

Daily Report

Tuesday, 6 October 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 06 October 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Beer

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[98232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of breweries that have closed in England in each of the last 10 years.

Paul Scully:

The latest ONS data (as of 5th October 2020) shows the overall number beer manufacturing enterprises in England from 2011 to 2020. Business openings and closures (VAT registrations or de-registrations) are not published at this level of industry detail.

Number of Beer Manufacturing Enterprises in England

DATE	ENGLAND
2011	490
2012	555
2013	645
2014	765
2015	855
2016	965
2017	1,060
2018	1,125
2019	1,150
2020	1,135

Source: ONS Business Counts

■ Commuters: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[96152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether employers are required to provide alternative transport for workers who cannot work from home and need to use public transport and who shielded during the covid-19 lockdown.

Paul Scully:

In order to keep the virus under control, it is important that people work safely. In order to help contain the virus, workers who can work effectively from home should do so over the winter. Where an employer, in consultation with their employee, judges an employee can carry out their normal duties from home they should do so. Public sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary. Anyone else who cannot work from home should go to their place of work.

The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if COVID-19 secure guidelines are followed closely. Employers should consult with their employees to determine who needs to come into the workplace safely taking account of a person's journey, caring responsibilities, protected characteristics, and other individual circumstances. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

■ Cosmetics: Animal Experiments**Caroline Lucas:**[\[96036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the decisions in Symrise AG, 18 August 2020, by the Board of Appeal of the European Chemicals Agency on requiring animal testing under REACH of ingredients solely and already used in cosmetics, and the incorporation of Article 18 of Regulation (EC) No. 2009/1223 via the Product Safety and Metrology (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, whether (a) all animal testing for ingredients used predominantly in cosmetics will be prohibited in the UK after 31 December 2020 and (b) there will be a prohibition on the sale in the UK of cosmetics ingredients tested on animals after March 2013 irrespective of where the testing was carried out or under which regulatory regime.

Paul Scully:

Following the end of the Transition Period, under the EU Withdrawal Act, existing EU legislation will be carried over into UK law. This includes both the REACH Regulation and the Cosmetics Regulation.

The use of animal testing to demonstrate the compliance of the final formulation of cosmetic products or their ingredients with the Cosmetics Regulation will remain prohibited in the UK after 31 December 2020. No animal testing of finished cosmetic products or their ingredients or combinations of ingredients in order to meet the requirements of the Cosmetics Regulation is allowed to take place in the UK.

The sale of cosmetics where the safety of ingredients is demonstrated through animal tests after March 2013 will remain prohibited in the UK after 31 December 2020

The safety of chemicals is regulated by DEFRA. In the case referred to, these tests were required under REACH in order to assess the risks to workers involved in the formulation of the substances.

■ Private Rented Housing: Energy

Sarah Olney: [98260]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to raise the minimum level of energy efficiency standard for private rented accommodation from band E to band D.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department has just launched a consultation on improving the energy performance of privately rented homes in England and Wales. Under the Government's recommended option, landlords would be required to reach EPC Band C for new tenancies from 1 April 2025 and all tenancies by 1 April 2028. The preferred policy option will deliver 7.9 MtCO₂e in carbon emission savings over Carbon Budgets 4 and 5. Landlords are encouraged to take advantage of the Green Homes Grant to fund necessary improvements.

■ Re-employment

Helen Hayes: [98256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to reduce the use of dismiss and re-engage tactics by employers.

Paul Scully:

I understand that this is an extremely difficult situation for employees to find themselves in. Ultimately these are commercial matters between employers and employees, and employers are free to offer the terms and conditions of employment which best suit their business needs, but Government is clear that employers must not discriminate unlawfully. In the vast majority of cases, employers want to do the right thing, and there are robust processes in place to prevent discrimination and abuse.

Helen Hayes: [98257]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with employers or employer bodies on the use of dismiss and re-engage tactics in negotiations with employees.

Paul Scully:

Details of meetings held by Ministers in the Department are recorded in our transparency data, which is published at:

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

Helen Hayes: [98258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of employers in receipt of Coronavirus Job Retention

Scheme payments who have adopted dismiss and re-engage tactics when negotiating terms and conditions changes with employees.

Paul Scully:

As of 20 September 2020, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has helped 1.2 million employers across the UK furlough 9.6 million jobs. The data does not include information on the decisions a business makes on its recruitment or dismissal practices.

■ **Summertime: Coronavirus**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[98146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of the UK remaining on British Summer Time to help (a) people's health and wellbeing and (b) limit the spread of covid-19.

Paul Scully:

The Government believes that the current daylight-saving arrangements represent the optimal use of the available daylight across the UK.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Holiday Leave**

Paula Barker:

[\[96215\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the compliance of Cabinet Office guidance to government departments on annual leave carry-over with the Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

This information is not held centrally.

■ **Civil Servants: Greater London**

Grahame Morris:

[\[98208\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil service jobs are based in London.

Julia Lopez:

Cabinet Office published Civil Service Statistics 2020 on 26 August. [This is available on GOV.UK.](#)

■ **G7**

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[94545\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the Government's priorities are for the UK presidency of the G7 in 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government is developing an ambitious agenda for the UK's G7 Presidency which will focus on strengthening international cooperation on key health, economic and climate challenges, and ensuring that we build back better for all.

■ Home Education: Coronavirus**Sarah Champion:**[\[96078\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether educational activities for home schooled children are exempt from the requirements of the covid-19 rule of six.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No.2) (England) Regulations 2020 exempt all gatherings reasonably necessary for the purposes of education or training.

■ Public First**Neil Gray:**[\[76729\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Ministerial sign off was required for the award of the focus group contract to Public First.

Neil Gray:[\[76730\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date the contract for focus group work was awarded to Public First.

Neil Gray:[\[76731\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he met with representatives from Public First in the six months prior to the award of the focus group contract to that company.

Neil Gray:[\[76732\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which (a) Minister or (b) official initiated discussions with Public First on the focus group contract.

Neil Gray:[\[76733\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many contracts his Department has awarded for focus group work in the last two years; what the value was of each of those contracts; and to which companies those contracts were awarded.

Helen Hayes:[\[77726\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the nature is of the on-site resources provided by Public First Ltd to support Number 10 communications.

Helen Hayes:

[\[77727\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many contracts the Government has awarded to Public First Ltd in each year since 2016.

Julia Lopez:

Further to my [answer on 01 October 2020](#), competitive tenders are used across government, including by the Cabinet Office. It is also the case that there are certain circumstances where regulations permit that contracts can be awarded without a competition, including where there is extreme urgency.

As has been the case under successive administrations, this Government works with a number of suppliers to provide polling and focus group work. Public First was engaged by the Cabinet Office to test public opinion and reaction to government messaging, including focus groups for COVID-19 research. Details of this contract have been published on GOV.UK in the usual way.

No ministerial sign off was sought for the award of a contract to Public First. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on GOV.UK.

A claim for Judicial Review was issued by the High Court on 10 July 2020 in relation to the award of this contract. It would not, therefore, be appropriate to make further comment whilst this is subject to ongoing legal proceedings.

■ Supply Chain Coordination

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[95614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the review into Supply Chain Coordination Limited; and what plans he has to hold a public consultation during that review; and if he will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

In line with successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not usually disclosed.

■ Veterans: Charities

Jim Shannon:

[\[96068\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to support veterans charities which cannot cover their costs and are unable to undertake normal fundraising during the covid-19 outbreak.

Johnny Mercer:

The COVID-19 Impact Fund has provided nearly £6m in grants to over 100 Armed Forces charities across the United Kingdom, including a number who are based, or operate, in Northern Ireland to support them through the immediate effects of the pandemic. These charities have ranged from smaller local charities to larger, household names. Many charities have also utilised the Government's employment and other financial support schemes to help sustain them through the pandemic. In

addition the Government has continued to provide £10m to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, some of which has also been made available to help charities respond to the direct impacts of COVID-19. Ministers have continued to hold discussions with the Armed Forces charity sector throughout this period and continue to monitor the financial impact on the sector closely.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Compensation

Emily Thornberry: [\[96015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what effect the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill will have on the ability of service personnel and their families to claim compensation when knowledge of their medical condition pre-dates by more than six years the emergence of evidence that those personnel were exposed to the risk of medical harm while serving in the armed forces.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what effect the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill will have on the ability of service personnel and their families to claim compensation when knowledge of their medical condition pre-dates by more than six years the proof of a link between that medical condition and the service undertaken by those personnel in the armed forces.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish a schedule of examples based on previous cases where the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill would allow service personnel and their families to claim compensation for medical conditions suffered as a result of their service, alongside cases where knowledge of those conditions six years prior to a claim would disallow its submission.

Johnny Mercer:

The Bill introduces an absolute limit of six years for claims for personal injury or death arising from overseas military operations. It remains the case that the time limit can be calculated from either the date of the incident, or from the date of knowledge. A claimant's date of knowledge is the date on which they first had knowledge that their injury was significant and attributable to a negligent act or omission by an identifiable defendant. Outside of the time limit, the courts will not be able to allow claims.

This measure will not prevent Service personnel and veterans, or their families, from bringing claims against the MOD in connection with overseas operations within a reasonable timeframe, which most have done historically anyway. As set out in the Impact Assessment for the Bill, published on 17 September, we estimate the vast majority (94 per cent) of relevant claims by Service personnel and veterans are already brought within six years. We expect that a proportion of the claims brought

after six years in the past would be brought sooner in the future to avoid being caught by the new absolute time limit for claims.

We won't comment on individual cases that may have been outside of the time limit, had this Bill been in effect. However, to help minimise the risk that individuals run out of time to make a claim, we will ensure that everyone in the Armed Forces Community who might be impacted by these new measures is fully aware of this legislation and the time available for them to make a claim.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the families of service personnel who have died from conditions related to radiation exposure will have the right, under the terms of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill, to claim compensation, in the event that documents revealing the exposure of those personnel to radiation during the course of their service emerge more than six years after their death.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what effect the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill will have on the ability of the offspring of service personnel to claim compensation for genetic mutations, deformities and related illnesses in the event that knowledge of those conditions pre-dates by more than six years the proof of a link between those conditions and the exposure of the service personnel from whom they are descended to radiation.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the implications of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill for Brunel University's Cytogenetic Assessment of British Nuclear Test Veterans and their Offspring and the terms of the rights of those offspring to make claims for compensation from his Department on the basis of the findings of that assessment.

Emily Thornberry: [\[96021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the medical and scientific case to exempt claims arising from exposure to radiation from the scope of the six year rule set out in the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill, given the particular nature and past history of said claims.

Johnny Mercer:

Nuclear Test Veterans who believe they have suffered ill health due to their service have the right to apply for no-fault compensation under the War Pensions Scheme.

The limitation longstops in Part 2 of the Overseas Operations Bill will apply only to tort claims for personal injury and death, and claims under the Human Rights Act, in relation to overseas operations, which are brought after the provisions come into force. The six-year limitation longstops will therefore have no impact on claims under the War Pensions scheme, which includes disablement and death benefits.

■ Armed Forces: Medical Records

Justin Madders:

[\[97611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what guidance he has published on who should pay fees for medical records in respect of applicants to the armed forces.

James Heappey:

Delivery of medical screening for applicants to the Armed Forces is contracted out. Where General Practitioners raise a charge for the provision of medical records the costs are met by the Armed Forces via the contractor.

■ Clyde Naval Base

John Spellar:

[\[98152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the saving to the public purse of awarding the Maritime Defence Framework Contract at HMNB Clyde to Babcock.

Jeremy Quin:

The Maritime Support Delivery Framework was let under a single source contract to ensure continuity of supply and incorporated financial benefits to be delivered by Babcock during the contract. I am withholding the value as its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests.

■ Military Bases: Catering and Cleaning Services

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[98163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with ESS on proposed pay cuts and redundancies for caterers and cleaners at his Department's bases.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[98164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of ESS making (a) caterers and (b) cleaners redundant on service personnel.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence maintains a contract with ESS which sets out output requirements. These outputs are subject to regular assurance and audit. It is the responsibility of ESS to determine the level of staffing required to meet the stipulated outputs and to ensure that quality and delivery thresholds are hit.

■ Navy: Military Bases

John Spellar:

[\[98150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many companies are contracted to deliver in-service support of (a) complex warships, (b) submarines and (c) naval base services as part of the Maritime Support Delivery Framework; and how many companies are planned to deliver the Future Maritime Support Programme.

Jeremy Quin:

Most onshore support services at HM Naval Bases, which support HM ships and submarines, are managed under the Maritime Support Delivery Framework contracts. These two contracts cover a wide range of services and are managed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence by our Prime Contractors, Babcock and BAE Systems.

Babcock is contracted to support the Naval Bases at Devonport and Clyde, while BAE Systems supports the Naval Base at Portsmouth. Both Babcock and BAE Systems sub-contract these services further, but the Ministry of Defence does not hold information on these sub-contracts centrally.

The provision of services under the Future Maritime Support Programme is currently under commercial tender and negotiation. As a result, at this stage, the number of providers is unknown.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 5G****Luke Pollard:**[\[97717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to create a nationwide 5G network.

Matt Warman:

The Government is committed to the delivery of world-class digital infrastructure, including 5G, across the UK. Our ambition is for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027.

All four mobile network operators have launched 5G networks, with 5G services now available in over 100 towns and cities across the UK. Whilst the vast majority of investment in 5G will be made by industry, the department is funding the research and trials of 5G networks through the £200m 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme which invests in targeted projects across the UK to build the commercial case for 5G.

The Government is also committed to reducing the barriers to the deployment of mobile infrastructure. As part of this, the Government has announced that, subject to a technical consultation, it intends to take forward reforms to the planning system to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage. The Government also intends to consult on whether changes to the Electronic Communications Code are needed to support these aims.

■ Television Licences: Older People**Jim Shannon:**[\[96070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has had recent discussions with TV Licensing on payment methods for elderly people who (a) do not bank online, (b) do not have a current account and (c) are uncomfortable returning forms in the post with their account particulars because of the risk of identity theft.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government has said the BBC must look urgently at how it can use its substantial licence fee income to support older people, and must ensure that it supports those affected by its decision on the over 75s concession.

The BBC is responsible for the collection and enforcement of the licence fee. The BBC, through its licensing arm TV Licensing, offers customers a range of options for paying for their TV Licence. This includes instalment options and different mechanisms such as Direct Debit, bank transfer and Paypoint.

For those who had previously received a free over 75s TV licence but will have to pay from 1 August, the BBC is also introducing the 75+ Plan: a new TV licence payment plan which enables people to pay in equal weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments, if they don't want to pay the licence fee all in one go. Those over 75 who register for the 75+ plan can pay over the counter with cash or a debit card at any PayPoint location, or over the phone or online with a credit or debit card. They can also set up a Direct Debit for monthly payments. The BBC has also set up specialist telephone contact centres to help people affected by the change to the over 75s concession.

EDUCATION**■ Adoption Support Fund: Mental Health Services****Tulip Siddiq:****[97660]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to provide (a) therapeutic and (b) other support to adoptive families through the Adoption Support Fund on a long-term basis.

Vicky Ford:

Improving adoption, including adoption support, is a manifesto commitment of this government.

The Adoption Support Fund provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies to pay for essential therapeutic services for children who have left the care system either through adoption or special guardianship order. Since its launch in 2015, the Adoption Support Fund has approved almost £175 million to deliver support to over 60,000 families. The Adoption Support Fund COVID-19 Scheme has provided over £6 million to support up to 61,000 families to meet needs arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.

On 17 July, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review, which will set out the government's spending plans for the next 3 years. We will consider future funding and scope for the Adoption Support Fund as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review discussions.

■ Assessments: Coronavirus**Mike Amesbury:****[94535]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of catch-up teaching support provided to former Year 13 students who have opted to sit exams in October 2020 as a result of those exams previously not taking place due to covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Nick Gibb:

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 disruption on attainment and progress is a key research priority for the Government, and we have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to consider catch up needs and monitor progress over the course of the year.

