Government on preparations required for the end of the transition period.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK Government regularly engages the devolved administrations on the negotiations and preparations for the end of the transition period. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster chaired a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) on 3 September, attended by devolved administration Ministers, which included a discussion on readiness. I also chaired one of my regular meetings on readiness with devolved administration Ministers on 1 October. The Government remains committed to continuing this engagement.

Hywel Williams:

[\[92705\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has contingency plans to minimise disruption at UK borders in the event that the Smart Freight system fails to work effectively.

Hywel Williams:

[\[92706\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the success of the Smart Freight system.

Hywel Williams:

[\[92707\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the feasibility of the Smart Freight system.

Hywel Williams:

[\[92708\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what internal tests his Department has conducted of the Smart Freight system; and what the outcome of those tests were.

Hywel Williams:

[\[95015\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his oral contribution of 23 September 2020, Official Report, column 969, how much funding the Government has allocated to that facility near Holyhead; and what his timetable is for the implementation of those plans.

Penny Mordaunt:

Further to the comments of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 23 September 2020, the 'Check an HGV is ready to cross the border' service is being developed in accordance with the rigorous standards applied to the development of any digital Government service. This includes consultation and engagement with users as well as internal testing. The service has passed successfully into the "beta" phase and is now being subjected to operational testing with users, including businesses. It is on schedule to be ready for December 2020.

On 12 July, the Government announced a funding package in 20/21 for border infrastructure, staffing and IT to ensure GB border systems are fully operational when the UK takes back control of its border after the end of the transition period.

A breakdown will be provided, port by port and region by region, in due course.

■ Veterans: Homelessness

Jane Hunt:

[\[95253\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on armed forces veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness and (b) steps his Department is taking to support armed forces veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Johnny Mercer:

The Government has taken a number of measures to identify and support veterans who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, homelessness. The Homelessness Reduction Act includes a statutory duty for members of the Armed Forces, who it is believed may be at risk of homelessness after discharge, to be referred to a local housing authority. The MOD, through Veterans UK, also provides a Defence Transition Service which offers those personnel who are known to be at risk of challenges, which may impact on making a successful transition back into civilian life, with enhanced support and a Veterans Welfare Service which provides support and assistance to veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Earlier this year King's College London was commissioned to undertake research on the impact of COVID-19 on veterans, the results of which will provide insight across a range of factors including housing and homelessness and other areas such as mental health and loneliness. Alongside this, the COVID-19 Impact fund has provided nearly £6m of support to over 100 Armed Forces charities including those working in the housing sector.

■ Vote Leave: Russia

Alex Sobel:

[\[95208\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department is taking steps to ensure that there is an investigation of alleged links between financial backers of the Vote Leave campaign and Russian intelligence.

Chloe Smith:

We have seen no evidence of successful interference in the EU Referendum. The Intelligence and Security Agencies produce regular assessments of the threat posed by Hostile State Activity, including around potential interference in UK democratic processes.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ ARM: NVIDIA****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[96921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he is seeking a legally binding guarantee to keep Arm as a separate entity with a separate business model that is not subject to US intellectual property provisions after Arm is sold from Softbank to Nvidia.

Daniel Zeichner:[\[96922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he is seeking a legally binding exemption from Export Administration Regulations or Office of Foreign Assets Control regulations for the sale of ARM from Softbank to Nvidia.

Caroline Dinéage:

As provided in previous parliamentary responses, ARM is an important part of the UK's tech sector and makes a significant contribution to the UK economy. While acquisitions are primarily a commercial matter for the parties concerned, the Government monitors these closely. When a takeover may have a significant impact on the UK we will not hesitate to investigate further and take action. We are scrutinising the deal carefully to understand its impact on the UK. The Enterprise Act 2002 allows the government to call in transactions such as this. We will consider if and when it would be appropriate to do so.

■ Entertainments: Coronavirus**Paul Girvan:**[\[91793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government plans to take to assist companies in the live entertainment industry that are unable to take on more debt and are at risk of insolvency as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinéage:

We appreciate that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the live entertainment events 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 announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing SEISS and CJRS come to end. From November, the Jobs Support Scheme will provide further support to returning workers, while the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme will aid the self-employed who are currently actively trading but are facing reduced demand.

We are also offering businesses who face a drop in demand for their services and possible cash flow issues generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans, and are extending the application window of the government-backed loan schemes and continuing reduced VAT (from 20% to 5%) on concert tickets to March 2021.

We will give all businesses that borrowed under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme the option to repay their loan over a period of up to ten years. This will reduce their average monthly repayments on the loan by almost half. We also intend to allow CBILS lenders to extend the term of a loan up to ten years, providing additional flexibility for UK-based SMEs who may otherwise be unable to repay their loans.

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 events sector by providing support to venues and many other organisations to stay open and continue operating.

