



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 07 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

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Fraud

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[98666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to assess the (a) scale and (b) cost of potential fraud in the Bounce Back Loan scheme.

Paul Scully:

As part of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme application process lenders undertake fraud checks, including Know Your Customer and Anti Money Laundering checks as required. In addition, the application form is clear – any individual who knowingly provides false information is at risk of criminal prosecution. We are working across Departments, and with lenders and law enforcement agencies, to tackle fraudulent abuse of the scheme.

Further details of how we expect the Bounce Back Loan Scheme to perform are set out in our accounts for 2019-20, a copy of which has been placed in the Libraries of the House. At this early stage, such estimates are naturally highly uncertain as reflected in the explanatory notes of the Accounts.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Lucy Powell:

[\[98704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of businesses in Bolton eligible for the emergency grants scheme for areas with local covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Paul Scully:

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) announced on 9 September provides support to businesses closed as part of localised restrictions to control Covid-19. The scheme provides businesses in the rating system with grants of either £1,000 or £1,500 and provides the local authority with an additional 5% top-up to support businesses not in the rating system and to meet other prioritised, severely impacted businesses.

We worked closely with Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to best calculate the amount of funding required and will continue to monitor Bolton's LRSG allocation.

Dan Carden:

[\[98754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which businesses have received loan guarantees under the (a) Bounce Back Loan Scheme, (b) Business Interruption Scheme, (c) Large Business Interruption Scheme and (d) Future Fund.

Paul Scully:

Details of awards under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be published where required on the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module in due course. The Future Fund is not a loan guarantee scheme, however details of investments made through the Future Fund alongside private investors are commercially confidential.

Business: EU Law**Darren Jones:**[\[97000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the EU requirement for businesses to be owned by a majority of EU-based shareholders will continue to apply to UK based businesses after the transition period.

Paul Scully:

There is no requirement for businesses to be owned by a majority of EU-based shareholders in current EU law or within the UK's Companies Act 2006.

However, both Societas Europaeas (SEs) and European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIGs), which are EU specific company formations, have certain ownership-linked requirements. SEs, for example, must have their registered offices in the EU and at least two of the bodies that form an SE must have a presence in different Member States. Similarly, EEIGs, which are a form of association between companies or other legal bodies, must be based in the relevant EU Member State and companies or firms must be incorporated in the EU to become members of an EEIG.

From 1 January 2021, SEs and EEIGs will no longer be able to be registered in the UK and any UK-based SEs and EEIGs that have not made alternative arrangements will be automatically converted into new UK corporate structures, respectively UK Societas and UK Economic Interest Groupings (UKEIG). Members of UKEIGs will continue to be allowed to be based in either a part of the UK or in any EU Member State, and UK Societas will not be subject to any continuing ownership-linked requirements.

In addition, there are ownership or voting rights requirements in specific regulated sectors where specific EU regulations apply. Examples include audit firms, where the existing requirements as to the majority of voting rights on the ownership body and the management body will be amended so that each majority must be held by UK registered audit firms or by individuals with UK audit qualifications or UK recognised qualifications.

Coronavirus: Quarantine**Darren Jones:**[\[96999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of employees who have been penalised for self-isolating as a

result of concerns about exposure to covid-19; and what steps he is taking to ensure that employers do not penalise employees on that basis.

Paul Scully:

Most employers are acting responsibly and supporting their staff to self-isolate when needed. However, we are aware of incidences where workers have felt compelled to work when they should be self-isolating. This is unacceptable.

It is critically important that when someone needs to self-isolate, they do so. That is why the Government made changes to the legal position around self-isolation making it an offence for an individual to leave their place of self-isolation (normally home) during the isolating period (either following a positive Covid test, contact by NHS Test and Trace or if they have returned from abroad and are required to quarantine.)

In order to support this, we have also made it an offence for an employer to knowingly allow a person who has been told to self-isolate to work anywhere other than where they are self-isolating. If employers are found to be in breach of this requirement, they will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. Repeated breaches will see an increase in the level of the Fixed Penalty Notice (£1k first offence, £2k second offence, £4k third offence, £10k fourth and subsequent offences.)

■ **Coronavirus: Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[96958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to encourage (a) shops and (b) hospitality businesses to measure the temperature of customers before they enter their premises during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

Our approach is clinically led, based on the expert advice of the UK's Chief Medical Officer for England, the NHS and Public Health England. Putting the safety of all workers at the forefront of this guidance. We are led by the evolving science in this work and as the scientific and medical advice changes, the guidance will be updated to reflect this.

Businesses will want to do all they can to keep their staff and customers safe. They must conduct thorough risk assessments on how best to do that and ensure they can keep their business going. Guidance for businesses can be found at www.gov.uk/workingsafely.