Additional funding of up to £96 million to support 16-19 year olds for the 2020/21 academic year is available through the National Tutoring Programme, enabling schools and colleges to provide small group tuition for disadvantaged students whose learning has been disrupted as a result of COVID-19.

A and AS level entry figures for the autumn series have been published and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entries-for-as-and-a-level-autumn-2020-exam-series>.

■ Children: Dyscalculia**Tulip Siddiq:****[94495]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish guidance on teaching children with dyscalculia on his Department's website.

Vicky Ford:

The department has contracted with the Whole School Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Consortium, led by nasen, to provide support to the SEND schools' workforce.

The Consortium has produced resources and training to enable schools to review their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision to ensure that they can identify and meet the needs of pupils effectively. The department has also funded a range of organisations to develop specialist resources and training to support teachers to identify and effectively meet the needs of pupils with autism, specific learning difficulties, including dyscalculia and dyslexia, speech, language and communication needs, sensory impairments, and physical disabilities.

All materials funded by the department are hosted on the SEND Gateway, an online portal which offers education professionals free, easy to access to high-quality information, resources and training for identifying and meeting the needs of children with SEND. The SEND Gateway can be accessed here:

<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/>.

■ Children: Mental Health

Sarah Olney:

[96145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to prioritise policy on the mental health and wellbeing of children.

Vicky Ford:

The government is committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people. The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has policy responsibility for children and young people's mental health. We are working closely with them and taking significant steps to support the mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people in education.

We have particularly prioritised children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. Getting children and young people back into school and college is itself key to their wellbeing. 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.

To ensure that staff are equipped to support wellbeing as children and young people returned to schools and colleges, we made it a central part of our guidance both on remote education and on the return to school. We supported this with a range of training and materials, including webinars which have been accessed by thousands of education staff and accelerating training on how to teach about mental health as part of the new relationships, sex and health curriculum, so that all pupils can benefit from this long-term requirement.

To continue this support we are investing £8 million in the Wellbeing for Education Return 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 funding expert advisers in every area of England to train and support schools and colleges during the autumn and spring terms. Further information about the Wellbeing for Education Return programme is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-for-education-return-grant-s31-grant-determination-letter>.

In further education, the department has provided £5.4 million of competitive grant funding through the College Collaboration Fund and 5 of the projects funded support student and staff mental health and wellbeing through online programmes and remote support.

In the long term, we remain committed to our major joint green paper delivery programme with DHSC and NHS England, including 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. Mental health support teams are part of the commitment made in the NHS England Long Term Plan that funding for mental health services will grow faster than the overall NHS budget, creating a new ringfenced local investment fund for all ages worth at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023-24. This will mean that by 2023-24, at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 years will be able to access support via NHS England funded mental health services.

We are also continuing to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable children, including by supporting the £7 million 'See, Hear, Respond service' led by Barnardo's, in partnership with national children's charities and local organisations, to support vulnerable children at most risk of harm or having negative experiences on their health and wellbeing. Providing additional support through a £6.5 million COVID-19 Adoption Support Fund scheme to support 61,000 adoptive and special guardianship families and extending our £1 million mental health assessment pilots for looked-after children until March 2021. We will also be considering the issues around provision for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health issues as part of our special educational needs and disabilities review.

■ **Children's Centres: Coronavirus**

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[96212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to ensure that no children's centres are closed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

The decision on whether to keep Sure Start children's centres open in response to the COVID-19 outbreak is a decision for local authorities to take.

Local authorities have a duty under the Childcare Act (2006) to ensure that there are sufficient children's centres to meet the needs of local families, and a duty to consult where permanent changes are planned to local children's centre provision. If a council decides to close a Sure Start children's centre on a permanent basis, statutory guidance requires them to demonstrate that local children and families will not be adversely affected.

■ **Educational Institutions and Nurseries: Coronavirus**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[96037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chief Inspector for Ofsted on ensuring that assessments of the financial performance of state (a) schools, (b) nurseries and (c) colleges are not detrimentally affected by spending on additional (i) cleaning required by covid-19 risk assessments and (ii) classroom based staff to facilitate flexible deployment for clinically vulnerable staff, (iii) technical equipment and assistance for digitally excluded children without a centrally funded laptop and (iv) other demonstrable costs incurred as a result of following covid-19 guidance; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and I, have regular discussions with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector about the issues which are facing education and areas of concerns within Ofsted's remit. The Secretary of State's latest meeting took place on 30 September 2020.

Ofsted's routine inspections of early years, schools and further education colleges are currently suspended to enable them to focus on the challenge of responding to the COVID-19 outbreak and welcoming all children back to education. Routine Ofsted inspections will remain suspended for the autumn term, although inspectors will visit a sample of schools and colleges to discuss how they are managing the return to education of all their students. It is intended that routine Ofsted inspections will restart from January 2021, with the exact timing being kept under review.

Routine Ofsted inspections, under the Education Inspection Framework, consider whether resources are managed well, as part of the Leadership and Management judgement. They do not include an assessment of the financial performance of the nursery, school or college.

All nurseries and childminders (including maintained nursery schools) have benefitted from the continuation of early years entitlement funding during the COVID-19 outbreak. Schools and colleges have also continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout.

Schools have been able to claim additional funding for exceptional costs incurred due to COVID-19, between March and July 2020, such as additional cleaning required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases and increased premises costs to keep schools open for priority groups during the Easter and summer half term holidays. Following last year's Spending Round, pre-16 school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20, while funding for 16-19 year olds in colleges and school sixth forms is rising by £400 million in 2020-21.

Caroline Lucas:**[96038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2020 to Question 70379 on Schools and Nurseries: Coronavirus, if he will make it his policy to provide further additional funding for state (a) schools, (b) nurseries and (c) other education institutions to fund (i) monies spent and (ii) planned spending on additional (A) cleaning required by covid-19 risk assessments and (B) classroom based staff to facilitate flexible deployment for clinically vulnerable staff and (C) other demonstrable costs incurred as a result of following covid-19 guidance.

Nick Gibb:

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

Schools have been eligible to claim for: increased premises related costs associated with keeping schools open over the Easter and summer half term holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not in school, where schools are not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements. The Department has published detailed guidance on the fund at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools>.

The first claims window for the fund closed on 21 July. All claims for funding within the specified cost categories and maximum limit have already been paid. The Department is assessing all other claims, which will be paid later in the autumn if approved.

There will also be a further opportunity in autumn for schools to claim for exceptional costs they faced between March to July. This second claims window will be available for schools who were unable to claim in the summer and will be for the same eligible cost categories.

As set out in the Department's reopening guidance, schools should use their existing resources when planning to welcome all children back for the autumn. The guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#funding>.

Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year, as usual, regardless of partial or complete closure. That will ensure that they are able to continue to pay their staff and meet their other regular financial commitments.

All nurseries and childminders (including maintained nursery schools) have benefitted from the continuation of early years entitlement funding during the COVID-19 outbreak, and as they typically rely on private income for a significant proportion of their income, they have also been able to access support to furlough their staff via the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme.

Nurseries and childminders cannot claim for specific costs incurred due to increased premises costs needed to keep schools open during school holidays, or over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements as a result of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases. The Department continues to look at the costs associated with COVID-19 to secure the best and most appropriate support for nurseries and childminders.

The Department also expects colleges and universities to prioritise the health and safety of their staff and students and put in place measures that apply to their individual circumstances. The Department has provided £256 million of additional funding for academic year 2020-21 starting from August for student hardship funds and mental health support. In addition, further education providers have been able to use their 16-19 Bursary Fund to purchase devices for students to support remote education.

■ Employment

Stuart Anderson:

[96191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has put in place following the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to support employers in (a) retaining and (b) upskilling workers (i) now and (ii) in the future.

Gillian Keegan:

The government is providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations), for the National Skills Fund.

The National Skills Fund will support adults to learn and reach their potential in the labour market.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, recently announced that for adults who do not currently have a level 3 qualification, the government will be fully funding their first full level 3 through the National Skills Fund. We will target this level 3 entitlement at subjects and qualifications with economic value and the strongest alignment with government priorities, to ensure the best possible returns for individuals, employers and the nation.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, also announced the launch of our new digital bootcamps, in 6 areas, to support local regions and employers to fill in-demand vacancies. The bootcamp training courses will provide valuable skills based on employer demand and will offer a fast track to a job interview on completion. Pending the success of the initial bootcamps, we are planning to expand the digital bootcamps to more of the country from Spring 2021 and we also want to extend this model to include other technical skills training.

The government remains committed to consulting on aspects of the National Skills Fund to ensure that we develop a fund that helps adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future. We are continuing to review the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 outbreak and we are considering the most appropriate time and approach we can take to launch the consultation, ensuring we have meaningful discussions with employers, providers and users.

Alongside the National Skills Fund, the department has been working to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. In his Summer Economic Update, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced investment of over £500 million to deliver a package of support for people to access the training and develop the skills they will need to go on to high-quality, secure and fulfilling employment. The Skills Recovery Package included:

- Apprenticeships: A new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire who is aged 24 or below, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire who is aged 25 and over, from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021.
- Traineeships: £111 million to triple the scale and reform traineeships for those aged 16 - 24 (25 with an Education, Health and Care plan): with additional funding

available to providers in 2020-21 to support 30,000 new places. We have also introduced, for the first time, payments of £1,000 per trainee for employers who offer new or additional work placements (up to 10 trainees).

- Careers information, advice and guidance: £32 million over 2 years to help 269,000 more people of all ages receive advice from the National Careers Service.
- Sector-based work academy programme (SWAP): £17 million to triple the number of SWAP placements in 2020/21, enough funding to support an extra 40,000 job seekers with additional training opportunities and the chance of a job.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also announced a new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people aged 16 to 24 claiming Universal Credit. Funding available for six-month job placements will cover 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week – and employers will be able to top this wage up. Employers can apply next month and the scheme will start in autumn. There will be no cap on the number of places available.

The government appreciates the importance of adult education to improving people's life chances. We will continue to explore options within adult education to aid the post COVID-19 recovery.

■ Outdoor Education: Coronavirus

Anthony Mangnall:

[94550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support (a) Outward Bound, (b) the Field Studies Council and (c) other school residential providers during the covid-19 outbreak while those providers are unable to function in their usual capacity.

Nick Gibb:

As of 4 July providers offering out-of-school activities to children have been able to open for both indoor and outdoor provision with safety measures in place. Providers are also able to resume non-overnight domestic educational visits and the Department has updated our protective measures guidance for these providers to support them to do so as safely as possible, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

We continue to advise against domestic overnight or overseas educational visits and residential provision for the time being. This is consistent with the latest government guidance on meeting people from outside your household, which advises that you should not stay overnight away from your home with members of more than 2 households. We continue to keep this position under review, and will continue to be guided by the best scientific and medical advice, to ensure that the right decisions are taken at the right time. This guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>.

The Government has also made financial support available to employers and the self-employed, including sole traders and limited company directors. Residential providers that have been adversely affected by COVID-19 can find out what financial support is available for their business here: <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

They may be eligible for the Job Support Scheme, tax relief, loans or cash grants depending on their circumstances. Information on the Job Support Scheme can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/job-support-scheme>.

■ Primary Education: Coronavirus

Catherine West:

[96141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he is providing to primary schools on enabling prospective parents to visit those schools in advance of school admissions deadlines during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities are required, through the School Admissions Code and the School Information (England) Regulations 2008, to provide parents with information about all schools in their area ahead of application deadlines, through publishing a composite prospectus.

Traditionally, schools have also held open events and arranged visits for prospective parents in the autumn term. This year, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, schools have also had to consider how to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.

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

This sets out a framework for school leaders to put in place a range of proportionate protective measures for children, staff and visitors. These include minimising contacts between groups and maintaining safe distance where possible; encouraging regular handwashing; and enhanced cleaning. As a result, face to face open events and visits are unlikely to be possible and schools are considering alternatives.

The provision of information to parents remains an important part of enabling them to make an informed choice about the schools they wish their children to attend.

The Department is aware that many schools have worked creatively to do this, but if a school does decide to hold a face to face event it is essential that a risk assessment is carried out and appropriate control measures are put in place, in line with the guidance.

■ Qualifications

Mr Richard Holden:

[97051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people aged (a) over 18 and (b) over 23 who do not have a level 3 qualification, by (i) local authority and (ii) Parliamentary constituency.

Gillian Keegan:

The attached document contains local authority and parliamentary constituency level data showing the proportion of the population aged 16-64 without an A level or equivalent qualification, according to Annual Population Survey estimates.

Attachments:

1. 97051_Table [97051_16-64_population_without_A_level_qualifications.xls]

■ Remote Education: Coronavirus

Nick Fletcher:

[96219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2020 to Question 90289 on Remote Education: Coronavirus, if he will make it compulsory for schools to remotely educate whole classes rather than stating that such schools should plan to do so.

Nick Gibb:

On 1 October, the Department published a temporary continuity direction which makes it clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to COVID-19. This will come into effect from 22 October 2020. The direction poses no additional expectations on the quality of remote education expected of schools beyond those set out in this guidance.

Alongside the direction, the Department also announced further remote education support to assist schools and further education (FE) colleges in meeting the remote education expectations set out in the schools guidance for full opening, published in July, and the autumn term guidance for FE colleges, published in August, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> ; and <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>.

The support package will be available over the coming months to schools or FE colleges seeking additional support, and can be found here:

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

For schools, the Department's support includes 250,000 laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and development resources for staff, including a good practice guide and school-led webinars. We are also investing £1.5m of additional funding to expand the EdTech Demonstrator programme, which provides peer-to-

peer support for schools and colleges. For colleges, the Department's support package will include 80 grants of £1,000 to colleges across England, providing additional training and support for mentors and coaches specialising in assisting teachers with remote education.

The package is designed to help schools and colleges build on and deliver their existing plans in the event that individual or groups of pupils are unable to attend school because of COVID-19 in line with guidance and the law. This adds to existing support outlined in the Answer of 22 September 2020, including resources available from Oak National Academy.

Schools and colleges have worked hard over the summer and the autumn term to prepare for full reopening and to develop remote education contingency plans. This is testament to their commitment to ensuring any missed education is recovered and that we prevent the attainment gap from widening further. We have a shared responsibility for working to ensure this generation of young people do not face long-term disadvantage.

■ Sixth Form Education: Portsmouth

Stephen Morgan:

[95738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on the educational outcomes of sixth form students in Portsmouth of recent trends in the number of those students who are self-isolating as a result of having covid-19 symptoms and are unable to return to their sixth form until they receive the results of their covid-19 tests.

Gillian Keegan:

In Portsmouth, as set out in national guidance, every further education (FE) provider should ensure they have a strong contingency plan in place for high quality remote education for all students by the end of September, if individuals or groups are asked to isolate, or the setting has to be partially or fully closed. The national guidance can be found at: <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>.

We know that FE providers delivered aspects of provision remotely prior to national lockdown and this has been successfully expanded over recent months, so providers are well placed to respond quickly if the need arises.

Similarly, as set out in the guidance for the full opening of schools, where a pupil is unable to attend a secondary 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. This guidance can be found at:

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

This guidance applies equally to sixth form students who may be self-isolating whilst awaiting COVID-19 test results, and seeks to ensure that their education continues until such time as they can return to a school or college setting.

■ Special Educational Needs

Rachael Maskell: [\[96111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason the process for establishing an Education, Health and Care Plan for SEND children is dependent on a diagnosis.

Rachael Maskell: [\[96112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason the process for establishing an Education, Health and Care Plan for SEND children is dependent on the medical model of disability and not the social model of disability.

Vicky Ford:

As set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must assess the need for an education, health and care (EHC) plan where a child or young person has or may have special educational needs, and where it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHC plan. A medical diagnosis of an illness or disability is not required to secure an EHC needs assessment or final EHC plan.

The special educational needs and disabilities Code of Practice sets out that local authorities may develop criteria as guidelines to help them decide when it is necessary to carry out an EHC needs assessment (and following assessment, to decide whether it is necessary to issue an EHC plan). However, local authorities must be prepared to depart from those criteria where there is a compelling reason to do so, in any particular case, and demonstrate their willingness to do so where individual circumstances warrant such a departure. Local authorities must not apply a blanket policy to particular groups of children or young persons or certain types of need, as this would prevent the consideration of a child's or young person's needs.