We recognise that the live entertainment events industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19. We continue to meet with the stakeholders to discuss the specific issues facing the industry.

■ **Events Industry and Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

Owen Thompson:

[\[95146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with events and hospitality companies that have not received Government support in (a) Midlothian, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are aware that the events industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19. Businesses can continue to access the government's UK wide support package. This includes the Bounce Back Loans scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

As the Chancellor announced on 24 September, we are also offering affected businesses generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans, as well as extending the application window of the government-backed loan schemes.

We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to monitor the situation facing companies across the UK.

I remain in regular contact with my devolved counterparts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We will continue to work together with the Devolved Administrations to assess how we can most effectively support hospitality and events companies.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Andrea Leadsom: [\[96057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support is available for (a) wedding fayre and (b) other event organisers to diversify their businesses as a result of the covid-19 restrictions.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are aware that the events industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19 and ongoing restrictions.

Wedding fayre organisers and other events businesses can continue to make use of the broader support package available to them. This includes the Bounce Back Loans scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

From November, the Jobs Support Scheme will provide further support to returning workers, while the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme will aid the self-employed who are currently actively trading but are facing reduced demand.

We are also offering affected businesses generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans, as well as extending the application window of the government-backed loan schemes.

Meetings of up to 30 can still take place in permitted venues, as per the Covid-19 Secure guidance for the visitor economy. Since 11 July, a range of outdoor events have been able to take place. As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, our decisions have been and will continue to be based on scientific evidence and public health assessments.

■ Football: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell: [\[90955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department have made of the economic effect on (a) National League football clubs and (b) local communities of not allowing the safe return of fans to football grounds in October 2020 as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[90956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support National League football clubs during the covid-19 outbreak; and what discussions he has had with representatives of those clubs on allowing fans to return to those football club grounds safely as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[96074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to enable the safe return of spectators to National League football matches; and

what discussions he has had with the (a) League and (b) FA on appropriate financial support for clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

The safety and security of players and spectators is of paramount importance.

On Tuesday 22 September it was announced that all sports pilot events currently ongoing would be paused with immediate effect, due to the sharp upward trajectory of Covid-19 cases. As set out in our Roadmap, sports events pilots, and the full return of fans to stadia would only ever take place when it was safe to do so.

However, the Government continues to work closely with a whole range of sports to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes the creation of a new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this.

The Government knows that the decision not to reopen stadia to spectators on 1 October will have major consequences for sports and clubs across the country who relied on those fans for income. We are working with those organisations to understand what they need and how we can support them.

Ministers have spoken to all of the major spectator sports, including football, and have asked for detailed financial returns so the Government can understand what support they might need.

■ **Showmen's Guild of Great Britain**

David Linden:

[\[97004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department last met representatives of the Showman's Guild of Great Britain.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department has held a number of meetings with representatives of the outdoor events industry to discuss guidance and next steps to reopening the sector.

DCMS officials last met with the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain on 14 August, and have also spoken to representatives of the Amusement Device Safety Council.

More broadly, my Department's officials have regular contact with the Events Industry Forum, which is responsible for developing Covid-secure guidance for outdoor events. We continue to engage with visitor attraction stakeholders through the Visitor Economy Working Group.

■ **Snooker: Coronavirus**

Robert Halfon:

[\[96046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether snooker clubs are subject to the covid-19 10pm curfew restrictions.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sport facilities such as gyms, leisure centres and sport clubs including snooker clubs are not required to close, however, hospitality areas which sell food and drink (such as cafes and bars) must close at 10pm. This does not apply to dispensing machines such as vending or coffee machines. Delivery services and drive-through services can continue after 10pm, where applicable.

Where a sport facility sells food and drink to consume on site, customers must eat and drink at a table.

Sports: Coronavirus**Ben Bradley:**[\[94534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on grassroots sports clubs of the covid-19 outbreak; and what estimate he has made of the level of financial support those clubs require.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity providers and facilities are at the heart of our communities, and play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

Sport England's Community Emergency Fund has provided £210 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic. We are continuing to work with organisations to understand what they need and how we may be able to support them.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**Anaerobic Digestion****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[95241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ensure that the Environment Bill 2019-21 includes a requirement for slurries and digestates to be spread using low-emission equipment such as (a) trailing shoe, (b) trailing hose and (c) injection by 2025.

Charlotte Nichols:[\[95242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ensure that the Environment Bill 2019-21 includes a requirement for slurry and digestate stores to be covered by 2027.

Charlotte Nichols:[\[95243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including in the Environment Bill a requirement for all solid manure and solid digestate spread to bare land other than that managed in a no-till system to be incorporated rapidly within 12 hours.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has made legally binding commitments to reduce ammonia emissions from 2005 levels by 8% and 16% by 2020 and 2030, respectively.