■ **Employee Ownership: Reform**

Sarah Olney:

[98739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on reform of Employee Share Ownership schemes.

Paul Scully:

There have been no recent discussions on reform of the Employee Share Ownership scheme between my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer and my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Energy: Housing**Sarah Olney:**[\[98742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding is available for low-income households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Energy Company Obligation, worth £640m per year, is focused on low income and vulnerable households across Great Britain. Our recently launched Green Homes Grant in England will further support customers in making their homes more energy efficient, including up to £10,000 for low income households.

In addition to the available funding to support low-income households with improving the energy efficiency of their homes, we also provide support with energy bills for low income and vulnerable consumers through the Warm Home Discount, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments.

We intend to publish an updated Fuel Poverty Strategy for England in due course which will provide further information on the range of schemes available to support low income and vulnerable households in improving the energy efficiency of their homes.

Marriage: Coronavirus**Justin Madders:**[\[96949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the need for sector-specific support for the wedding industry as a result of the new coronavirus measures announced on 22 September 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Chancellor has laid out the Government's Winter Recovery Plan. This includes measures to support businesses, such as extending the current government-backed loan schemes and introducing the Pay as You Grow and Job Support Schemes. There are also specific measures to support the self-employed, such as the SEISS Grant Extension.

Post Offices: ICT**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[96784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the evidence from Paula Vennells to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee on 24 June 2020, what the identify is of the law firm involved on behalf of his Department with which the UKGI POL representative was fully engaged.

Paul Scully:

The legal defence of the litigation was handled solely by Post Office Ltd.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[96785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether a lawyer representing his Department attended meetings of the POL GLO sub-Committee from the time of its inauguration in March 2018 until the conclusion of the litigation in December 2019.

Paul Scully:

No legal advisor representing BEIS attended the Post Office Limited GLO Sub-Committee. Among the committee's attendees were the UKGI Shareholder Representative and the UKGI General Counsel as an observer.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[96786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the legal costs incurred by his Department as a result of the Post Office Ltd Horizon IT system litigation case for each tax year.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[96787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the legal costs incurred (a) within his Department as a result of the Post Office Ltd Horizon IT system litigation case and (b) as a result of his Department engaging external specialist advice on that case.

Paul Scully:

The Post Office appointed Womble Bond Dickenson and Herbert Smith Freehills in the latter stages of the litigation. BEIS was not a party to the litigation and did not take part in the proceedings which were handled by Post Office Limited and their own legal team. Therefore, BEIS incurred no external legal costs.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[96790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether a Ministerial Direction was ever sought by his Department's Accounting Officer on the regularity, propriety, value for money or feasibility in respect of spending incurred by Post Office Limited during its Horizon IT system litigation case.

Paul Scully:

No Ministerial Direction was sought on this matter. Post Office Limited (POL) handled the defence of the Group Litigation as operational matters are an exclusive responsibility for the Company, as outlined in the Framework Document.

All costs in doing so, including legal costs and the settlement in December 2019, were paid using funds from POL's commercial revenue. BEIS sought and received assurance throughout the process that no public funding was used to contest the litigation.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[96791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the (a) financial, (b) reputational and (c) strategic risks posed by the Post Office Limited's Horizon IT system litigation case were escalated to his Department's Performance and Risk Challenge Panel.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[96792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the (a) financial, (b) reputational and (c) strategic risks posed by the Post Office Limited's Horizon IT system litigation case were escalated to his Department's Finance and Risk Committee.

Paul Scully:

The Post Office Limited's Horizon IT system litigation has been considered by both the Performance and Risk Challenge Panel and the Performance and Risk Committee as part of the Committee's considerations regarding its Performance and Risk report.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[96801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether a Ministerial Direction was issued by his Department on the spending incurred by Post Office Limited during its Horizon IT system litigation case.

Paul Scully:

No Ministerial Direction was sought on this matter.

■ Science: Coronavirus

Justin Madders: [\[96947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment has he made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on science and discovery centres.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government recognises the impacts of COVID-19 on science and discovery centres across the UK and Ministers and officials have met the Association of Science and Discovery Centres.

Science and discovery centres in England have access to the unprecedented support the Government has announced for business and workers, to protect them against the current economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Many are also part of museum groups or are heritage sites. Museums and heritage organisations can access over £200 million of coronavirus support schemes from Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Science and discovery centres outside England may be eligible for further support from the devolved governments.

■ Science: Finance

Justin Madders:

[\[96948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres on a resilience fund for science centres.