■ Vocational Education: Finance

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[96002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to introduce grant funding for vocational education up to Level 3 for learners aged 19 and over.

Gillian Keegan:

The government is providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations), for the National Skills Fund. The National Skills Fund will support adults to learn and reach their potential in the labour market.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, recently announced that for adults who do not currently have a level 3 qualification, the government will be fully funding their first full level 3 through the National Skills Fund.

Currently, adults who are between the ages of 19 – 23 are eligible for full funding for their first full level 3. We are now extending eligibility for a first full level 3 so adults who are above the age of 23 can also benefit from level 3 courses and qualifications with high economic value and strong alignment with government priorities.

This offer will focus on the valuable skills, including vocational skills, that will help adults get ahead in the labour market, ensuring the best possible returns for individuals, employers and the nation.

The government remains committed to consulting on aspects of the National Skills Fund to ensure that we develop a fund that helps adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future.

We are continuing to review the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 outbreak and we are considering the most appropriate time and approach we can take to launch the consultation, ensuring we have meaningful discussions with employers, providers and users.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Welfare

Richard Fuller:

[\[96035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timetable is for bringing forward legislative proposals on animal sentience.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to further strengthening our world-leading animal welfare standards. We have committed to bringing in new laws on animal sentience. Any necessary changes required to domestic legislation will be made in an effective and credible way and will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows.

■ Disability: Plastics

Sarah Olney:

[\[98263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how disabled people who need plastic straws can access them following the ban on the sale and distribution of single-use plastic items.

Rebecca Pow:

Single-use plastic straws can still be purchased from registered pharmacies (both in-store and online) and can be provided in catering establishments on request to any customer, without proof of need. These exemptions will ensure that those that require straws can continue to access them safely and independently.

■ Environment Agency: Finance

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[98265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2020 to Question 95729, whether the Environmental Agency received enough funding from all of its sources of funding to reach its estimated investment need for flood and coastal protection.

Rebecca Pow:

The 2020 Budget announced £5.2 billion of Defra capital investment for the six years starting in 2021. This equates to £866 million per year. In addition there will be partnership funding contributions, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government investment direct to local authorities and revenue investment for the maintenance of defences.

Subject to the upcoming comprehensive spending review, it is very likely the overall level of investment over the six years from 2021 will exceed the £1 billion per year identified in the Environment Agency's Long Term Investment Scenarios.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[98266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2020 to Question 95729, how much funding the Environment Agency has received from all its sources of funding including Government investment in each year since 2010.

Rebecca Pow:

The table below shows all the sources of funding for Environment Agency (EA) expenditure by year since 2010/11. This includes central government funding to the Environment Agency, together with local levy and other sources which includes partnership-funding-contributions to Environment Agency schemes that are partially funded by government Grant in Aid.

Estimated Total Flood and Coastal Risk Management Expenditure through Environment Agency (EA), 2010/11 to 2019/20 (£m)

FINANCIAL YEAR	EA CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING RESOURCE	EA CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING CAPITAL	EA LOCAL LEVY	EA FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES	TOTAL
2010/11	291.6	360.0	30.9	17.1	699.6
2011/12	287.8	260.7	33.7	16.9	599.1
2012/13	268.0	269.1	20.2	27.2	584.5
2013/14	250.6	315.3	29.1	39.4	634.4
2014/15	282.6	466.7	24.1	42.9	816.3

FINANCIAL YEAR	EA CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING RESOURCE	EA CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING CAPITAL	EA LOCAL LEVY	EA FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES	TOTAL
2015/16	274.5	390.7	18.2	55.8	739.2
2016/17	314.6	446.9	27.1	55.0	843.6
2017/18	338.2	403.1	29.3	49.8	820.4
2018/19	304.8	453.0	35.5	42.8	836.1
2019/20*	316.7	514.1	38.9	38.0	907.7

*Note that for 2019/20 the accounts have not yet been finalised for the last financial year, these figures are still subject to change.

■ Flood Control: Yorkshire and the Humber

Rachael Maskell: [\[98240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to hold the Yorkshire flood conference.

Rachael Maskell: [\[98241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to hold the Yorkshire flood conference in York.

Rachael Maskell: [\[98242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has decided to hold smaller flood summits in place of the planned flood conference for Yorkshire.

Rachael Maskell: [\[98243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to hold a North Yorkshire flood summit in place of the planned Yorkshire flood conference.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises the impact that flooding has had on individuals, businesses and local communities. As floods Minister, I have continued to engage with a range of flood-affected Members across the Yorkshire area since the November 2019 flooding.

The hon. Member will be aware that during the adjournment debate of 30 September I confirmed that I will be meeting with flood-affected Members alongside the Secretary of State on 8 October, with a focus on South Yorkshire following the letter from the hon. Member for Barnsley Central.

I will continue to discuss flood matters with colleagues from Yorkshire and other areas across the country, going forward.

■ **Food: Finance**

Layla Moran:

[98280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to allocate additional funding to food producers to ensure a regular food supply during winter 2020-21.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain. Our food security depends on supply from diverse sources, from strong domestic production as well as imports from stable and diverse sources. This ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

Our thorough preparations for leaving the EU in 2019, alongside the lessons we have learned from the range of interventions deployed during the Covid-19 response provide a robust foundation for planning on food supply this winter.

We are currently working alongside industry and across Government including with the Devolved Administrations to review our plans for the end of this year. These will incorporate the potential concurrence of further peaks of Covid-19, supply chain risks at the end of the transition period and other potential risks such as severe weather and seasonal flu.

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

The Government appreciates that parts of the food and farming sectors are currently facing unprecedented challenges as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Farmers and food processors are, where eligible, able to apply for public support through the various Covid-19 related Government schemes including Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs). On 24 September, the Government announced an extension to its access to finance schemes to 30 November 2020 for new applicants and introduced 'Pay as you Grow' options for BBLs borrowers, who will be offered more time and greater flexibility for their repayments.

■ **Landfill**

Colleen Fletcher:

[98233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of the UK's waste that has gone to landfill in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

Statistics for the amount of UK waste sent to landfill are calculated by Defra at two-yearly intervals. The latest figures that are available are for 2018 and published by Eurostat – see below.

UK WASTE SENT TO LANDFILL - THOUSAND TONNES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

Calendar Year	Landfill (Waste deposited into or onto Land)	Total waste sent to final treatment	Landfill as a Percentage of Total waste treated
2014	48,178	205,436	23.5%
2016	52,271	214,287	24.4%
2018	50,789	214,653	23.7%

Source; Eurostat:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_wastrt/default/table?lang=en

By implementing measures in our Resources and Waste Strategy the Government will continue to reduce waste to landfill.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Mr John Baron:****[98154]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 13 July 2020 and follow-up correspondence of 13 August 2020 and 17 September 2020 regarding a constituent, Mr Philpot.

Victoria Prentis:

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member.

A reply will be sent to the hon. Member in due course.

■ **Moorland****Olivia Blake:****[98300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on the condition of moorlands.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra and its arm's length bodies hold a range of data which provides information on the condition of moorland.

Information from site specific surveys and monitoring of agri-environment agreements is available on the Government data website[1], or the Defra science site.[2]

Over half of the moorland in England is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its biological or geological value. Information on the condition of these SSSIs, which cover a range of habitat types, is held and published by Natural England and can be accessed at the link below.

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/NEInterimReports/ConditionByHabitat.aspx>

[1] <https://data.gov.uk/>

[2] <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/>

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Armed Conflict: Civilians

Tulip Siddiq: **[95704]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has to develop an action plan for its policy paper on the UK's approach to protection of civilians in armed conflict, published on 27 August 2020.

Nigel Adams:

HMG's policy paper on the UK's Approach to Protection of Civilians (PoC) in Armed Conflict reaffirms our commitment to the importance of PoC issues and aims to broaden understanding of our position. The paper reviews our 2010 strategy and outlines key domestic and multilateral activity. Taking into account the changing nature of conflicts and initiatives by a range of state and non-state actors, it outlines areas on which we will continue to focus our work across HMG, working with the international community and civil society to improve the protection of civilians. The UK will always uphold international laws, use our influence to encourage others to do likewise, seek to condemn those that do not, and push for accountability.

■ China: Christianity

Mr Gregory Campbell: **[97474]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Chinese authorities on the reports of persecution and monitoring of Christian groups and churches in that country.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians and other religious groups on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. The freedom to practise, change or share ones faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy. We regularly raise our concerns about freedom of religion or belief in China, including at the most recent session of the UN Human Rights Council on 25 September. We will continue to raise this important issue.

■ China: Commonwealth

Anthony Mangnall:

[97031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent of Chinese interference in the internal affairs of Commonwealth nations.

Nigel Adams:

China plays an important role as a development partner for some Commonwealth nations. However, we are also clear-eyed about the risks this poses in terms of China's economic and political influence. It has always been the case that where we have concerns we raise them. We continue to work with Commonwealth member states in close partnerships bilaterally, within the Commonwealth, and in other international fora across a wide range of issues. This work includes protecting and promoting the rule of law, democracy and human rights, addressing global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, and advocating for small and vulnerable states.

■ China: Overseas Aid

Michael Fabricant:

[95979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what Official Development Assistance is provided to the People's Republic of China; for which projects that assistance is so provided; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

The UK ended traditional bilateral aid programmes to China in 2011. As the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated, global challenges need global solutions, and we recognise that China has to be part of them as a major driver of global growth with increasing presence on the global stage. We now offer China expertise and skills, to help tackle global issues like climate change, which is firmly in the national interest, as well as using ODA to fund the ODA eligible portion of the costs of UK diplomatic staff in China, Chinese Chevening scholars and the British Council's ODA eligible activity in China.

The Statistics on International Development (SID) provides an overview of official UK spend on international development, including a breakdown of projects. The 2019 data was published on GOV.UK on 24 September, and can be viewed through the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921034/Data_Underlying_SID_2019.ods

Paul Girvan:

[96172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to remove all streams of Official Development Assistance from his Department to the People's Republic of China.

Nigel Adams:

The UK ended traditional bilateral aid programmes to China in 2011. As the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated, global challenges need global solutions, and we recognise that China has to be part of them as a major driver of global growth with increasing presence on the global stage. We now offer China expertise and skills to help tackle global issues like climate change, where action by China is critical to reaching our global climate goals, as well as using ODA to fund the ODA eligible portion of the costs of UK diplomatic staff in China, Chinese Chevening scholars and the British Council's ODA eligible activity in China.

As the Foreign Secretary stated to Parliament on 20 July, the UK wants a positive and constructive relationship with China. There are wide-ranging opportunities, from increasing trade to cooperation on climate change. However, where we have concerns, we raise them and where we need to take action we will.

Commonwealth: Overseas Aid**Anthony Mangnall:**[\[97032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the UK's Official Development Assistance spending went to Commonwealth nations in each year since 2010.

James Cleverly:

Information on annual UK bilateral aid to Commonwealth nations over the period 2009 to 2019 is contained in table A4g of the 2019 UK Statistics on International Development, published on Gov.UK (www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2019).

Department for International Development: Staff**Chris Law:**[\[95661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people were employed by the Department for International Development prior to the announcement of the merger of Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 16 June 2020.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: The total number of staff employed by Department for International Development prior to the announcement of the merger was 3414 (2655 UK based staff and 759 Staff Appointed In Country (SAIC)). The data extract closest to the reference date of 16th June 2020 is 30th June 2020.

Detainees: British Nationals Abroad**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[97661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many British citizens the Government classifies as arbitrarily detained or unfairly detained overseas.

Nigel Adams:

Where HMG provides consular assistance we can, and often do, intervene in cases where it is alleged that a British national detained overseas has not been treated in line with internationally-accepted standards. This includes, but is not limited to, cases where it is alleged that detention is arbitrary. We consider all interventions on a case by case basis. We do not keep central statistics relating to cases where arbitrary detention has been alleged.

■ Developing Countries: Procurement**Gareth Thomas:**[\[94323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Vulnerable Supply Chains Initiative in meeting that scheme's objectives; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

The Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility seeks to enable vulnerable people and supply chains in agriculture and the garments sectors to recover from and remain resilient to the economic and social impacts of COVID-19. It will leverage the reach and influence of responsible businesses through partnerships with expert organisations such as Fairtrade or the Ethical Trading Initiative.

In just under ten weeks the Facility established partnerships with 16 of the UK's largest retailers and wholesalers. We are already starting to see some of the results, such as the commencement of COVID-19 occupational health and safety training in over 20 garment factories in Bangladesh. Over the coming 12 months the portfolio will benefit over 800,000 people in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. I have every confidence the Facility will meet its objectives and ensure Britain is a force for good in the world.

■ Ethiopia: Human Rights**Afzal Khan:**[\[97716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representation he has made to his Ethiopian counterpart on human rights violations against the Oromo people in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: I [Minister Duddridge] am concerned by ongoing reports of human rights violations against the Oromo people that included the murder of Ethiopian musician Hachalu Hundessa on 29 June, and the violence that followed in Addis Ababa and the Oromia region. I [Minister Duddridge] visited Ethiopia from 27 - 29 July and was able to discuss these issues with the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the President of Oromia Region. I [Minister Duddridge] pushed for full and transparent investigations into the violence and that those detained are afforded due process and their cases heard promptly. I [Minister

Duddridge] also expressed the need for more peaceful dialogue between different ethnic groups in Ethiopia and for space to be given for political debate.

The UK welcomes the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to strengthen accountability. We also support civil society organisations in Ethiopia so that they can play an increasing role in monitoring human rights. We will track the situation, raise our concerns at the deaths of civilians, and raise the importance of respect for human rights in meetings with the Government of Ethiopia and regional leaders.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Staff**

Chris Law:

[\[95662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people were employed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office prior to the announcement of the merger of that Department with the Department for International Development on 16 June 2020.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: On 31 May 2020, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office employed between 5000 and 5499 UK Based staff and between 8000 and 8499 Locally Employed staff.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[95715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Response to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID, published on 22 September, were staff from the Department for International Development and the Foreign Office consulted about the decision to merge the departments.

James Duddridge:

Machinery of Government changes are for the Prime Minister to decide and as with any government change like this, the announcement came first to Parliament. We've been engaging closely with staff ever since the announcement and will continue to work closely with staff throughout the process of creating the new Department.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[95716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Response to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID, published on 22 September, which Members of Parliament were consulted on the merger.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign Secretary and the wider Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Ministerial Team engage with Parliamentarians from both Houses, both formally and informally, on a continual basis and discuss a wide-range of issues

when doing so. As such, it is not possible to provide a full account of the Parliamentarians whom they have consulted regarding the creation of the FCDO.

The Government has consulted widely across Parliament following the Prime Minister's 16 June statement announcing the forthcoming creation of the FCDO. Key Parliamentarians consulted include Sarah Champion MP (Chair of the International Development Committee); Tom Tugendhat MP (Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee); Baroness Anelay (Chair of the International Relations and Defence Committee); Mark Garnier MP (Chair of the Committees on Arms Exports Control) and Tobias Ellwood MP (Chair of the Defence Committee).

In addition to the above consultation, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary listened carefully to the views of ninety-nine Members of Parliament expressed over the course of discussion in the House immediately following their statements to the House of 16 June 2020, 18 June 2020 and 2 September 2020 on this subject.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[95717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Response to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID, published on 22 September, whether the joint ministerial teams previous portfolios will continue for the remainder of the 2019-21 Session.

James Duddridge:

Ministerial portfolios are the preserve of the Prime Minister to determine and Minister's portfolios have been published. Former FCO and DFID joint ministerial teams are continuing in their roles in FCDO with their previous portfolios.
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office>)

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Departmental Responsibilities

Preet Kaur Gill:

[95718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Response to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID, published on 22 September, if he will publish Departmental strategic objectives by the end of September.