Over the next few years the Government will introduce legislation requiring farmers to reduce ammonia emissions and is already supporting farmers to undertake best practice and invest in the farm infrastructure and equipment that will reduce emissions.

The Clean Air Strategy sets out the actions that will be taken to reduce ammonia emissions in England. These include a requirement to spread slurry and digestate using low-emission spreading equipment by 2025, for slurry and digestate stores to be covered by 2027 and for manure to be rapidly incorporated into bare soil.

We have not included specific commitments to legislate in the Environment or Agriculture Bills because the Clean Air Strategy sets out the plans for legislation in this area and we have existing powers to enable introduction of the legislation to reduce ammonia emissions set out in the Strategy.

■ Biofuels: Crops**Alan Brown:**[\[95134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the integration of bioenergy crops into agricultural and soil management strategies.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government supports the generation of heat and power from low carbon technologies, including those using crops and forestry biomass, helping to deliver the Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2050. The Government recently consulted on the future support for low carbon heat, which includes proposals for a Green Gas Support Scheme and a Clean Heat Grant with support for heat pumps and in some instances, biomass. Government also consulted on the introduction of E10 bioethanol transport petrol this year, where domestic production can utilise energy crops.

The Agriculture Bill contains provisions for financial assistance in England to manage land in a way that mitigates the effects of climate change, and for starting or improving the productivity of agricultural and forestry activity.

The Government recognises soil is one of our greatest natural assets and is essential for underpinning a range of benefits such as flood mitigation, food production and carbon storage. The 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) sets out Governments ambition to replenish depleted soil and restore its fertility so that soils are sustainably managed by 2030. In order to meet this ambition, we are developing a healthy soils indicator for England as part of 25YEP. The future monitoring scheme through the soil indicator will be able to inform us on the impact of changes in land management practices, including the wider take-up of bioenergy crops in rotations.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Israel: Foreign Relations**

Caroline Ansell: [\[95156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support steps to strengthen ties between Israel and its neighbours.

James Cleverly:

We warmly welcome the normalising of relations, and the strengthening of ties between Israel and its neighbours. We urge others across the region to follow the example of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. During his visit to Israel on 24 August, the Foreign Secretary met Prime Minister Netanyahu, Alternate Prime Minister and Defence Minister Gantz, and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi. They discussed normalisation of relations in the region, alongside a range of other bilateral, regional, security issues. The changing regional context and converging Arab and Israeli interests presents an opening and the UK strongly supports such moves.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Andy Slaughter: [\[95026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the fatal shooting of 16-year-old Mohammad Damer Hamdan Matar near the occupied West Bank village of Deir Abu Meshal on 19 August, what steps he is taking to ensure accountability for Israeli soldiers' use of live ammunition against Palestinian children in situations where lethal force was not necessary to protect life.

James Cleverly:

Whilst we have not made representations on this specific incident, we remain deeply concerned by the ongoing cycle of violence. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

Andy Slaughter: [\[95027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Palestinian counterpart on reports of night time family home arrests of Palestinian children by Israeli soldiers.

James Cleverly:

We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law.

Andy Slaughter:

[\[95028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, he will make representations to the Government of Israel to release the 151 Palestinian children being held in Israeli military detention as called for by UN officials during the covid-19 pandemic.

James Cleverly:

We remain concerned by the impact that COVID-19 could have on Palestinian detainees, including children. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in Israel and continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on this issue. This includes the increased risk due to lack of hygiene, proper ventilation, population density and issues of due process. We continue to call for steps to be taken that will reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in prisons whilst simultaneously respecting fundamental human rights.

Caroline Ansell:

[\[95155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help secure peace between Israel and Palestine following the Israel-UAE and Israel-Bahrain peace agreements.

James Cleverly:

We warmly welcome the agreement between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. We welcome both the decision to normalise relations, as well as the suspension of plans for annexation - a move the UK has opposed as it would have been counterproductive to securing peace in the region. We profoundly hope that this moment can be used as a step towards direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians, as there can be no substitute in order to reach a two-state solution and a lasting peace. The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 24-25 August and encouraged the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians to build on this momentum. We urge the Palestinian Authority to resume co-operation with Israel, which is in the interests of the Palestinian people. We also call on both parties to make constructive and open steps towards a return to dialogue.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Dementia: Research

Angela Crawley:

[\[93620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on dementia research charities of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will increase funding for dementia research.

Helen Whately:

The Department is closely liaising with the Association of Medical Research Charities, as well as individual dementia charities, to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this sector and identify how best the Government and charities can work together to ensure that patients continue benefiting from charity funded research.

The Government remains strongly committed to supporting research to combat dementia. The Government's Challenge on Dementia 2020 contained the commitment to spend £300 million on dementia research over the five years to March 2020. This commitment was delivered a year early with £341 million spent on dementia research over the four years to 31 March 2019.