Amanda Solloway:

We have been closely liaising with the UK Association for Science Discovery Centres through meetings with Ministers and officials. We recognise that, as with so many other organisations and individuals, that COVID-19 has created challenges for these centres.

Some centres have already and others are planning to reopen in the coming period so they can continue to offer experiences which bring science to life in order to inspire and involve their visitors.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Bank Services: UK Trade with EU

Simon Jupp:

[\[97754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on negotiating the continuation of EU banking passporting rules to ensure that UK expatriates do not have their bank accounts closed at the end of the transition period.

Penny Mordaunt:

The majority of expatriates living in the EU should not see any change to their banking at the end of the transition period. The Government expects banks to treat customers fairly and provide timely communications to enable them to make appropriate decisions. The Financial Conduct Authority continues to engage with firms to ensure they are meeting these expectations.

■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Naz Shah:

[\[96936\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much Government funding has been allocated to covid-19 messaging for non-English speaking BAME groups through (a) television, (b) radio and (c) written publications.

Naz Shah:

[\[96937\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to help ensure that critical covid-19 messaging is able to reach (a) Pakistani / Urdu / Pushto, (b) Bangladeshi / Sylheti, (c) Sikh / Punjabi, (d) Indian / Hindi and (e) Gujarati people.

Naz Shah:

[\[96938\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has made agreements with any (a) Muslim, (b) Sikh and (c) Hindu media channels to help ensure that critical covid-19 messaging is broadcast to BAME viewers.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Hon. member to the answers given to [PQ 55066](#) on 10 June 2020, [PQ 46692](#) on 29 May 2020 and to [PQ 45460](#) on 11 May 2020.

The Government is working with specialist multicultural marketing agencies, addressing barriers by targeting audiences with bespoke COVID communications. Core marketing materials are translated into multiple languages nationally and on request from Local Authorities and external stakeholder groups. We are also utilising trusted voices, relevant channels, and translated messages to reach a wide range of audiences across the country. This helps the Government to maximise the impact of its ongoing multichannel communications strategy.

■ **Coronavirus: North of England**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[97049\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people in (a) North East England, (b) County Durham local authority area and (c) North West Durham have (i) died as a result of covid-19 and (ii) died as a result of covid-19 with underlying health conditions in each age category in each week since 1 January 2020.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ97049 [PQ97049.pdf]

■ **Electronic Government: Proof of Identity**

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[95666\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have registered as users of (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems to date.

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[95667\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the numbers of users registered on (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems have met departmental targets.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95668\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment the Government has made of potential barriers to people signing up for (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95669\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Government departments have signed up to use (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95670\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Government services can be accessed by registered users of (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95671\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when registered users of the (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems will be able to view payments made on their behalf under the (i) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (ii) Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95672\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems facilitate women registering for some Government services under their maiden surname even if they also register for some services under a surname they adopt on marriage.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95673\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how (a) GOV.UK Verify and (b) Government Gateway identity verification systems reflect the different legal systems operating in the UK and the associated variation in statutory provisions regarding name changes.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[95674\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the National Audit Office report, Investigation into Verify, published on 5 March 2019, HC1926, what assessment he has made of the findings in paragraph 2 on page 5 on the Infrastructure and Projects Authority's report that the Verify platform has been an innovative technical success and is performing to specification, but it is not producing the promised benefits.

Julia Lopez:

GOV.UK Verify and Government Gateway provide millions of citizens with access to essential government services. The number of users can be accessed publicly at any time through the GOV.UK Verify performance dashboard, and is updated weekly. Currently, 7.2 million users use their GOV.UK Verify identity accounts to access 22

government services across 9 departments. HMRC has 25.1 million unique individual users who have confirmed their identity and who have accessed their personal tax account, with a total of 96 million authentication credentials. For Government Gateway these include individual, business and agent users.

GOV.UK Verify keeps its accessibility under review and has consistently reduced barriers to make access to services simpler, focusing on the customer's end-to-end experience, and ensuring members of the public can access online government services simply and securely.

We are constantly looking to balance the need of inclusion and demographic coverage of government services with the need for strong digital identity assurance to reduce the risk of fraud. Both GOV.UK Verify and Government Gateway use ongoing user research, user testing and service monitoring to improve, simplify and reduce friction in users' experience of these services. Offline channels and support are offered to users unable to use either GOV.UK Verify or Government Gateway identity verification services.

Government Gateway is currently used to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). CJRS claimants (employers or their authorised agent) can log into the claims service and see the claims made and the date they were sent for payment, and SEISS claimants (employers or their authorised agent) can log into the claims service and see the claims made and the date they were sent for payment.