James Duddridge:

The FCDO's strategic objectives will be shaped by the outcomes of the Integrated Review and Spending Review. They will be published in due course.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Non-Governmental Organisations

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[95714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government Response to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID, published 22 September, (a) which 26 NGOs did the Government consult with, (b) how were they selected and (c) when were they consulted.

James Duddridge:

The Government has engaged with 26 NGOs and will continue its ongoing engagement with NGOs both within the UK and internationally. Between the middle and end of August, Ministers carried out 50 calls with Stakeholders, as well as a round-table involving 16 Civil Society Organisations, chaired by Baroness Sugg on 19 August, which included a representative from BOND, which in turn represents over 400 organisations.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

Neil O'Brien: [\[97018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people work in the diversity and inclusion team in his Department's human resources department.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: Diversity and inclusion work is the responsibility of a number of people working in HR and across the network in the FCDO, including circa 25 members of staff from the former FCO and DFID diversity and inclusion teams.

The FCDO is committed to putting diversity and inclusion at its heart, and is working towards its aspiration to be the most inclusive government department.

■ Hamas: Human Rights

Chris Clarkson: [\[96220\]](#)

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 recent charges brought by Hamas against Gaza peace activists who took part in a video call with Israelis.

James Cleverly:

We strongly condemn the detention of peace activists by Hamas. The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas in its entirety. We monitor the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories closely, including reporting on human rights violations in our annual Human Rights and Democracy Report.

■ Iran: Detainees

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[97666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to extend diplomatic protection to more British citizens detained by Iran.

James Cleverly:

We continue to urge the Iranian Government to immediately release all arbitrarily detained British dual-nationals, and enable them to return to their families. We have consistently raised this with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We will consider all requests for diplomatic protection based on the individual circumstances of each case. We will continue to act in a way that we believe will lead to the best outcomes for these individuals.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[97668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assurances his Department has received that Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe will not have her imprisonment extended.

James Cleverly:

While we welcome Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe remaining on furlough, we remain extremely concerned about the welfare of all our British dual-nationals detained in Iran and continue to raise all their cases at the highest levels, discussing them at every opportunity with our Iranian counterparts. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises all of our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have been consistently clear that Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe must not be returned to prison.

■ Overseas Aid: Poverty

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[95722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 September 2020 to Question 91694 on overseas aid: poverty, whether any of the bottom billion poorest people live in Ukraine.

Wendy Morton:

Ukraine is a fragile lower middle-income country, with strategic importance for the long-term security, stability and prosperity of the wider region. Like all other ODA eligible countries with people living in poverty, the UK is confident that the spending of UK ODA in Ukraine is fully justified by its strategic value and the impact on the lives and welfare of its people.

■ Pakistan: Christianity

Gareth Thomas:

[\[96758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the persecution of Christians in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

We urge the Government of Pakistan to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens. We engage at a senior level with the Government of Pakistan on the mistreatment of religious and ethnic groups, including from the Ahmadiyya, Christian, Hazara and Shia communities. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister for South Asia, raised our concerns regarding Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 August. Lord Ahmad also raised these concerns with the Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, on 8 September.

The former Foreign Secretary [Jeremy Hunt MP] asked the Bishop of Truro to review what the former FCO could do to better support the plight of Christians globally. The Bishop responded with a report setting out the gravity of the issue, as well as practical recommendations for an enhanced response to the plight of Christians and people persecuted for holding other religions or beliefs. The UK Government has committed to implementing the Bishop's 22 recommendations in full, and work is continuing in the FCDO to implement them in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. More than half of the recommendations have already been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented.

■ Pakistan: Overseas Aid**Gareth Thomas:**[\[96759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what Official Development Assistance he has allocated to support (a) education and (b) healthcare in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

In 2019-20 the UK Government spent between £93-94 million on education and just over £30 million on healthcare (including health and nutrition programmes) in Pakistan.

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

■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[96095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what effect reports of human rights violations by Sri Lanka's security forces have on the extent of UK programmes operating in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned about the human rights situation in Sri Lanka, including instances of harassment, intimidation and surveillance of civil society groups and human rights defenders. The Minister of State for South Asia and Human Rights, Lord (Tariq)

Ahmad of Wimbledon, has raised these concerns with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. The UK Government made our concerns clear in statements delivered on behalf of the Core Group on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council in February, June and September, as well as reiterating our ongoing commitment to justice and accountability for victims of conflict and human rights violations.

Our programmes in Sri Lanka are designed to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation. These include the resettlement of victims of conflict, support to civil society and human rights organisations, and work to build the capacity of the security forces to support vulnerable groups, for example our work on sexual and gender based violence with the Sri Lanka Police Service.

All UK assistance is subject to robust Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) assessments that analyse the potential human rights, international humanitarian law, political and reputational risks of any proposed assistance to ensure that it supports our values and is consistent with our domestic and international human rights obligations.

■ **Syria: Armed Conflict**

Laura Farris:

[\[97056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support humanitarian action in (a) refugee camps and (b) elsewhere in Syria; and what steps he is taking with his international counterparts to help bring an end to the conflict within that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK has committed over £3.3 billion to support the humanitarian response in Syria and neighbouring countries hosting its refugees, such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. This includes a pledge of at least £300 million at the 2020 Brussels IV 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' donor conference.

Our aid provides life-saving support such as healthcare, food and water in camps for displaced Syrians, and in communities across the country. Our aid also supports education and job creation initiatives for Syrian refugees in the region.

The UK works to bring an end to the conflict through supporting the UN-facilitated political process to reach a lasting political settlement to the conflict which protects the rights of all Syrians. The UK uses its position at the UN Security Council to call on all parties to respect agreed ceasefires and to focus the international community on the conflict's impact on the civilian population.

■ **Syria: Human Rights**

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[97033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will support the Government of the Netherlands attempt to hold the Syrian Government

responsible under the United Nations Convention against Torture for gross human rights violations and torture.

James Cleverly:

The UK welcomes the action taken by the Netherlands Government to hold the Assad regime responsible for human rights violations under international law. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing gross human rights violations in Syria and support all efforts on accountability for the regime's crimes. The UK has provided £11 million to support accountability work for war crimes committed in Syria since 2012.

■ **Torture: British Nationals Abroad**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[97662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many cases of torture or suspected torture he recorded among British citizens detained overseas in 2019.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: As reported in the FCDO Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report 2019, published in July, between January and December 2019, British nationals reported 119 new allegations of torture or mistreatment overseas to consular staff. We take all allegations of torture or mistreatment seriously, and follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of each case.

■ **Victim Support: Lucie Blackman Trust**

Hannah Bardell: [\[94476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department allocates to the Victim Support Homicide Service/Lucie Blackman Trust to support families bereaved abroad.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) works with a number of partner organisations where they can provide expertise, specialist support or services that the FCDO cannot. The FCDO contributes grant funding, via the Ministry of Justice, to the Victim Support Homicide Service to provide support to eligible families bereaved abroad. The grant funding provided to the Lucie Blackman Trust is to support missing British nationals and their families.

■ **Visas: EU Countries**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[96003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government has made in securing a reciprocal tourist travel mobility agreement with the EU.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has discussed mobility arrangements across a number of areas as part of negotiations on our future relationship with the EU.

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

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

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

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Childbirth****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[96004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he is providing to NHS trusts on ensuring that partners are able to be with expectant mothers for the entirety of the birth during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, women have been able to have one birth partner of their choice with them during labour and childbirth as long as their birth partner is well and doesn't have COVID-19 symptoms.

If the birth partner has symptoms of coronavirus, they will not be allowed to go into the maternity suite, to safeguard the health of the woman, other women and babies, and the maternity staff. However, an alternative, well birth partner can attend in their place.

■ Coronavirus**Owen Thompson:**[\[92836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State of Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to recognise long covid as a medical condition.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of COVID-19 infection, including the prevalence, severity and duration of symptoms, and how best to support recovery.

The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study, to understand and improve long-term outcomes for survivors following hospitalisation with COVID-19. The research will inform future NHS service design and provision and the Government is currently considering options for future work in this area.

■ Coronavirus Act 2020

Alex Cunningham:

[\[95072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on where to publish the list of authorities using the powers in section 10 of Schedule 8 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 relating to temporary modification of mental health and mental capacity legislation in the event that the Government activated those powers.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

These powers have not been commenced in England and therefore no authorities have used them. Throughout the pandemic, the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement have been working very closely with National Health Service trusts and local systems to monitor pressure on services and any consequent need to commence these powers. On 30 September 2020, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced during the motion on the Coronavirus Act 2020, *Official Report*, 30 September, columns 392-393, that these provisions will be removed from the Act for England.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Ian Mearns:

[\[94394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the changes to covid-19 restrictions, announced on 22 September 2020, whether the (a) national and (b) local lockdown restrictions allow (i) established long-term partners who do not live in the same household to see each other and (ii) long-term partners who live in different households to meet with people from other households.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: Under the new gatherings limit of six people that applies nationally, individuals can meet anyone they want, whether they live with them or not.

Under the local restrictions that apply in parts of the country, individuals must not host or meet with people they do not live with in their home or garden, whether inside or outside of the affected area, unless they are in a support or childcare 'bubble'. Individuals can still enter a home or garden for specific purposes set out in the regulations, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/828/regulation/5>

■ Coronavirus: Funerals and Marriage

Ian Mearns:

[94395]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk of spread of covid-19 at (a) organised weddings and (b) organised funerals; and what the reason is for the different numbers allowed at those events.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: The Government recognises the significance of life events, particularly funerals, and treats them with sufficient sensitivity therefore there are different exemptions to the rule of six for weddings and funerals. The grieving process and related formal and informal rituals through which we mourn the passing of loved ones are important for the health and wellbeing of the bereaved.

Although gathering in larger groups does increase the risk of transmission, we have been clear that people should follow social distancing rules when gathering with people they do not live with. People should continue to follow this advice at these events, making sure to wash their hands, cover their face and maintain space. We continue to keep these restrictions under constant review and will ensure they remain proportionate to the threat to public health posed by COVID-19.

■ Coronavirus: Health Services

Andrew Gwynne:

[87501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in which local authorities the Your COVID Recovery programme is currently available; and if he will provide a timetable for the launch of the programme in areas that are not currently covered.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: Your COVID Recovery is an online tool being developed in two phases. Phase 1 was launched earlier this summer to enable patients and their families or carers to access further information around recovering post COVID-19. It provides a holistic approach to health and wellbeing and includes information on areas including mental health and wellbeing, to physical strength and returning to work. The development of Your COVID Recovery has been clinically led and by rehabilitation experts, with the support of recovered COVID-19 patients.

Phase 1 of the website is live and publicly available at the following link:

www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk

It covers all aspects of care following an individual having had COVID-19 either in an acute or community setting.

Phase 2 is the virtual rehabilitation aspect of the platform and will be launched later in the autumn.

Owen Thompson:

[92837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people suffering from the long term symptoms of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of COVID-19 infection, including the prevalence, severity and duration of symptoms, and how best to support recovery. The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study, to understand and improve long-term outcomes for survivors following hospitalisation with COVID-19. The research will inform future NHS service design and provision and the Government is currently considering options for future work in this area.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitality Industry**Mr Mark Harper:**[\[94354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution on covid-19 of 22 September 2020, Official Report, column 797, what advice SAGE provided to the Government on the effect on the R number of closing hospitality venues at 10pm.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: The Government receives a range of inputs in order to make all of its decisions relating to covid-19 restrictions, including inputs from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), from monitoring the impact of restrictions in local areas via the Joint Biosecurity Centre and monitoring international experience. SAGE has reviewed multiple options to reduce the 'R' number.

■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[86004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislation to give local authorities the power to enforce a minimum of one metre social distancing during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: We have always said there would be local outbreaks requiring local action. New powers came into force on 18 July, enabling local authorities to manage future outbreaks, which includes the power for local authorities to close individual premises or public outdoor spaces, and place restrictions on events.

These Regulations focus on local authorities' powers, but the police will have a role to enforce the rules that the local authority puts in place, particularly in regard to closed outdoor public spaces

The Joint Biosecurity Centre will continue to provide local authorities with data on local infection rates and provide an early indication of potential outbreaks. We continue to be led by scientists and data, so remain ready to regulate, where there is clear evidence to do so.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[907132\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the 10.00pm curfew on hospitality premises serving alcohol on limiting the second wave of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

We know social mixing is a major factor of transmission and compliance with social distancing and enforcement of regulations becomes more challenging later in the evening.

We have looked to other countries and taken an approach that balances reducing these contacts and suppressing the virus, with maintaining the livelihoods on those in the hospitality sector, by enabling businesses to remain open.

We want to see COVID-19-secure businesses remain open, and this is a balance, but contact tracing data has indicated patterns of contacts links to hospitality venues, restaurants, pubs and bar.

■ **Endometriosis: Medical Treatments**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[92781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of NHS treatment of endometriosis in each of the last three years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 September 2020]: The Department does not hold data on the cost of National Health Service treatment for endometriosis.

■ **General Practitioners: Finance**

Alex Sobel:

[\[90238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) funding from the public purse he plans to allocate to and (b) support he plans to provide to GPs to manage potential increases in demand for their services as a result of the health effects of long-term covid-19 symptoms.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of COVID-19 infection, including the prevalence, severity and duration of symptoms, and how best to support recovery. The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study (PHOSP-COVID), led by Christopher Brightling at the University of Leicester.

The NHS is working to expand access to COVID-19 rehabilitation treatments for those who have survived the virus but still have problems with breathing, mental health problems or other longer-term complications. As part of this, in July the NHS launched the 'Your COVID Recovery' service, a personalised programme to support the recovery of people who have been in hospital or suffered at home with the virus.

The research currently underway will continue to inform future NHS service design and provision.

■ **Health Services: Social Services**

Stuart C McDonald: [\[907125\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of negotiations on the future relationship with the EU on the health and social care sector.

Edward Argar:

The negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom are ongoing. The UK has been engaged continuously and constructively in those negotiations, and issues which affect the health and social care sector play an important part in them. We must not prejudge the outcome of those negotiations.

■ **Health: Social Services**

Stuart Anderson: [\[93685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to ensure that the mental health and wellbeing of people (a) in and (b) leaving social care is supported over the long term.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Local authorities must promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions relating to an individual.

The promotion of Wellbeing (also known as the Wellbeing Principle) is the principle duty of the Care Act 2014. The Care Act guidance states that the care and support system works to actively promote wellbeing and independence, and does not just wait to respond when people reach a crisis point.

■ **Maternity Services**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[94486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to support maternity services to implement fully an expanded Saving Babies' Lives care bundle across every maternity unit in England by 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Implementing the second version of the Saving Babies' Lives care bundle is a priority for NHS England and NHS Improvement. The quarterly implementation survey, which is used to monitor progress, was suspended during the earlier phases of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to minimise the burden on frontline services. This was reinstated this month.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[94487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to promote the development of specialist pre-term birth clinics.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Reduction of pre-term births is a new element in the Saving Babies Lives' Care Bundle version 2. The aim of this element is to reduce the number of pre-term births and to optimise care when pre term birth cannot be prevented. The establishment of pre-term birth clinics is outlined in the Care Bundle and has been widely promoted across all Local Maternity Systems, provider trusts and clinical networks.

Mental Health Services**Mike Hill:**[\[907122\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for urgent mental health service provision.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Clinical Review of Access Standards committed to testing new standards during 2020/21 for urgent mental health crisis care, including access to a liaison psychiatry team in accident and emergency departments within an hour of referral.

The NHS Long Term Plan set out measures to achieve 24 hours a day, seven days a week crisis care services, including a new national single point of access via NHS 111, and increased investment in alternative crisis services.

Duncan Baker:[\[907133\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to increase the number of mental health hubs in the community.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Long Term Plan set out a vision for providing integrated mental health support across primary and community services to ensure people can access the care, treatment and support at the earliest point of need.

All local areas have received funding to develop and deliver these new models of integrated care by 2023-24. The Government has not prescribed the form these should take though they may take the form of community mental health hubs.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Cat Smith:**[\[94459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to invest in child and adult mental health services for children and young people up to the age of 25.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are committed through our NHS Long Term Plan to investing at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year into mental health services by 2023-24. This will see an additional 345,000 children and young people able to access support through National Health Service-funded services or school- and college-based mental health support teams.