Food Poverty: Children**Robert Halfon:**[\[91835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children living in food insecure households in England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 September 2020]: The Department's Healthy Start scheme provides a nutritional safety net to hundreds of thousands of pregnant women and families with children under four in lower-income families. Healthy Start encourages a healthy diet by providing vouchers that can only be spent on fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, plain cow's milk and infant formula.

Free school meals, led by the Department for Education, play an important role in ensuring disadvantaged children receive a healthy, nutritious meal each day. They are aimed at families who are out of work or on low incomes.

Under the benefits-related criteria, there are currently around 1.4 million pupils eligible for and claiming a free school meal, saving families around £400 a year for each child.

General Practitioners: Epilepsy**Fiona Bruce:**[\[91829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the GP-to-patient ratio for female patients with epilepsy aged people 15 and 45 years in the Congleton constituency.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 September 2020]: Data on the general practitioner to patient ratio for female patients between the ages of 15 to 45 years old with epilepsy is not available at national or regional levels.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Robert Halfon: [\[91831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what value of Healthy Start vouchers have been redeemed in 2019-20.

Robert Halfon: [\[91832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much was spent on Healthy Start vouchers in 2019-20.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 September 2020]: The total expenditure on Healthy Start vouchers in England, for the most recent year that data is available, 2018/19, was £44,787,081. This expenditure includes the expenditure on Healthy Start vouchers redeemed and the administrative costs for the scheme.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Housing**

Stuart C McDonald: [\[93608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department first discussed with the Ministry of Defence the housing of asylum seekers in military barracks or other accommodation.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office has a statutory obligation to provide support and accommodation to destitute asylum seekers.

As a result of Covid-19, movement of service users out of accommodation was temporarily paused. This combined with the continued large numbers of arrivals in small boats from France has put considerable strain on the accommodation system. As part of the emergency response to this, the Home Office has worked with other government departments to identify alternative accommodation for asylum seekers as a temporary measure.

The Ministry of Defence and Home Office entered into discussions from mid-August regarding the possibility of the Ministry of Defence assisting in identifying accommodation options for asylum seekers.

The Ministry of Defence responded with an offer to review their estate with a view to being able to loan suitable and available sites to the Home Office for up to 12 months. The Defence Secretary confirmed that the two sites at Penally and Napier were indeed able to be offered to the HO on 12 September.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Peter Kyle: [\[96136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how she plans to allocate the additional £60 million announced by the Prime Minister on 22 September 2020 for covid-19 enforcement across the 43 police force areas of England and Wales.

Peter Kyle: [\[96137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much additional funding has been allocated to Sussex Police to support enforcement of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Kit Malthouse:

On 22 September 2020 the Prime Minister announced £60m of additional funding for COVID-19 enforcement to be shared between local authorities for COVID-19 marshals and the 43 police forces of England and Wales.

The Home Office is finalising details of the funding allocations to police forces, which will be published on Gov.uk in the coming days.

■ Immigrants: Coronavirus

Kate Osamor: [\[93654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support she plans to make available to people with No Recourse to Public Funds who have become unemployed during the covid-19 outbreak while they are awaiting the result of a Change of Conditions application.

Chris Philp:

Many of the wide-ranging Covid-19 measures the Government has put in place will be available to migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Migrants working in the UK legally may be able to access contributory based benefits such as employment and support allowance. Local Authorities also have a statutory duty to provide support to families subject to the NRPF condition where a child's wellbeing is in question.

The change of conditions applications, which are available for those who have been granted leave on the basis of their family or private life, are being prioritised and dealt with compassionately.

■ Immigrants: EU Nationals

Hilary Benn: [\[95989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has issued to (a) banks and (b) other lenders on ways for EU citizens to prove they hold (i) settled and (ii) pre-settled status.

Kevin Foster:

EEA citizens can continue to use their national passport or identity card to evidence their status in the UK until the end of June 2021.

We are developing an extensive package of communications to ensure individuals, employers, landlords and other third parties, such as financial institutions, are fully aware of how and where those with settled or pre-settled status can use their online immigration status to prove their status, including when opening a bank account.

Immigration: Married People**Sarah Olney:****[96146]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of suspending the Minimum Income Requirement.

Kevin Foster:

The Minimum Income Requirement as a whole is set at the level which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration.

Given the economic impact of Covid-19 we have made adjustments to the requirements under it to support those affected.

Such adjustments are among a range of measures put in place by the Home Office to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. These are set out for customers on GOV.UK and are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

Internet: Fraud**Yvonne Fovargue:****[95069]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of (a) the volume of user-generated fraudulent and scam content posted on online platforms and (b) the harm that content has caused to victims of that fraud.

James Brokenshire:

We know that people are spending more time online during this period and this can put them at greater risk of experiencing online harm. We have been working closely with technology companies, civil society and academia to understand and respond to the risks presented during this period.