On the 8 September, Public Health England (PHE) launched a mental wellbeing campaign for children and young people. This involves an expansion of PHE's Better Health-Every Mind Matters website with content specifically for children and young people and their parents and carers. The Every Mind Matters campaign also targets university students with content on dealing with change, promoted via Snapchat influencers, and signposting them to resources from charity partner The Mix, which offers free information and support for under 25s on mental health, as well as relationships, sex, drugs, money and jobs.

■ **Mental Health Services: Young People**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[92684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the adequate provision of mental health services for young people.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[92686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that children and young people with mental health conditions receive the support they need throughout the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

National Health Service mental health services have remained open for business throughout this time. Our community, talking therapies and children and young people's services have deployed innovative digital tool to connect with people and provide ongoing support. For those with severe needs or in crisis, all NHS mental health providers have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines.

On 8 September, the Government launched a mental wellbeing campaign for children and young people. This involves an extension of Public Health England's Every Mind Matters webpage with content specifically for children and young people and their parents and carers.

We are taking action to ensure that children and young people have access to support in schools. Our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme will provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and access to resources they need to support children and young people, teachers and parents.

We remain committed to investing at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year into mental health services by 2023-24 through the NHS Long Term Plan. This funding underpins our aim for an additional 345,000 children and young people to be able to access support through NHS-funded services or school- and college-based mental health support teams.

■ Multiple Births

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[94355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the National Maternity and Perinatal Audit, what steps he is taking to ensure that maternity units implement the recommendations highlighted in the report to follow NICE guidance on multiple births.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Twins and Multiple Births Association's Quality Improvement Programme, funded by the Department, statistically proved that implementing the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance reduces twin stillbirths, neonatal deaths and neonatal admissions.

Based on the evidence generated through the Quality Improvement Programme, the Saving Babies' Lives Care Bundle (Version Two) strongly encourages providers and commissioners to implement NICE guidance and stipulates best practice for multiple pregnancies.

The NHS Long Term Plan highlights the Department's aim to roll out the Saving Babies' Lives Care Bundle across every maternity unit in England.

■ NHS Resolution: Public Appointments

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[96006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to announce the appointment of the new Chair of NHS Resolution; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 1 October 2020]: The assessment process for recruiting a new Chair of NHS Resolution is well advanced and the appointment will be announced in due course.

■ NHS: Social Services

Peter Grant:

[\[907134\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on ensuring that the NHS and social care sectors are adequately resourced during winter 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

This Government is committed to supporting the National Health Service and wider social care sector this winter, as it has throughout this year. In July, the Government announced £3 billion in additional funding, alongside £450 million for accident and emergency department upgrades and expansions. Similarly, we are supporting adult social care with a further £546 million of infection control funding over this winter. Where health policy is devolved, the devolved nations have benefitted from the appropriate Barnett consequential.

■ NHS: Weather**Mr Simon Clarke:**[\[907129\]](#)

What additional support he is providing to the NHS ahead of winter 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

This Government is committed to supporting the National Health Service and wider social care sector this winter, as it has throughout this year. In July, the Government announced £3 billion in additional funding, alongside £450 million for accident and emergency department upgrades and expansions. Similarly, we are supporting adult social care with a further £546 million of infection control funding over this winter. Where health policy is devolved, the devolved nations have benefitted from the appropriate Barnett consequential.

■ Pregnancy: Mental Health Services**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[94485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to provide an additional 24,000 women with access to specialist perinatal mental health support.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to increasing access to evidence-based care for women experiencing moderate, severe and complex mental health issues. This will benefit an additional 24,000 women per year by 2023/24, in addition to the extra 30,000 women getting specialist help by 2020/21. NHS England continues to expand capacity of inpatient mother and baby units, which support women with serious mental health issues, keeping them together with their babies.

From 2020/21 there will be a requirement for general practitioners to offer a six-eight week maternal postnatal health check for new mothers as an additional appointment to that for the baby. This should include a review of the mother's mental health and wellbeing, in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidance. Five years ago, 40% of the country had no access to specialist perinatal mental health care. Now, there is full geographical coverage for the first time, with specialist community perinatal mental health services in every one of the 44 local National Health Service areas.

■ Suicide**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[95165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people died by suicide within two months of attending A&E for a mental health problem in 2019-20.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: The information requested is not held.

■ Victims: Health Services

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[94509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) specialist support is available for and (b) steps he is taking to improve the treatment available to stalking victims with mental health conditions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government recognises the importance of a trauma-informed approach across the range of services in health that provide support to victims and survivors of abuse.

Mental health is one of our top priorities and we want to ensure that people can access services according to their clinical need.

All healthcare staff are required to complete training on safeguarding for children and adults to ensure they understand the key principles to identify and support victims of violence and abuse, including stalking.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Housing

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[89747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department and its contractors are taking to ensure that people in asylum accommodation can comply with the new public health stipulation of a maximum of six people gathering, in (a) hotels, (b) other initial accommodation centres and (c) HMOs used for asylum accommodation.

Chris Philp:

We have worked closely with Public Health to ensure asylum accommodation providers are following relevant guidance and are supporting asylum seekers to follow Public Health guidance within the estate.

Providers are applying controls to further support social distancing such as providing translated public health guidance and instruction to service users. Communal dining rooms have staggered meal times and appropriate marking to delineate social distancing. Where service users are isolating, food is placed outside of their rooms.

Laws prohibiting social gatherings of more than six people apart from a set of limited exemptions including work and education apply to everyone. The Home Office are working closely with accommodation providers to ensure that the new health stipulation of "the rule of six" is followed and implemented accordingly. The varying types of accommodation require different approaches, the Home Office are working closely with providers to understand the implementation of those approaches and to assure themselves that Public Health guidance is applied appropriately.

During these unprecedented times the government is working with a range of partners and across departments to secure further accommodation and the MOD has offered use of some of its sites. We have sought Public Health England/Wales advice

on how we can make best use of this accommodation, working within the constraints of the configuration, whilst minimising risks from covid-19.

We will follow the model which the MOD has adopted which is to continue to use the dormitories as shared rooms but to limit occupancy ensuring a minimum distance between beds of at least 2 metres. This will be complemented by a range of additional safety measures including increased cleaning of surfaces, availability of hand sanitisers, a track and trace system and extensive communications with residents around covid-19 control measures.

Stuart C McDonald: [95106]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Ministry of Defence sites (a) have been agreed for use and (b) are being considered for use to house asylum seekers; and what the location is of each such site.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office has agreed the use of two sites with the Ministry of Defence; Napier Barracks, Kent, and Penally Training Camp, Pembrokeshire. Discussions are ongoing about whether any other sites may meet requirements.

■ Contact Tracing: Passengers

Nick Thomas-Symonds: [83881]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many contacts Public Health England has made to addresses given by people on Passenger Locator Forms, returning from countries that are not exempt from the Government's travel corridors, since 3 July 2020.

Chris Philp:

Information relating to Health measures at the border and compliance with quarantine restrictions are available at [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border) on the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border>

This includes compliance checks made by Public Health England and the number of calls made to eligible UK arrivals.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Stephanie Peacock: [98267]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many fines have been issued to people breaking restrictions due to the covid-19 outbreak to date.

Stephanie Peacock: [98268]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much has been collected in fines from people breaking restrictions due to the covid-19 outbreak to date.

Kit Malthouse:

Data on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued under the new emergency COVID-19 health regulations are published by the National Police Chiefs' Council on a fortnightly basis. The latest information can be found here:

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/crime-is-close-to-pre-lockdown-levels-and-fines-given-to-the-public-rise-as-new-regulations-are-introduced-1>

Information on how much has been collected in fines from people breaking public health regulations is not held centrally.

■ Patrol Craft: English Channel**Luke Pollard:****[92891]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has received representations on vigilante civilian patrol boats reportedly operating in the English Channel.

Chris Philp:

The Home Secretary has been made aware that vigilante civilian patrol boats have allegedly been operating around the coast and condemns this activity: there is no place for vigilante justice in ordered society.

Members of the public should report any unusual or suspicious activity to their local police and must not take direct action against any individuals or groups.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Standards**Stuart Anderson:****[96190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional financial and other support she is putting in place to ensure that UK Visas and Immigration office staff are able to process all inquiries promptly.

Kevin Foster:

There are a variety of measures in place to ensure that UK Visas and Immigration office staff are able to process MP enquiries promptly.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic a dedicated telephone and email enquiry line has been created to ensure customers can get access to necessary information quickly. All calls are monitored and themes drawn out to ensure insight is feedback into the system, supporting staff to answer queries accurately and promptly.

UKVI has also maintained and proactively updated the gov.uk help pages to help aid self-serve to ensure more queries can be resolved without needing to directly contact the Home Office.

Performance against service standards in dealing with inquiries is regularly monitored and the Home Office will take further steps if necessary to ensure they are maintained.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ House of Commons: Travel Agents****Navendu Mishra:**[\[97732\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the House of Commons' Travel Office books tickets solely through the Trainline; and what comparative assessment the Commission has made of the cost of booking rail tickets through (a) Trainline and (b) directly from rail operators.

Pete Wishart:

The Parliamentary Travel Office (PTO) books train tickets through Trainline.

Rail tickets sold in the UK are regulated and the cost of booking tickets is the same irrespective of where the ticket is purchased.

Parliament, however, receives the 3% commission paid to the PTO service provider by Trainline – which effectively makes the tickets cheaper than purchasing elsewhere.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Baptism: Coronavirus****Rehman Chishti:**[\[96051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what comparative assessment he has made of the effect of the the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) (Amendment) (No. 5) Regulations 2020 on christenings and humanist naming ceremonies.

Luke Hall:

The changes to the Regulations are to reduce social interaction of groups larger than six, in order to reduce transmission of COVID-19. The Regulations do not prevent life cycle events from taking place, but they are subject to the rule of six.

If a family chooses to have their life cycle event as a private ceremony, then the number of attendees must be capped at six people (unless everyone attending is from the same household or support bubble, where numbers may be higher). However, there are circumstances where life cycle events happen within the course of communal worship. In such circumstances, unless relevant exemptions apply, groups must not interact in a way which breaches the rule of six.

Where a life cycle event takes part within a communal worship service, attendees can only mingle with the groups of up to six people that they attend with and they will be subject to the restrictions and guidance for communal worship which can be found in the Guidance for the Safe Use of Places of Worship.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Neil Coyle:

[\[96082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will help more people to qualify to be able to undertake External Wall Fire Review assessments.

Christopher Pincher:

I recognise concerns about the capacity within the sector for assessing external wall systems. My Department is working with the sector, including the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Institution of Fire Engineers, to develop a strategy that will boost capacity of professionals able to undertake these assessments.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Expenditure

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[96983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated to local authorities in England to support the work of fire and rescue services in each year since 2010.

Luke Hall:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: The funding that MHCLG allocates to local authorities in England is confirmed each year as part of the annual Local Government Finance Settlement. The Department publishes this data and the funding for both stand-alone Fire and Rescue Authorities and local authorities with fire and rescue responsibilities can be found online at the links below. The Home Office is the responsible department for fire services and provides in addition a number of specific grants to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

These publications show funding allocations but of course this Government believes that local authorities are best placed to know where the spending pressures lie in their local area. This funding is not ringfenced specifically for fire and rescue services, and local authorities may choose to spend the funding as they see fit. Each local authority is accountable to its local electorate for its spending.

This year's settlement provided the largest year on year increase in Core Spending Power for local authorities in almost a decade: £2.9 billion or an average 4.4 per cent real terms increase.

2015/16

[SETTLEMENT FUNDING ASSESSMENT MODEL:
FINAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT
2019 TO 2020](#)

2016/17 - 2020/21

[Key information for local authorities: final local
government finance settlement 2020 to 2021](#)

* The methodology for presenting local authority funding changed in 2015 and to go further back to 2010 would show an inconsistent series.

■ Planning Permission

Mark Eastwood:

[\[96206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Planning for the Future White Paper, what steps he is taking to secure broad public engagement at the planning application stage of the proposed new planning system.

Christopher Pincher:

The planning reforms set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper will make it simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with the planning system. The best way to bring forward new, significant development is by improving community engagement and input at an earlier stage in the planning process. At the plan making stage, people will have the opportunity to comment on local plans and deciding where proposed development should go. This will give certainty to local communities that development will be in the areas best identified for growth. There will still be the opportunity for people to comment on planning applications where these are still required.

■ Planning: Birmingham Edgbaston

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[96149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposals in the Planning for the Future consultation, published 6 August 2020, on the (a) maintenance of green spaces and (b) conservation of biodiversity in Birmingham, Edgbaston constituency.

Christopher Pincher:

In *Planning for the Future* we have proposed significant changes to the focus and the processes of planning – to secure better outcomes in terms of land for homes, beauty and environmental quality. One key proposal is that future local plans would put all land into one of three categories: areas for growth, for renewal or for protection. That proposal makes clear that, under such a system, local authorities would use the plan-making process to earmark valued green space, which need not be a designated area such as Local Green Space or Green Belt, for protection.

It is not feasible to try to predict how a particular local authority would apply the proposed rules, the detail of which will depend on the response to our current consultation. However, I can be clear that, in its plan-making and decisions, a local authority will still be expected to promote the provision and retention of green space and other green infrastructure, and to protect and enhance biodiversity in line with natural environment policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. Moreover, the Environment Bill gives local authorities a new power to require developers to provide net gains for biodiversity as a mandatory condition of planning permission.

■ Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus

Navendu Mishra:

[\[96208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of potential evictions in the private rented sector after the end of the covid-19 related eviction ban; and what support he is providing to (a) local authorities and (b) housing associations to rehouse people who have been so evicted.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to support tenants and landlords as we head into winter.

To keep tenants in their homes over the winter, the Government has legislated to require landlords to give tenants six months' notice before they can seek repossession, except in the most egregious cases.

Where possession cases do go to court, the judiciary will look to prioritise the most egregious cases such as those involving anti-social behaviour. New court rules have been introduced by HMCTS requiring landlords to set out any information they are aware of in relation to how their tenant, or any dependant of their tenant, has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Where this information is not provided, judges have the ability to adjourn proceedings. Additionally, bailiffs have been advised not to enforce possession orders in places where local public health restrictions have been introduced by Government through legislation, or between 11 December 2020 to 11 January 2021.

This Government remains committed to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping and is clear that no one should be without a roof over their heads. We have provided £4.3 billion to help councils to manage the impacts of COVID-19 which includes their work to support homeless people, including £3.7 billion which is not ringfenced, and £600 million to support social care and a further £3.2 million in emergency funding for local authorities to support vulnerable rough sleepers.

We are also providing a Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of £200 million to help local authorities plan and respond to their local homelessness pressures alongside delivering the Homelessness Reduction Grant of £63 million to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act and enable local authorities to do more to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas.

■ Reopening High Streets Safely Fund

Steve Reed:

[\[98228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2020 to Question 95648, how many local authorities have agreed a Reopening High Streets Safely Fund contract; and what the value of those agreed contracts is.

Luke Hall:

The department is in the process of agreeing contracts with 310 local authorities across England. The total value of the fund is £50 million. Local authorities are entitled to claim their full allocation on eligible activity up until 31 March 2021.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Agricultural Products: Australasia****Gareth Thomas:**[\[97450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in (a) Australia and (b) New Zealand on (i) quotas and (ii) tariff free quotas for trade in agricultural products after the transition period; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The United Kingdom's updated goods schedule was circulated at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for certification on 24 July 2018, including tariff rate quotas for a range of agricultural goods.

Australia and New Zealand were among the countries that expressed reservations. On 21st December 2018, the United Kingdom opened a process under Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to negotiate these tariff rate quotas with affected WTO Members. Officials have been engaging with concerned parties in this process. In addition, officials have been engaging with both Australia and New Zealand in Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which were launched in June.

■ Agriculture: USA**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[98156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking with the Northern Ireland Executive to promote the Northern Ireland agri-food sector in the US following the re-commencement of UK beef exports to that country.

Graham Stuart:

The resumption of market access for beef to the US marks an historic moment for our farmers and producers, with the first shipment originating from Northern Ireland on 30th September.

On 22nd June, in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for International Trade launched a Bounce Back Plan to support the food, drink and agriculture industries. The package offers initiatives to support the agri-food sector, both in Northern Ireland and across the whole of the UK, and includes support such as export masterclasses and virtual meet the buyer events. This bespoke package will further boost our trade efforts and complement new opportunities for Northern Irish companies presented by free trade agreements, such as with Japan.

■ **Battle of Trafalgar: Anniversaries**

Emily Thornberry: [\[98180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much money from the public purse was spent on her Department's Permanent Secretary attending the Ministry of Defence Trafalgar Night Dinner in Portsmouth on 21 October 2019; and what that money was spent on.

Greg Hands:

All expenditure associated with the Permanent Secretary's travel is published in line with the usual Transparency requirements, and can be viewed on gov.uk.

■ **Diplomatic Relations: Australia**

Emily Thornberry: [\[86600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, who was present at the dinner that she attended with the Australian High Commissioner on 28 August 2019.

Emily Thornberry: [\[90082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answers of 15 September 2020 to Questions 86601 and 86604, whether the only external people with whom she discussed issues relating to the UK-Australia relationship at her dinner with the Australian High Commissioner on 28 August 2019 were representatives of foreign governments.

Greg Hands:

The Government does not routinely release detailed information about ministerial engagements.

■ **Imports: Israel**

David Simmonds: [\[96235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with Israeli companies on exporting to the UK UV-light technology developed in Israel to kill germs.

Graham Stuart:

None. The importation of specific product lines is facilitated by the Department for Health and Social Care, as the lead department for domestic healthcare policy and sponsor of both the NHS and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

■ **Overseas Trade: Israel**

Alexander Stafford: [\[96230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to strengthen the UK's trade relationship with Israel.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[96231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what support she is providing to her Israeli counterpart to help expand Israel's commercial ties with the Gulf states.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

As my Rt Hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, stated during his recent visit to the region, the relationship between the United Kingdom and Israel is strong. We wish to strengthen it further.

We are working with Israeli officials to explore opportunities for expanding and deepening the United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement – and we will work with our Israeli counterparts to reinstate plans to host a United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Investment conference in London too.

We welcome Israel's normalisation of relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. As a friend to all three countries, we welcome the opportunities for increased trade and investment that this will provide.

■ Trade Agreements: Japan

Gareth Thomas:

[\[97449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on what date her Department plans to publish the full details and text of the trade agreement recently agreed between the UK and Japan; and is she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) will be finalised and signed in the coming weeks, before the full text is laid in parliament and made publicly available.

Furthermore, a parliamentary report, setting out in detail any areas where there are material differences between the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement and the CEPA, will be published, alongside a full Impact Assessment. Both the International Trade Committee and the International Agreements Sub-Committee will have the opportunity to scrutinise the deal and produce an independent report on the agreement.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[97750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which of the 16 chapter areas discussed during the fourth free trade agreement negotiating round with the US are now at an advanced stage in those talks.

Greg Hands:

In the fourth round of the UK/US free trade agreement, both sides continued to have detailed textual discussions and negotiators are now in the process of consolidating texts in the majority of chapter areas - an advanced stage of talks.

We have made particularly strong progress on small and medium-sized enterprises, where we have reached broad agreement on the Chapter's contents.

A full list of chapter areas discussed is released after each negotiating round in the Written Ministerial Statement and GOV.UK.

However, because negotiations are ongoing and discussions are therefore sensitive, it would not be prudent to provide precise details on progress in specific chapters at this stage.

■ Trade and Agriculture Commission

Emily Thornberry:

[\[91594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether members appointed to the Trade and Agriculture Commission on 10 July 2020 declared any potential conflicts of interest relating to the Government's tender process for the Trader Support Service to facilitate trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Greg Hands:

All members of the Trade and Agriculture Commission are required to declare any potential conflict of interest throughout the term of their appointment.

JUSTICE

■ Courts: Coronavirus

Ellie Reeves:

[\[96170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the announcement of 21 September 2020 entitled Eight more Nightingale Courts to deliver justice, when those courts will be operating at full capacity; if he will publish the ongoing costs for each of those locations; and when more nightingale courts will be operational.

Chris Philp:

The dates on which the additional eight Nightingale courts will be open are as follows:

NIGHTINGALE COURT	OPENING DATES
Salford – Lowry Theatre	28/09/20
York – Hilton Hotel	29/09/20
Middlesbrough – Jury's Inn	30/09/20
Bristol	w/c 12/10/20
Chester	w/c 19/10/20
Liverpool	w/c 19/10/20
Winchester	w/c 26/10/20

NIGHTINGALE COURT**OPENING DATES**

Cirencester

To be confirmed

These additional hearing venues are being rapidly set up to alleviate the pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic and as such we are aiming to list cases to the maximum capacity.

The Nightingale courts announced to date will have an overall cost at the end of the financial year of £10m, excluding judicial costs. This covers both set up cost – including the cost of IT and video equipment, furniture, portage, enabling works to prepare a site, and other costs such as security equipment - as well as ongoing running costs at each venue which reflect local commercial agreements. We are assessing further potential Nightingale court sites and announcements will be made in due course.

HMCTS has published an update on their response to covid-19 in the criminal courts in England and Wales (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-and-tribunal-recovery-update-in-response-to-coronavirus>). This provides a comprehensive update on recovery plans and includes details about Nightingale courts.

■ Courts: Criminal Proceedings

Mark Eastwood:

[96205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many court proceedings initiated by police forces in England and Wales have been unsuccessful on the grounds that notice of intended prosecution arrived after the 14 day period from the alleged offence.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) does not hold data centrally on the number of court proceedings initiated by police forces in England and Wales that have been unsuccessful on the grounds that the notice of intended prosecution arrived after the 14-day period from the alleged offence.

HMCTS holds data with regards to the:

- a) number of cases acquitted after trial;
- b) number of cases dismissed as a result of no evidence being offered; and
- c) number of cases withdrawn.

When cases are listed and a subsequent issue with the notice of intended prosecution is identified the case is discontinued.

■ Crown Court: Hove

Peter Kyle:

[\[96138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the backlog of cases has been at Hove Trial Centre for (a) adult and (b) youth cases in each quarter since the first quarter of 2018.

Chris Philp:

It is not possible to separately identify the criminal caseload at Hove Trial Centre in the data that is centrally collated by the Ministry of Justice. Hove is a satellite of Lewes Crown Court and as such it does not have its own caseload.

A table detailing the volume of outstanding cases at Lewes Crown Court by adult and youth from Q1 2018 to Q2 2020 (latest published) can be found below:

Table 1: Outstanding ¹ cases in the Lewes Crown Court, quarterly Q1 2018 - Q2 2020

Year	Quarter	ALL CASES	
		Total	Under 18 and over 18
2018	Q1	965	949 16
	Q2	908	891 17
	Q3	773	766 7
	Q4	583	576 7
2019	Q1	564	558 6
	Q2	529	522 7
	Q3	521	519 2
	Q4	554	550 4
2020	Q1	596	585 11
	Q2	643	634 9

1) Outstanding cases excludes cases that have a live bench warrant issued on the case, at the end of the period. The number of cases outstanding at the end of each period will not be equal to the sum of cases outstanding at the start of the period and those received during the period, minus cases disposed due to the exclusion of cases that have a live bench warrant issued on the case.

■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Sam Tarry:

[\[96218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to increase domestic violence victims' access to legal aid in response to increasing levels of domestic violence during the covid-19 outbreak.

Alex Chalk:

Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime and we are determined to protect and support the victims of abuse and their children and bring perpetrators to justice.

The legal aid scheme is designed to target funding at those that need it most, and this government has always been clear that publicly-funded legal advice is available to victims of domestic abuse in family proceedings, subject to certain criteria being met.

Legal aid is and remains available for the purpose of obtaining urgent protection, such as non-molestation orders, without any evidence requirements and the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) has the power to waive all upper financial eligibility limits. Victims of domestic abuse are also eligible for legal aid when applying for indefinite leave to remain or for residence cards, subject to the statutory means and merits tests.

We recently widened the evidence requirements for domestic abuse victims, making it easier for victims to obtain and provide the evidence they need to access legal aid.

We are currently conducting a review of the means test, where we are specifically considering the experiences of victims of domestic abuse. The review is scheduled to conclude in Spring 2021, at which point we will publish a full consultation paper.

We have also committed an extra £76 million to support the most vulnerable during the pandemic, including survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. We're also providing £3 million that will go to specialist services for children who have both been directly and indirectly affected by domestic abuse.

■ Prisoners: Appeals

Alex Cunningham:

[\[96888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recent High Court judgment *R (Harrison and others) v. Secretary of State for Justice* [2020] EWHC 2096.

Alex Chalk:

The Government announced in June 2019 that the Law Commission will conduct a fundamental review of the law on how and where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of that review, the Government invited the Law Commission to make recommendations about how marriage by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme for all marriages that is simple, fair and consistent. The Government will decide on provision on the basis of the Law Commission's recommendations.

The Law Commission has now published a consultation paper as part of its review and will welcome responses from all.

■ Prisons: Overcrowding

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[98235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to reduce overcrowding in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

We are committed to reducing crowding across the prison estate which is why we are investing up to £2.5bn to provide 10,000 additional prison places to ensure we have the prison places we need to manage incoming demand.

In addition, we have already delivered 2,100 uncrowded prison places at HMP/YOI Berwyn, 206 uncrowded places in a house block at HMP Stocken and continue to work at pace to deliver modern, decent, uncrowded prisons at the former HMP Wellingborough and HMP Glen Parva sites, which are due to open in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

Jim Shannon:

[\[96069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to tackle the backlog of rape cases that have not been tried as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and lockdown restrictions.

Chris Philp:

COVID-19 has been an unprecedented challenge for the criminal justice system, but we have kept courts open and cases flowing through the system throughout. The UK has been a global leader and we are ahead of comparable systems.

HMCTS published an update to the Court Recovery Plan in September, which sets out that court operating hours will be extended, alternative venues will be used as courts to increase capacity, and our continued use of technology to support remote of video hearings. Further measures to increase jury trial capacity are also being explored.

The courts continue to prioritise cases where the safety of the public and individuals is a concern. The most time-critical hearings have continued to take place in the Magistrates' Courts, including hearings where the defendant is in custody or there is a risk to the public. Magistrates' courts are now hearing all types of work. In Crown Courts, jury trials have now resumed in over 90% of our sites.

■ Television Licences: Non-payment**Paul Girvan:**[\[96173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a legal pardon for people who have a criminal conviction as a result of not paying for a television licence.

Alex Chalk:

There are currently no plans to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a legal pardon for people who have a criminal conviction as a result of not paying for a television licence.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Railways: Veterans****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[98155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will hold discussions with the Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner on the introduction of a veterans' railcard.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has had regular discussions on a wide range of issues with office holders in Northern Ireland including the Victims Commissioner and the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner, who was recently appointed to act as a voice and advocate for veterans as they make the transition to civilian life.

The Department for Transport have been leading on the programme to introduce railcards for veterans and, with support from the Office for Veterans' Affairs, have been working closely with the devolved administrations to determine how this is delivered across all parts of the UK. In Northern Ireland, the decision on implementing this proposal is for the Minister for Infrastructure to take.

■ Trade: Northern Ireland**Claire Hanna:**[\[97738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the (a) work plan and (b) programme for delivery of the Business Engagement Forum that the Government set up with Northern Ireland businesses.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Business Engagement Forum provides a space for Northern Ireland's businesses and business representatives to put forward proposals and provide feedback on how to maximise the free flow of trade.

The Government has now held at least 16 meetings of the Forum with over 60 businesses from a variety of sectors and geographical regions. Most recently this included meetings on FTA negotiations and agriculture, as well as a targeted session

with representatives from the aerospace sector. This is complemented by regular engagement carried out by Ministers and officials from across Whitehall.

To ensure that the Business Engagement Forum continues to provide a genuinely safe and flexible space for two-way conversations between the Government and Northern Ireland's business community, the Forum has no restrictive work plan or programme for delivery, and meetings are held in confidence.

TRANSPORT

■ **Cycling: Safety**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[98234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve road safety for cyclists.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 28 July the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking, with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. This includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over the next 5 years, which is the largest ever boost for cycling and walking, and will deliver transformational change. The plan includes a number of commitments which will deliver increased safety for cyclists, including the roll-out of segregated cycle lanes in towns and cities, a big increase in cycle training, higher safety standards for lorries and improved Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance.

The Department continues to deliver the commitments contained in the Government's response to the 2018 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Safety Review including a consultation on the review of the guidance in the Highway Code to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians which closes on the 27th October.

■ **Dartford-Thurrock Crossing: Electric Vehicles**

Gareth Johnson:

[\[97547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing the Dartford toll charges for owners of wholly electric vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

The Dartford Thurrock Crossing was designed to handle up to 135,000 vehicle movements each day, but it is not uncommon for over 180,000 vehicles to use the Crossing.

The Dartford Road User Charge was introduced in 2003 to manage user demand which currently exceeds the capacity of the Crossing. Given that low or zero emission vehicles also use scarce road capacity, there is a rationale for continuing to charge them to use the Crossing. The Department currently has no plans to remove charges for owners of wholly electric vehicles using the Crossing.

■ Electric Scooters

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[97467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure (a) widespread public understanding of the laws on e-scooters and (b) e-scooter retailers are advising customers on those laws.

Rachel Maclean:

Departmental communications have made clear that e-scooter use is illegal. Detailed guidance on this has been published on gov.uk and the Department has supported police enforcement campaigns for illegal e-scooter use.

E-scooter retailers should make the legal position for e-scooters known at the point of sale and the Department has previously written to retailers asking them to do so. Retailers who mislead customers can be in breach of Trading Standards rules.

In e-scooter trial areas where use of rental e-scooters is legal, local authorities and e-scooter operators are ensuring users are aware of the rules, including through signage and training for users.

■ Electric Scooters: Crime

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[97468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of e-scooters being sold by UK retailers and used illegally on roads.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has not made an assessment of the number of e-scooters being sold by UK retailers. Using a privately-owned e-scooter on the road or pavement is illegal and retailers should make their customers aware of this at the point of sale.

The Department recognises that people want to take advantage of the benefits that e-scooters offer and we are running trials of rental e-scooters in several areas.

■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen

Andrew Griffith: [\[96237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to bring forward plans for a nationwide hydrogen refuelling network.

Rachel Maclean:

The UK is well placed to be a leader in hydrogen fuel cell powered transportation and we are supporting hydrogen where the market favours its use. The UK has one of the largest hydrogen refuelling station networks in Europe. Our £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is increasing the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations. The programme is delivering new refuelling stations, upgrading some existing stations as well as deploying hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles.

■ Package Holidays: Internet

Matt Vickers: [\[96221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that travellers who booked holidays through (a) LoveHolidays and (b) On The Beach prior to the departure of those companies from ABTA have their bookings protected.

Matt Vickers: [\[96222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to ensure that travel firms operating out of the UK treat British holidaymakers equitably in the event that the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office advises holidaymakers against non-essential travel to a destination that those holidaymakers had made a booking to prior to that advice being released.

Robert Courts:

All travel agents trading in the UK must have an ATOL License and provide an ATOL certificate for holidays booked, regardless of their country of origin and regardless of ABTA membership. Consumers retain the same legal rights to a refund or a credit note for travel that is no longer possible. Where the travel agents are not liable to offer these, and FCDO guidance has changed, consumers should rely on their travel insurance.