The department is committed to tackling all forms of crime, including those that exploit technology and the internet. We are considering all routes to ensure law enforcement have the tools they need to go after these criminals and to protect the vulnerable.

HMG published new guidance on April 23rd to help all users to stay safe online during the coronavirus outbreak. It includes detailed advice on protecting personal data, cyber security and disinformation. It also provides additional guidance for

parents on online safety issues affecting children such as child sexual abuse, exposure to age-inappropriate content and cyberbullying.

This Government is committed to delivering legislation to tackle online harms. This will introduce a statutory duty of care on companies to take steps to protect their users from harm, including child sexual exploitation and abuse. We are currently working swiftly to prepare a full Government response, which we will publish later this year. This will include more detailed proposals on online harms regulation and will be released alongside interim voluntary codes of practice on tackling online terrorist and child sexual exploitation and abuse content and activity. We will follow the full Government response by introducing Online Harms legislation in this session.

■ Passports: Applications

Peter Grant:

[\[96102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of updating the Government's passport renewal website to make applicants aware that they can enter a family or friend's email address if they do not have an email address themselves.

Kevin Foster:

While people can provide the email address of a third party as part of their online passport application, for security purposes Her Majesty's Passport Office strongly recommends the use of a personal email address. As such, there are no plans to change the guidance relating to this.

■ Refugees: Children

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[92646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to offer UK resettlement to vulnerable unaccompanied minors from Syria who have been displaced again by the fire at the Moria refugee camp in Greece.

Chris Philp:

We are very concerned by the reports and images emerging from the Moria camp on the island of Lesbos following the devastating fire. We are working across government and with our embassy in Greece to actively monitor the situation as it develops.

Throughout the pandemic the UK has continued to receive those accepted for transfer under the Dublin III Regulation, including unaccompanied children. We are in regular contact with sending Member States, including Greece, who are responsible for arranging transfers.

We have also committed to continue to process transfer requests under the Dublin family reunion provisions from Greece and other Member States which were received before the end of the transition period.

■ Visas: Foreign Nationals**Stephen Timms:****[85927]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, of the applicants granted extensions of leave to remain in 2019, how many in the (a) work, (b) study, (c) family and (d) other groups had the condition No Recourse to Public Funds attached to their leave.

Chris Philp:

Data on the number of extensions granted in the UK are published in table Exe_D01 of the managed migration detailed datasets in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets> .

The published statistics do not show how many extensions were subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds condition. Currently we cannot provide the data that you have requested. However, as part of the regular publication of this data the Home Office will review whether the data can be meaningfully broken down any further.

Most migrants visiting, studying, working or joining family in the UK are subject to a No Recourse to Public Fund (NRPF) condition until they have obtained indefinite leave to remain. Exceptions are made in respect of some migrants, such as families here on the basis of family life/Article 8, where the condition is lifted if the family can provide evidence that they would otherwise be destitute. Migrants with leave under the family and human rights routes can apply to have the NRPF restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia****Emily Thornberry:****[96022]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 3 April 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Bani Matar was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:**[96023]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 14 April 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Al-Taiziyah was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 6 May 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Majz was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 11 May 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Al-Mudhaffar was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 27 May 2015 air-strike on a market in Khadir was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 3 June 2015 air-strike on houses in Sihar was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 5 June 2015 air-strike on houses in Harad was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 5 June 2015 air-strike on vehicles in Harad was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be

one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 7 July 2015 air-strike on a Mosque in Tuban was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer the Rt Hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 11th September (UIN: 84666).

■ Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

Kate Osamor: [\[95702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many export licences for the sale or transfer of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia have been (a) granted and (b) refused by the Government since 20 June 2019.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government takes its arms export responsibilities seriously and assesses export licence applications in accordance with strict licensing criteria.

Through our rigorous process, 87 export licences were granted for military related items to Saudi Arabia, during the period 20th June 2019 to 29th September 2020.

We will not license the export of equipment where to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria; no licences had to be refused on this basis in the aforementioned period.

JUSTICE

■ Prisoners On Remand: South West

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[95118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to reimburse Avon and Somerset Police for the cost of providing virtual remand hearings.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[95119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to fund all future provision of Virtual Remand Hearings by Avon and Somerset police.

Chris Philp:

COVID-19 has been the biggest peacetime challenge that our justice system has faced. Video Remand Hearings (VRH) have been an important tool to free up court capacity for trials which must take place in person. During a pandemic, anything which reduces the number of people travelling to court is the right thing to do for the

safety of all those who come into contact with the criminal justice system. The roll out of VRH was rapid, and we are grateful to all of those that have engaged with it to ensure the continued operation of the criminal justice system.

I am aware of concerns over resourcing pressures. During this unprecedented time all parts of the criminal justice system have been required to operate in new ways to keep the public safe and ensure that justice is delivered. My Department is engaging with the police and Home Office to agree a way forward.

SCOTLAND

■ Shipping: Scotland

Drew Hendry:

[\[95684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps his Department is taking to support the decarbonisation of the maritime industry in Scotland.

Iain Stewart:

The UK Government is working actively with the maritime sector to support decarbonisation at both international and domestic level. My office works closely with the Department for Transport which leads on this work and which is focussing on supporting the decarbonisation of the industry throughout the whole of the UK. I also met with Maritime UK last month to discuss the sector decarbonisation in Scotland.

Domestically, the UK Government has published research exploring the opportunities and challenges arising from decarbonisation and this will provide the sector with greater clarity on what is required to achieve decarbonisation. In support of this, the Department for Transport has provided £1.5m of grants through Maritime Research and Innovation UK, supporting clean maritime innovation throughout the UK.

Internationally we are working with other high ambition states and the sector to develop and adopt pragmatic, effective, short and medium term measures that will peak and reduce emissions from the sector.

TRANSPORT

■ Carbon Emissions

Alan Brown:

[\[95131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of changing the methodology his Department uses to calculate transport emissions from tailpipe emission to well to wheel to capture the full carbon impact of his Department's policy decisions.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model considers greenhouse gas emissions from the production and use (well-to-wheel emissions) of a range of vehicle energy sources, since both are important

metrics in assessing transport's environmental performance. The Department will continue to consider both well-to-wheel and tailpipe emissions as part of our decision making and approach to decarbonisation.

■ Renewable Fuels: Transport

Alan Brown: [\[95130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing an effective minimum price for Renewable Transport Fuel to help ensure the value of (a) biomethane and (b) other low-carbon fuels.

Rachel Maclean:

A market for low carbon fuels used in transport, including biomethane, is promoted by the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) certificate trading scheme. Under the scheme the minimum value of renewable transport fuel certificates (RTFCs), which can be rewarded to a range of low carbon fuels, is not fixed but is determined by the market. One of the benefits of the RTFO market-based scheme is in providing flexibility to suppliers in meeting their obligation thereby ensuring costs passed on to consumers are minimised.

The Department continually keeps the support schemes applicable to low carbon fuels used in transport under review to ensure these deliver cost effective reductions in emissions in line with UK Carbon budgets.

■ Train Operating Companies: Emergency Recovery Management Agreements

Mary Glendon: [\[95076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the total cost to the public purse of payments to train operating companies under the Emergency Recovery Management Agreements.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Under the Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs), operators have been placed under more demanding management agreements than the previous Emergency Measure Agreements. These include tougher performance targets and lower management fees.

The total cost to the public purse of rail services under ERMs will depend on passenger revenue levels, which remain highly uncertain in the near term due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated public health measures. As such, no firm cost estimate is available.

TREASURY**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Older People**

Marsha De Cordova: [\[95212\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the withdrawal of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on older people.

Jesse Norman:

When designing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, as well as subsequent policies and reforms including the closure of the scheme, the Government undertook an analysis of how the policies were likely to affect individuals sharing protected characteristics in line with Public Sector Equality Duties. This is in line with the internal procedural requirements and support in place for ensuring that equalities considerations inform decisions taken by ministers.

The CJRS is one of several forms of support available during this difficult period. The Winter Economy Plan includes the new Job Support Scheme which, alongside the Job Retention Bonus, will continue to support firms to keep employees across all demographics in their jobs once the CJRS closes.

■ Eat Out to Help Out Scheme

Deidre Brock: [\[95109\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) names of the companies, other than small enterprises, that received support under the Eat Out to Help Out scheme and (b) amount that each of those companies (i) claimed and (ii) was paid under that scheme.

Jesse Norman:

In registering for the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme, businesses agreed to publication of the names and addresses of their restaurants or other outlets. HMRC do not have permission to publish other details about the businesses or their claims and are bound by a duty of confidentiality.

HMRC have published data about the number of registered establishments and claims totals and will publish a detailed analysis of the scheme in the near future. This will include breakdowns of claims values between small and larger businesses (those with more than 25 establishments).

■ Horse Riding: Non-domestic Rates

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[94483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of treating riding schools and livery yards as agricultural settings for business rates purposes.

Jesse Norman:

Agricultural land and farm buildings are exempt from business rates. Decisions on reliefs and exemptions will be considered as part of the fundamental review of business rates.

In response to COVID-19, the Government has provided 100 per cent business rates relief to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure in 2020-21, including riding schools.

■ Save as You Earn: Resignations**Paul Bristow:**[\[95239\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of changing the rules governing Save As You Earn (SAYE) schemes to make resignation from an employer a good leaver reason.

Jesse Norman:

Save As You Earn (SAYE) is a scheme that allows employees to save up to £500 a month over a three or five year savings contract. Savings can be taken as cash, or used to purchase tax-advantaged company shares at a price determined at the start of the contract. The scheme is intended to support staff retention and engagement, by encouraging employees to regularly save towards a financial reward offered by the employer.