■ Public Transport: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[96151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to update guidance for public transport providers to ensure that health risks for workers who shielded during the covid-19 lockdown are minimised.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Our priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been to keep people, especially vulnerable workers in high risk groups, safe by minimising the risk of transmission in transport settings. We keep our guidance under constant review as COVID-19 incidence and scientific evidence changes. Our safer transport guidance for operators contains detailed advice on communications, crowd management protocols, cleaning regimes and ventilation settings transport providers should use to provide a safe service for all passengers. It also sets out clear steps on how transport employers can protect their workers who are at higher risk from COVID-19, based on recommendations we have received from Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

Afzal Khan: [\[96186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to enforce the wearing of face coverings on public transport.

Rachel Maclean:

Since the introduction of the legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport in England, we have seen high levels of compliance on the network. However, we recognise that not everyone will follow these rules. Enforcement officers will take steps to engage, explain, encourage and enable passengers to wear face coverings, subject to exemptions. My Department continues to work closely with transport operators, the police and Transport for London to consider the approach to enforcement. We have already introduced stricter penalties for those failing to comply with face covering regulations as we seek to curb the spread of the virus.

■ **Rail Review**

Sarah Olney: [\[98261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the Government's response to the Williams Rail Review consultation which closed on 31 May 2019.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is committed to reforms that deliver a passenger-focused railway, with reliable and safe services. We have now ended the franchising system, paving the way for the wider reforms which will be set out in the upcoming Williams Review White Paper. The Government wants to make progress as quickly as it can, but the impact of Covid-19 has posed challenges. We will publish this as soon as the course of the Covid-19 pandemic allows.

■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[98274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the passenger experience of the Turn Up and Go assistance service.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[98275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of train stations in the UK offer a Turn Up and Go assistance service for disabled passengers.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

All train stations in the UK offer a Turn-Up and Go assistance service. Passengers can turn up at any station that they have identified as accessible to them and request assistance on to a train from a member of staff, or via a help point or a Freephone number – either this will be provided or, where reasonably practicable, alternative accessible transport offered at no extra cost to the passenger.

Research conducted by the Office of Rail and Road in 2017 showed that 72% of passengers who participated in the 'mystery shopper' exercise of turn-up-and-go services were satisfied with their journey experience and the quality of assistance they received.

■ Railways: Disability

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[98273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to improve the on-board train experience for disabled passengers.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Whilst operating under recent social distancing restrictions, train operating companies have continued to offer support and assistance to disabled passengers on-board trains, wherever and whenever it is sought. There are now over 14,000 modern vehicles in service benefit from audio visual passenger information systems, priority seating, dedicated wheelchair spaces and accessible toilets (where toilets are provided) which enhance the usability on-board trains by design.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[98276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the needs of disabled train passengers are met, whilst ensuring (a) their safety and (b) that current covid-19 guidance is adhered to.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is committed to ensuring that measures are in place for supporting disabled passengers on the national rail network during and after the pandemic. All train and station operators are still required to adhere to their Accessible Travel Policy obligations. The Rail Delivery Group has updated its guidance for train and station operators, so rail workers can remain safe without building barriers to travel for disabled passengers. The Office of Rail and Road will continue to monitor train and station operator's compliance with their Accessible Travel Policy obligations.

■ Railways: Fares

Sarah Olney:

[\[98262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with railway operators on making the price of a single rail journey equivalent of a return ticket for that journey.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department launched a trial of Single Leg Pricing with LNER on 2 January 2020, removing return tickets for journeys between London King's Cross and Leeds, Newcastle and Edinburgh. Removing returns has simplified the fares structure, with flexible single fares purchased just before travel now costing around half of the old return fare and no more singles priced at £1 less than the return. Passengers are able to mix and match tickets much more easily, providing better value for money, tickets that suit their travel plans and cheaper journeys overall.

■ Trainline: Coronavirus**Navendu Mishra:** [\[96209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the Government pays a commission to Trainline for tickets booked through that service during the covid-19 outbreak; and what the cost to the taxpayers purse of that commission since emergency measures were implemented during the outbreak is.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Trainline, like all Third Party Retailers, operates under a long term license issued by the Rail Delivery Group on behalf of the rail industry. This is part of the industry's Ticketing and Settlement Agreement. The Department has no role in determining commission rates. During the Covid crisis we have directed operators to encourage passengers to purchase online ahead of travel and online retailers, like Trainline, are one way passengers can buy their tickets online.

TREASURY**■ Beer: Excise Duties****Grahame Morris:** [\[98209\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 90116, how many small breweries will be affected by the proposals to convert small brewers relief to a cash basis.

Kemi Badenoch:

The proposal to convert Small Brewers Relief (SBR) to a cash basis would affect small breweries entitled to SBR, but would only have an impact if there are future changes to the value of the relief.

Grahame Morris: [\[98210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many small breweries (a) have and (b) have not been permitted to recalculate their production volumes for the purposes of small brewers relief in 2020-21.

Grahame Morris: [\[98211\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing breweries to recalculate their production volumes in 2020 for the purposes of small brewers relief.

Grahame Morris: [\[98212\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to allow small breweries to disregard beer spoilt during the covid-19 outbreak for calculating production volumes in 2020 for the purposes of small brewers' relief.

Kemi Badenoch:

UK law does not allow for in-year adjustments to be made to the current year's production for the purposes of Small Brewers Relief (SBR) after beer has been finished.

Brewers who have had to discard spoilt beer in 2020 due to COVID-19 have been able to reclaim the excise duty payable from HMRC in line with the requirements set out in HMRC Excise Public Notice 226. Where small brewers' production has been lower than expected due to reduced demand, this will be taken into account when calculating their SBR eligibility for 2021.

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme**Mark Tami:**[\[95992\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he has put in place for small businesses to access bounce back loans where their banking arrangements are solely with financial institutions that do not offer those loans.

John Glen:

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) was designed to ensure that the smallest businesses can access loans of up to £50,000, capped at 25% of firms' turnover in a matter of just days. The Government is providing lenders with a 100% guarantee on each loan to give them the confidence they need to support the smallest businesses in the country, and no interest payments are due for the first 12 months. As of 20th September, over 1.2 million facilities have been approved through BBLs representing a value of more than £38bn.

The Bounce Back Loan scheme rules do not mandate that the applicant must have a business relationship with the lender in order to receive a BBLs loan. The British Business Bank has so far accredited 28 BBLs lenders, including several non-banks and alternative lenders.

The Government does not intervene in their lending decisions.

Some banks have made good on their intention to invite applications from new customers, and many of those that are still only open to existing customers are regularly reviewing that position. The Government have always made clear to lenders that they should open to new customers as soon as it is operationally possible for them to do so.

Emma Hardy:[\[97692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to support businesses who were unable to access bounce back loans because (a) they did not have a business bank account open before July 2020 or (b) banks were refusing new applicants before the deadline.

John Glen:

On September 24 the Chancellor launched the Winter Economy Plan. As part of this, he announced the Government is extending the four temporary loan schemes which

have helped over a million businesses to date, to 30th November 2020 for new applications. This includes including the Bounce Back loans Scheme (BBLs). This extension means that even more businesses will be able to benefit from the schemes, which have supported over a 1.2million businesses to date.

Furthermore, the Government will continue working with lenders and business representatives to introduce a new, successor loan guarantee scheme, set to begin in January.

Some banks have made good on their intention to invite applications from new customers, and many of those that are still only open to existing customers are regularly reviewing that position. The Government have always made clear to lenders that they should open to new customers as soon as it is operationally possible for them to do so. Lenders are fully aware of the current urgency, so we would expect them to respond appropriately to their customers' needs.

■ **Bowling: VAT**

Andrew Rosindell:

[96005]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 81614 on Bowling: Coronavirus, what guidance his Department has issued to bowling alley businesses on the eligibility of the lower rate of VAT for bowling alleys.

Jesse Norman:

The temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism was introduced on 15 July to support the cash flow and viability of businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Hospitality for the purposes of this relief includes the supply of food and non-alcoholic beverages from restaurants, cafes and pubs for consumption on these premises. It also includes the supply of hot food and non-alcoholic hot beverages to take away. Where a bowling alley provides such hospitality they will benefit from the reduced rate, although admission to a bowling alley itself is not eligible. Further information on this can be found in VAT Guidance: reduced rate for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions on GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catering-takeaway-food-and-vat-notice-7091>.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 24 September that the temporary reduced rate for tourism and hospitality will be extended to 31 March 2021.

Luke Pollard:

[97026]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the reasons are for the exclusion of ten pin bowling businesses from the reduction in VAT for tourism and hospitality businesses.

Jesse Norman:

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July to support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and protect 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors, which have been severely affected by Covid-19.

Hospitality for the purposes of this relief includes the supply of food and non-alcoholic beverages from restaurants, cafes, pubs and similar establishments for consumption on the premises. It also includes the supply of hot food and non-alcoholic hot beverages to take away.

Where a bowling alley provides such hospitality, that hospitality will benefit from the reduced rate, although admission to a bowling alley itself is not eligible. Further information can be found in VAT Guidance: reduced rate for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catering-takeaway-food-and-vat-notice-7091>.

■ Credit Unions

Gareth Thomas: **[96751]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have belonged to a credit union in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: **[96752]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a credit union development strategy; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

According to the data held by the Prudential Regulation Authority, credit union membership for the past 10 years is as follows:

CREDIT UNION MEMBERSHIP

Year	Membership numbers
2009	1,259,183
2010	1,350,039
2011	1,427,812
2012	1,565,724
2013	1,660,610
2014	1,758,632
2015	1,850,503
2016	1,920,709
2017	1,969,152
2018	2,019,873
2019	2,070,452

The annual data for 2013 onwards is available online and can be found at <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/news?NewsTypes=571948d14c6943f7b5b7748ad80bef29&Taxonomies=5de036cac1ff46b49b8ac98c266de410&InfiniteScrolling=False&Direction=Latest>

The Government is committed to supporting credit unions, which play a vital role in the financial wellbeing of their communities, providing an ethical home for their members' savings, and affordable loans to those who may otherwise have to resort to high-cost lenders.

The Chancellor announced at Budget earlier this year that the Government intends to bring forward changes to the Credit Unions Act to allow credit unions to offer a wider range of products and services. This will allow credit unions to continue to grow sustainably for the future and support them in the vital role they play in financial inclusion.

The Government has no plans to publish a credit union development strategy.

■ Debts Written Off: Developing Countries

Zarah Sultana:

[98290]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) debt cancellation for lower-income countries from Governments, the IMF and World Bank, the private sector and all other creditors for 2020 and 2021 and (b) bringing forward legislative proposals similar to the Debt Relief (Developing Countries) Act 2010 to enforce on the private sector the terms of an international agreement for debt relief.

John Glen:

The Government is concerned about the debt vulnerabilities of low-income developing countries, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UK cancelled most of our low-income developing country debt under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. However, we have remained a global leader in advancing sovereign debt transparency and sustainability. In April 2020 the Chancellor joined his G20 counterparts to commit to a temporary suspension on debt service repayments from the 77 poorest countries under the debt service suspension initiative (DSSI). To date, the DSSI has supported 43 countries which have requested suspensions by freeing up \$5 billion 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.

The G20 agreed private sector DSSI participation should be voluntary and at borrowers' discretion. The Government continues to support this approach, which helps protect these countries' hard-won market access which will be essential for financing COVID recovery. Where borrowers do make requests, private creditors should implement the DSSI. Where sovereign debt reductions are necessary, it will be important for there to be fair and timely burden sharing between all creditor types, including commercial creditors.

■ Developing Countries: Debts

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[96204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to support the cancellation of debt owed by the world's poorest nations.

John Glen:

HM Government is concerned about the debt vulnerabilities of low-income developing countries, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UK cancelled most of our low-income developing country debt under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. However, we have remained a global leader in advancing sovereign debt transparency and sustainability. In April 2020 the Chancellor joined his G20 counterparts to commit to a temporary suspension on debt service repayments from the 77 poorest countries under the debt service suspension initiative (DSSI). To date, the DSSI has supported 43 countries which have requested suspensions by freeing up \$5 billion 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 and to facilitate durable economic recovery, with equitable burden sharing among all official and private creditors.

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[96214\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide financial support in addition to the provisions of his Winter Economy Plan announced on 24 September 2020 for businesses that continue to face capacity reduction as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has announced a package of measures in the Winter Economic Plan that will continue to protect jobs and help businesses through the uncertain months ahead as we continue to tackle the spread of the virus. The package includes a new Jobs Support Scheme, extending the Self Employment Income Support Scheme and 15% VAT cut for the hospitality and tourism sectors, and help for businesses in repaying government-backed loans. The Government will keep its support for the economy, including businesses affected by the virus, under review.

■ Employment

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[96033\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's definition is of a viable job.

Steve Barclay:

The Government, through the Job Support Scheme, is targeting support on those businesses that are being impacted by Coronavirus and who can support their employees doing some work, but that need more time for demand to recover.

As the Chancellor said, it is clear we are living with Coronavirus for a while, and therefore, our economy is likely to undergo a period of adjustment and it is right that our approach to economic support evolves.

Financial Services: UK Relations with EU

Gareth Thomas: [96747]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent progress he has made on achieving equivalence for British financial services in the EU from 1 January 2021.

John Glen:

Equivalence assessments are a technical process that each side is carrying out separately, distinct from the financial services negotiations in the FTA. The UK has completed its assessments for the EU following constructive engagement with our regulators, and will make decisions for the EU where it makes sense to do so.

Fuels: Tax Evasion

Mr Gregory Campbell: [98157]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to reduce the amount of money lost to the public purse as a result of fuel fraud in Northern Ireland.

Kemi Badenoch:

Fuel fraud is an important issue, particularly in Northern Ireland. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) continually refreshes its comprehensive anti-fraud oils strategy introduced in 2002, and the illicit market share in Northern Ireland has since reduced from 26% to 6% in 2018-19. More details can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907122/Measuring_tax_gaps_2020_edition.pdf

The Accutrace fuel marker, introduced into rebated fuel in 2015, presents criminals with a significant challenge and continues to be effective in driving down fuel fraud. HMRC has also expanded its capacity for fuel testing and investigation of fuel fraud in Northern Ireland.

Insurance: Coronavirus

David Mundell: [96008]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of the insurance industry on the availability of contingency insurance for live events during covid-19 outbreak.

David Mundell:

[\[96009\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support the Government is providing to the contingency insurance sector to help ensure the viability of contingency insurance market during the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector on its response to this unprecedented situation. We are working closely with the insurers, the trade bodies and regulators to understand what more the industry can do to help individuals and businesses in time of need, and how the insurance market delivers the support firms need as the economy reopens.

The Government is exploring all options to ensure businesses can build resilience following the outbreak of COVID-19. We encourage businesses encountering financial difficulty as a result of this unprecedented situation to review the initiatives in the Government's support package, such as Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, for which the application window has been extended to 30 November, and businesses rates holidays. We have taken steps to make our schemes deliverable, fair and targeted at those who need it the most. We continue to keep the Government support package under close review.

Any potential further insurance interventions will be assessed on a case by case basis; officials continue to gather and monitor information on how event providers are being affected by the current crisis and the availability of cover.

David Mundell:

[\[96810\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) functioning of the contingency insurance market and (b) ability of that market to provide sufficient support to the live events sector to enable that sector to plan for events to take place in 2021.

David Mundell:

[\[96811\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the extent of Government support required for contingency insurance suppliers to be able to adequately support the return of live events to the UK as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

David Mundell:

[\[96812\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received from (a) representatives from the insurance industry and (b) the Let Live Thrive campaign on the underwriting by Government of contingency insurance contracts to support the live events sector.

John Glen:

The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector on its response to this unprecedented situation. We are working closely with the insurers, the trade bodies and regulators to understand what more the industry can do to help

individuals and businesses in time of need, and how the insurance market delivers the support firms need as the economy reopens.

The Government is exploring all options to ensure businesses can build resilience following the outbreak of COVID-19. We encourage businesses encountering financial difficulty as a result of this unprecedented situation to review the initiatives in the Government's support package, such as Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, for which the application window has been extended to 30 November, and businesses rates holidays. We have taken steps to make our schemes deliverable, fair and targeted at those who need it the most. We continue to keep the Government support package under close review.