The SAYE scheme allows businesses to distinguish between a “good leaver” and a “bad leaver” if an employee leaves within the agreed savings period. The Government believes that these current rules are an appropriate way to support the policy’s aims. “Good leavers”, such as those who leave the company on retirement or redundancy, can retain the scheme’s tax advantages when exercising their share options. Where employees leave the company voluntarily, they can still withdraw their accrued savings in the scheme, but do not receive tax advantaged shares. No assessment has been made of making resignation from an employer a “good leaver” reason.

The Government keeps all taxes and reliefs under review.

■ Social Security Benefits**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[95676\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on changes to the benefit cap.

Steve Barclay:

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of ministerial discussions are not normally disclosed. Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has a statutory obligation to review the levels of the benefit cap at least once in each Parliament unless an early election is called, as it was last year. A review will take place at an appropriate point in the future.

■ Working Tax Credit: Bath

Wera Hobhouse: [\[95172\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children have received the £20 per week uplift in working tax credit basic element payments in Bath in each month since that uplift was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The latest available information on the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit at the parliamentary constituency level is for April 2020. In April 2020, the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit in Bath was 500.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-geographical-analyses-december-2013>.

Information on following months is not readily available. The next update to this publication will provide statistics relating to December 2020 and will be available in January 2021.

Final annual information on families with children receiving Working Tax Credits is published once a year and updated each July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2018-to-2019>.

■ Working Tax Credit: Blaydon

Liz Twist: [\[95187\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children have received the £20 per week uplift in working tax credit basic element payments in Blaydon in each month since it was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The latest available information on the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit at the parliamentary constituency level is for April 2020. In April 2020, the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit in Blaydon was 1,000.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-geographical-analyses-december-2013>.

Information on following months is not readily available. The next update to this publication will provide statistics relating to December 2020 and will be available in January 2021.

Final annual information on families with children receiving Working Tax Credits is published once a year and updated each July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2018-to-2019>.

■ Working Tax Credit: Huddersfield

Mr Barry Sheerman: **[95001]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children have received the £20 per week uplift in working tax credit basic element payments in Huddersfield in each month since that uplift was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The latest available information on the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit at the parliamentary constituency level is for April 2020. In April 2020, the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit in Huddersfield was 2,100.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-geographical-analyses-december-2013>.

Information on following months is not readily available. The next update to this publication will provide statistics relating to December 2020 and will be available in January 2021.

Final annual information on families with children receiving Working Tax Credits is published once a year and updated each July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2018-to-2019>.

■ Working Tax Credit: Newport West

Ruth Jones: **[95221]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children have received the £20 per week uplift in working tax credit basic element payments in Newport West in each month since it was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The latest available information on the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit at the parliamentary constituency level is for April 2020. In April 2020, the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit in Newport West was 1,200.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-provisional-awards-geographical-analyses-december-2013>.

Information on following months is not readily available. The next update to this publication will provide statistics relating to December 2020 and will be available in January 2021.

Final annual information on families with children receiving Working Tax Credits is published once a year and updated each July.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-and-working-tax-credits-statistics-finalised-annual-awards-2018-to-2019>.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment: Environment Protection

Dr Luke Evans:

[95231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support people into jobs or training opportunities aligned to the development of the Green Economy.

Mims Davies:

Across Government we are developing policies to support people to pivot to high demand, growth sectors, including low-carbon and climate resilient jobs. There are already over 460,000 people working in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country and by 2030 the UK could support up to 2 million green jobs.

DWP's Jobcentre Plus network supports thousands of jobseekers each year to move into the labour market, including jobs in the Green Economy. The Government's pledge to double the number of Work Coaches to 27,000 by March 2021 will ensure that jobseekers continue to have access this expert and tailored support. As announced on 8th July, we are continuing to support jobseekers by increasing participation in our sector-based work academy programmes (SWAP). We will continue to establish bespoke opportunities, including those within the Green Economy, working with employers and training providers to support jobseekers to fill job vacancies and pivot into new careers.

■ Jobcentres: Location

Wendy Chamberlain:

[95224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of jobcentre sites; and what plans she has for the future use of those sites.

Mims Davies:

There are currently 639 Jobcentres across the UK. DWP is evaluating the existing estates capacity and exploring options for new, temporary, premises to respond to the increased demand for services across the UK. Parliament will be updated once firm decisions are made on any new premises.

■ Jobcentres: Staff**Seema Malhotra:** [\[96076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the average number of claimants each work coach is supporting in each region.

Mims Davies:

The size of a Work Coach caseload varies as it is dependent on a number of factors, including the level of customer support required, the needs of the local labour market, the Work Coach working pattern and each claimant's Labour Market Regime.