Any potential further insurance interventions, including for the contingency insurance sector, will be assessed on a case by case basis; officials continue to gather and monitor information on how event providers are being affected by the current crisis and the availability of cover. As part of this monitoring, the Government is open to receiving representations from (a) the insurance industry and (b) the Let Live Thrive campaign.

■ Remote Working: Tax Allowances

David Linden:

[\[97005\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking in addition to putting new guidance on gov.uk to raise awareness for the tax rebate for home-working.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) continue to engage with stakeholder groups, including employers, to raise awareness of the tax relief available to those working from home.

■ Roads: Freight

Rachel Reeves:

[\[97561\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of haulage and logistics companies who will be unable to find a customs brokerage service by 1 January 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The UK has a well-established customs intermediaries sector which serves British businesses trading outside the EU. The sector is varied and consists of a number of different business models, including specific customs agents, freight forwarders and fast parcel operators; all of which will require differing numbers of staff.

The sector is responding to the increased demand from traders. Government support of up to £84m has been designed to meet the needs of the sector to build capacity flexibly by covering training and IT, as well as recruitment.

The Government continues to monitor progress carefully and keeps support under review.

■ Self-employed

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[96803\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support self-employed people in September and October 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to supporting the self-employed population through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

Eligible individuals whose businesses have been adversely affected by COVID-19 can claim a second SEISS grant in September and up to 19 October 2020. This is worth 70 per cent of their average monthly trading profits and capped at £6,570 in total. As set out in the Winter Economic Plan, the SEISS grant will enter its third stage, providing critical support to the self-employed from November 2020 to April 2021.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants. This highlights that the UK continues to have one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world.

■ Tax Avoidance

Justin Madders:

[\[96946\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people who are subject to the loan charge are waiting to receive their settlement paperwork.

Jesse Norman:

After the Independent Review of the Loan Charge reported, HMRC wrote to taxpayers who had chosen to pause the settlement of their disguised remuneration scheme use asking if they wanted to reengage in the settlement process with HMRC.

Those who have actively engaged with HMRC and kept to the timelines HMRC set will have received their final settlement offer in time to meet the 30 September deadline for settling and submitting their 2018-19 tax return.

If taxpayers have exceptional reasons beyond their control that have prevented them from meeting the timeframes provided, they should make HMRC aware of this. HMRC are working closely with these taxpayers to provide any additional support they may need.

■ Tourism: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[\[98259\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what further financial steps he is taking to support people in the tourism sector who have become unemployed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

In its Plan for Jobs, the Government has announced unprecedented support to help unemployed people in Great Britain find a job. We are providing £1.2bn to significantly expand and enhance work search support, including doubling the number of work coaches, additional investment into the Flexible Support Fund to provide direct support at a local level, and using externally contracted provision to expand support even further.

Employees aged under 25 were about two and a half times as likely to work in a sector that was shut down, such as accommodation, travel and leisure, as other employees. Recognising that young people are particularly at risk, the government has also launched a new £2bn Kickstart Scheme, creating hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across Great Britain, as well as a guaranteed foundation of support to all 18-24 year olds on Universal Credit in the Intensive Worksearch group, through its new youth offer.

In England, the government will also support people to build the skills they need to get into work, including by providing funding to triple the number of traineeships and sector-based work academy placements, new payments to employers to hire apprentices and new funding to expand the National Career Service.

These measures will help support people who used to work in the tourism sector, but became unemployed as a result of Covid-19, to get back into work. The Government has also cut the rate of VAT applied to hospitality, accommodation and attractions, from 20% to 5%, for a period of six months which will help the tourism sector in general.

In addition, tourism businesses may be able to benefit from the new Job Support Scheme the government is introducing from 1 November 2020. All Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), including those in the tourism sector, will be eligible. Large businesses will be required to demonstrate that their business has been adversely affected by COVID-19, and the government expects that large employers will not be making capital distributions (such as dividends), while using the scheme.

■ UK Government Investments: Conflict of Interests**Mr Kevan Jones:****[95999]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the UKGI's compliance officer's official Protocol is in the event of a NED or UKGI employee's deliberate failure to declare a significant interest.

John Glen:

Staff or NEDs who do not declare a significant interest will be in breach of their contract of employment or letters of appointment respectively, and subject to appropriate disciplinary measures.

■ United Nations: Taxation

Dan Carden:

[96184]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing an intergovernmental tax body at the United Nations.

Jesse Norman:

The UK Government welcomes the current United Nations tax committee's efforts to foster universal participation in international legal instruments on tax matters and its work on capacity building.

The UK's priority is to maintain effective and representative arrangements for international cooperation in tax matters that respects member states' sovereignty and avoids duplication with the work of other international organisations. Therefore, the Government would not support an upgrade of the committee to an intergovernmental body at this time.

■ Working Tax Credit: Birmingham Selly Oak

Steve McCabe:

[95981]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children received the £20 per week uplift in working tax credit basic element payments, announced on 20 March 2020, in Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency in each month since its introduction.

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 Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency was 1,700.

<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**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Holiday Leave****Paula Barker:****[96217]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the compliance of her Department's rules on annual leave carry-over with the Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

Following the introduction of the Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, DWP revised its guidance on annual leave carry-over to ensure it is fully compliant with the Regulations. The new 2-year extension of carry-over limits is available to anyone who, for reasons related to the impact caused by COVID-19, cannot use their annual leave by their normal deadline.

The Department greatly values the contribution made by our employees, who have voluntarily postponed their leave to help out when our workloads have increased greatly over recent months. However, employees have been encouraged to use their leave where possible because it is important for their wellbeing that they do so, in order to have time away from work to rest

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Maladministration**Colleen Fletcher:****[97592]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answers of 29 September to Questions 95101 and 95102 what estimate she has made of the number of people affected by administrative errors made by her Department which led to (a) the overpayment of benefits and (b) financial hardship for claimants in the last five years.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: DWP is focused on paying people their correct entitlement and a quality checking regime is in place. However, there are occasions where administrative or 'official errors' have arisen from processing or delays, which we look to correct as quickly as possible.

The latest National Statistics Fraud and Error statistics were published on 14th May 2020 and show that estimated losses from official error in 2019/20 accounted for 0.4% of total benefit expenditure.

These statistics can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system-financial-year-2019-to-2020-estimates>

Whilst the official error rate is the same as in the previous 4 years, changes to the way in which the statistics are calculated make it difficult to make exact comparisons beyond 2018/19.

The Department is unable to provide data in response to the second question, as any request to reduce the rate of repayment due to financial hardship will have been the result of individual circumstances.

■ Flybe: Pensions

Gavin Newlands:

[\[96091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2020 to Question 29272, what progress she has made in her discussions with the Isle of Man Government on the Flybe pension scheme.

Guy Opperman:

It would not be appropriate for a UK Minister to comment on cases that are a matter for the Isle of Man Government, the Isle of Man Financial Services Authority or the independent Pensions Regulator. Members wishing to receive updates should contact the Scheme Administrator or the Isle of Man Government.

■ Job Support Scheme

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[95659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons her Department opened the new Job Finding Support scheme to private tender.

Mims Davies:

Job Finding Support is designed to help those who have recently become unemployed, by offering tailored support and advice, to help them re-enter employment quickly. Work Coaches are at the core of our employment offer and this provision will complement their role by helping customers who would benefit from light-touch support delivered digitally. The provision is being let through a commercial competition to utilise the expertise and experience of those private, charitable and third sector organisations operating in this sector.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Neil Coyle:

[\[97588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how her Department plans to ensure that intermediaries are available for the Kickstart scheme in every local authority region.

Mims Davies:

The department engaged with a wide range of organisations, charities, employers and local authorities across the country to encourage their participation in the Kickstart Scheme as gateway organisations. A list of over 500 organisations willing to act as a gateway organisation has been published alongside guidance on the gov.uk website with good regional and sector coverage.

Neil Coyle:

[\[97589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason Kickstart intermediary agencies are required to run payroll functions.

Neil Coyle:

[\[97590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing the requirement that Kickstart scheme intermediary agencies have to run payroll functions.

Mims Davies:

Gateway organisations are not required to manage the payroll for employers included in their bids for Kickstart funding. They are responsible for forwarding the grant payment, once the wages have been paid. Some Gateway organisations may wish to offer this additional support to employers included in their bid, but this is a matter of choice for the Gateway and the employer.

Neil Coyle:

[\[97591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether local authorities will be (a) required or (b) encouraged to participate in the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Local Authorities are not required to participate in the Kickstart Scheme but we are keen that they do. Local Authorities are welcome to apply for Kickstart funding as an employer to create additional jobs for young people in their area. We also encourage Local Authorities to be among those participating in the scheme as gateway organisations.

■ Pensioners: Poverty

Chris Elmore:

[\[94508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the evidence given by Andrew Latto, Deputy Director; Devolution, Pensioner Benefits and Carer's Allowance Policy, to the Scottish Social Security Committee on 23 January 2020, if she will publish the calculations supporting the Deputy Director's statement that, in the UK, 16 per cent of pensioners are in poverty [and] if all those pensioners claimed pension credit, housing benefit and the council tax reduction, especially the council tax reduction, that would reduce the 16 per cent to almost zero.

Guy Opperman:

Since 2009/10, material deprivation for pensioners has fallen from 10% to 6% in 2018/19.

There are 100 thousand fewer pensioners in absolute poverty (before and after housing costs) than in 2009/10.

Average pensioner incomes have grown significantly in real terms over the last two decades (average weekly income in 1994/95 was £165 a week After Housing Costs, in 2018/19 prices, compared to £320 a week in 2018/19).

For 2020/21 we are forecast to spend over £126 billion a year on pensioners – including £102 billion on the State Pension.

In 2017/18 it was estimated that 1.6 million pensioners (14%) were in Absolute Poverty (After Housing Costs) and 2.0 million pensioners (16%) were in Relative Poverty (After Housing Costs).

The latest figures for 2017/18 estimate that 1.1 million pensioner households who were eligible for Pension Credit did not claim this benefit. 0.2 million pensioner households who were eligible for Housing Benefit did not claim.

Estimate for take-up for Council Tax reduction schemes by pensioner households are not available due to the localised nature of these schemes.

The Government want to ensure that older people receive the support they are entitled to. Although more than 1.5 million older people across Great Britain already receive extra financial help through Pension Credit, research suggests there are still a significant number of older people who are missing out. That is why, earlier this year, the Department ran a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit and highlight that even a small award can provide access to a wide range of other benefits, including Housing Benefit and Council Tax reduction schemes.

■ Universal Credit

Stephen Timms:

[\[96745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Welfare Delivery on 25 June 2020 Official Report, column 1455, what progress she has made on implementing the Court of Appeal judgment of 22 June 2020 in the case of Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart v. the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Will Quince:

In its deliberations, the Court of Appeal recognised the complexity of the issue which the Department is working to resolve for claimants as soon as possible.

We intend to bring forward legislation to address the issues raised by the Court of Appeal, so that in future for cases affected by this issue monthly earnings can be reallocated to another assessment period, which means that only one set of earnings should be taken into account rather than two.

■ Universal Credit: Self-employed

Owen Thompson:

[\[97645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment on the merits of implementing automatic approval for Universal Credit for self-employed people who are ineligible for other Government financial support.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: From 6 April 2020 we temporarily removed the application of the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) for all self-employed Universal Credit claimants. This ensures that the self-employed are supported by the benefit system so that they can follow Public Health England guidance on social distancing and self-

isolation. In addition to the temporary removal of the MIF we have also delayed the Gainful Self-Employment Test, and dis-applied work search and work availability conditionality requirements. This means self-employed Universal Credit claimants can follow public health England guidance, and the Universal Credit award will be assessed on any actual earnings.

The adjustment to self-employment policy is a part of a wider government package to support those on low incomes through the outbreak. Taken together, these measures provide over £9.3bn of additional support through the welfare system for people affected by COVID-19. Further information about UC and self-employment can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/self-employment-and-universal-credit>

Some small business owners may also receive a grant through the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, as well as various business loan schemes. There is a lot of ongoing support that can be accessed, including the Bounce Back Loan Scheme for small businesses, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the deferral of tax payments.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Rwanda: Females

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[96153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 September 2020 to Question 91695 on Rwanda: Females, on what dates the process and principles were discussed with the Prime Minister.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 5 October 2020. The correct answer should have been:

James Duddridge:

The First Secretary of State supported by the International Development Secretary and ministers from ODA spending departments, led a cross government process to identify reductions in this year's ODA budget in order that we meet the 0.7% commitment.

This looked at all strands of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure the UK can maintain operational capacity. This process also has made sure there is continued support for five ODA priorities; bottom billion poverty reduction, climate change, girls' education, COVID-19 and Britain as a force for good.

The drop in GNI caused by the economic impact of COVID-19, and meeting the new demands for action that this pandemic has created, meant that a tough decision was made not to go ahead with the life-skills programme, Investing in Adolescent Girls Rwanda, which had not yet started.

We have protected schools and education spending both in Rwanda and across the world. This is expected to total over £500 million globally this financial year, and approximately £13.6 million in Rwanda.

~~After a final review session with the First Secretary, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Development Secretary, recommendations were presented to the Prime Minister for final agreement.~~

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ **The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's report on the Anglican Church**
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS489\]](#)

Today the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published its latest report, which can be found at www.iicsa.org.uk.

This report relates to its investigation into institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Anglican Church. I pay tribute to the strength and courage of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences to ensure the Inquiry can deliver its vital work.

Government will review this report and consider how to respond to its content in due course.

I would like to thank Professor Jay and her Panel for their continued work to uncover the truth, expose what went wrong in the past and to learn the lessons for the future.

JUSTICE

■ **New Prison Update**

The Minister of State for Justice (Lucy Frazer): [\[HCWS490\]](#)

Today I can announce that, following a rigorous and robust evaluation process, G4S has been successful in its bid to provide prison operator services at the new build resettlement prison at Wellingborough.

I can also today announce that following public consultation in 2019 and a meeting of local community representatives in February 2020, the new prison will be named 'HMP Five Wells'. This was the most popular submission from members of the public and reflects the five historic wells that surround the town, and also appear on Wellingborough's coat of arms. I am grateful for the public's submissions to name their new prison and I am proud that HMP Five Wells will provide a significant boost to the local economy by creating hundreds of long-term jobs, support our commitment to a role for the private sector in operating custodial services, and improve rehabilitation and security in the prison estate.

The contract for the operation of HMP Five Wells follows the first mini competition launched in July 2019 under the Prison Operator Services Framework. Four of the six Framework Operators (G4S Care and Custody Services UK Limited, Serco Limited, Sodexo Limited and a new entrant, Management and Training Corporation Works Limited) bid as part of the competition.

Bidders were required to submit proposals that addressed specific requirements in relation to our aspirations for the new Resettlement prison and set how they would deliver

all aspects of the custodial service from arrival to resettlement ensuring this is safe, decent and secure. Bidders also set out how the prison would be mobilised and resourced effectively, how they would provide effective Property and Facilities Management, and demonstrated financial robustness.

As the successful bidder, G4S demonstrated its capability to deliver a high quality, value for money service which will ensure that the prison is safe, decent, secure, rehabilitative and fit for modern times. All bidders should be proud of their submissions.

HMPPS did not bid in the competition but provided a public-sector benchmark against which bids were rigorously assessed. If bids had not met our expectations in terms of quality and cost, HMPPS would manage the new prison itself.

It is important to recognise that the operator competition for the operation of HMP Five Wells was about driving quality and value across the system, which we have shown can be done through a balanced approach to custodial services provision, which includes a mix of public, voluntary and private sector involvement.

The result of the operator competition for HMP Five Wells, with strong bids from all bidders, bodes well for the next competition we will run for the new prison at Glen Parva in 2021 and potentially further competitions for new prisons and existing private prisons as their contracts expire over the course of the next five years.

It is another crucial milestone in this Government's commitment to delivering around 3,500 modern places at HMP Five Wells, the new prison at Glen Parva, and via a new houseblock at HMP Stocken. This is on top of the 10,000 additional prison places being created by investing up to £2.5 billion to reform the prison estate, improve standards of decency across the estate, and reduce reoffending.