The Department continually assesses the service being offered to customers and staff numbers, including the number of Work Coaches, are kept under constant review.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Sutton Coldfield**Mr Andrew Mitchell:** [\[93530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking with employers to help ensure as many young people as possible in Royal Sutton Coldfield benefit from the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Jobcentre Plus staff are meeting employers and organisations in their area to promote Kickstart and encourage participation with the scheme.

Officials have also engaged with representatives from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership to engage with their networks of local employers and organisations.

■ Pension Credit**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[95234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of initiatives to progress the awareness and take up of pension credit.

Guy Opperman:

The precise updated data on the effectiveness of the spring 2020 campaign is not yet able to be provided.

The purpose of the campaign was to raise Pension Credit awareness and test impact.

There was a 20% increase in telephone calls to the Pension Credit claim line (during the course of the campaign the weekly average was 2,493 phone calls compared to a weekly average in 2019 of 2,079 phone calls).

There was also significant engagement with social media and a spike of activity on viewing the Pension Credit website pages with more than 5,000 sessions on the launch day, 10 February (compared to 1,000 on 3 February).

However, it should be stressed that other factors may affect these numbers, including the BBC TV licensing decision and the effect of the Pandemic.

■ Pensions: Fraud

Neil Gray:

[95089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will provide a breakdown of the types of pension scams that have occurred since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

DWP is working across government and with regulators to monitor and respond to any increases in transfers or pension scams. To date, this monitoring has revealed little evidence to demonstrate an increase in either transfers or scams across the industry as a whole as confirmed by the independent regulator. This has been confirmed by responses from industry. The Government will continue to monitor and respond to any emerging evidence.

The Government established Project Bloom, a cross-government taskforce that brings together law enforcement, government and industry to share intelligence, raise awareness of and the reporting of scams through public communication campaigns, and take enforcement action where appropriate.

Please see links below for more information about the joint statement from Regulators and the Money Advice Service, and help available, produced by the Pension Protection Fund and supported by government.

<https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/covid-19-savers-stay-calm-dont-rush-financial-decisions>

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/sites/default/files/file-2020-05/COVID-19-and-your-pension.pdf>

The Government continues to work with Regulators and enforcement agencies to prevent scams and take appropriate action. In the period March - July 2020, 116 reports of possible pension fraud were received by Action Fraud, compared to 179 for the same period in 2019.

Project Bloom has identified that the methodology of scammers is continually evolving, moving away from the traditional type of theft of peoples pensions through setting up a sham scheme, towards investment related fraud. Investment related fraud includes persuading individuals to invest in ventures that do not exist or using multiple charging structures that the member is not aware of.

Neil Gray:

[95095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions her Department has had with (a) regulators, (b) pension providers and (c) HMRC on taking steps to encourage pension scam victims to report those scams.

Guy Opperman:

DWP works with other government departments, regulators, police, enforcement agencies and the pensions industry to raise public awareness of pension scams and

encourage the reporting of scams by victims. The Government established Project Bloom, a cross-government taskforce that brings together law enforcement, government and industry to share intelligence, raise awareness of and the reporting of scams through public communication campaigns, and take enforcement action where appropriate.

Project Bloom monitors the evolution of scam typology and the measures that all agencies including providers and financial professionals can take to help prevent scams.

The Government continues to drive forward and endorse better messaging from both TPR and FCA to the public and industry on how to identify a scam. Government helped facilitate and supported the joint statement by regulators at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, urging individuals not to make hasty pension decisions.

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/COVID-19-and-your-pension.pdf>.

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/media-hub/press-releases/2020-press-releases/covid-19-savers-stay-calm-and-dont-rush-financial-decisions>.

The Government is also using social media to further endorse the messaging from the regulators, with posts referencing Pension Scams and #ScamSmart in total across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn in the period March to September 2020.

The ScamSmart campaign and website have been live since 2014. It started by focusing on just Investment Scams and has grown to incorporate Pension Scams. The aim of all the activity under the ScamSmart brand is to alert consumers to the warning signs that indicate a possible scam is taking place and to drive action, getting consumers to use the FCA Warning List tool and the Register. The national media campaign which ran from July to November 2019 resulted in excess of 220,000 people visiting the website.

■ State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad

Alberto Costa:

[95122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to review the level of state pension received by British nationals living overseas.

Guy Opperman:

The UK State Pension is payable worldwide and annual index-linked increases (up-rating) are paid where there is a legal requirement to do so. For example, in countries where we have a reciprocal agreement that provides for up-rating. This policy is longstanding and has been supported by successive post-war Governments and Parliaments for over 70 years.

The government doesn't intend to change long standing policy.

■ Universal Credit: Birmingham Selly Oak**Steve McCabe:****[95980]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families with children received the £20 per week uplift in universal credit standard allowance payments, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 20 March 2020, in Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency, in each month since its introduction.

Will Quince:

The available information on the number of households with children with Universal Credit in payment, by parliamentary constituency, is published and can be found at:

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

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

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