GOV.UK Verify can be adapted to reflect requirements relating to name changes to support departmental service requirements, provided there is suitable evidence of their change in name. Government Gateway Identity Verification allows online service access where sufficient confidence can be gained on a user's identity and the ownership of the name in question.

The National Audit Office (NAO) report recognised that the Verify programme has delivered on three of its four original objectives. The Verify programme has successfully developed world-leading standards that are used by governments across the world. It has also developed a secure technical platform and a procurement framework for identity services.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Zarah Sultana:

[\[98774\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his policy is on negotiating arrangements to replace the European Health Insurance Card for UK citizens from 1 January 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

From 31 December 2020, people protected under the Withdrawal Agreement will continue to be entitled to a UK-issued EHIC. For people not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, the future of reciprocal healthcare arrangements between the UK and EU are subject to negotiations, which are ongoing.

■ Public Sector: Procurement

Paula Barker: [\[97740\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that public sector procurement contracts prioritise British manufactured goods and services after the UK leaves the EU.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to [PQ84363](#) on 15 September 2020.

DEFENCE

■ Army: Recruitment

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[98730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many soldiers who enlisted in the financial year 2015-16 who were (a) under and (b) over the age of 18 at enlistment dropped out of the army before completing their Phase Two training.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[98731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many soldiers who enlisted in the financial year 2016-17 who were (a) under and (b) over the age of 18 at enlistment dropped out of the army before completing their Phase Two training.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[98732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many soldiers who enlisted in the financial year 2017-18 who were (a) under and (b) over the age of 18 at enlistment dropped out of the army before completing their Phase Two training.

James Heapey:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer my predecessor, (Anne Marie-Trevelyan), gave her on 30 January 2020, to Question 8412.

Attachments:

1. 8412 - Army Recruitment [8412 - Army Recruitment.docx]

■ International Military Services

Tulip Siddiq: [\[97670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he last gave written instructions to the lawyers of International Military Services.

Jeremy Quin:

Any such instructions would commonly be covered by litigation privilege in the context of ongoing legal proceedings. Due to those ongoing legal proceedings, it would not be appropriate to comment.

■ Iran: International Military Services**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[97669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when International Military Services last held negotiations with its Iranian counterparts to settle its debt to Iran.

Jeremy Quin:

Due to ongoing legal proceedings, it would not be appropriate to comment.

■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement**Mr David Jones:** [\[98670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to review the Defence and Security Public Contracts Directive after the end of the Transition Period.

Jeremy Quin:

Consistent with the Withdrawal Act, the Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations (DSPCR) will be amended at the end of the Transition period to reflect the UK's new status.

Reform of the DSPCR is currently being actively considered as part of the cross-Government review into the UK's defence and security industrial sectors. Reform would, in due course, require new primary legislation.

■ Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill**Rachael Maskell:** [\[98717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish an equalities impact assessment for the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Operations) Bill.

Johnny Mercer:

An Equality Impact Assessment for the Overseas Operation (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill was completed, and will be published on the gov.uk website in the near future.

■ Veterans: Coronavirus**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:** [\[98162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many veterans have contracted covid-19 while living in Veteran specific accommodation projects.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence does not track service personnel once they have left the Armed Forces and therefore the information requested is not held.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **5G: Huawei**

Luke Pollard: [\[97718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that Huawei is removed from the UK 5G network.

Luke Pollard: [\[97719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the length of time it will take to remove Huawei from the UK 5G network.

Matt Warman:

The Government has set out a clear timetable for the removal of Huawei equipment from 5G networks by 2027. To go further and faster beyond a 2027 target would add considerable - and unnecessary - further costs and delays. And the shorter we make the timetable for removal, the greater the risk of actual disruption to mobile telecoms networks.

Not all operators use Huawei. For those operators that do use Huawei, individual pathways to comply with the 2027 deadline will be a commercial decision for the individual operators.

The forthcoming Telecommunications (Security) Bill will provide the powers to place this timetable on a clear legal footing. In the meantime Ministers and senior officials are working with affected operators to ensure long term compliance.

■ **Brass Bands: Coronavirus**

Alberto Costa: [\[93611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for safety of the reintroduction of large brass band rehearsals.

Caroline Dinenage:

As of 14 September non-professional performing arts activity, including choirs, orchestras, wind and brass or drama groups can continue to rehearse or perform together where this is planned activity in line with the performing arts guidance and if they can do so in a way that ensures that there is no interaction between groups of more than six at any time. If an amateur group is not able to ensure that no mingling takes place between these sub-groups of no more than six (including when arriving at or leaving activity or in any breaks or socialising) then such non-professional activity should not take place.

We will continue to work with the Performing Arts sector to understand how the new regulations affect those engaging in activity. We have always been clear that the easing of restrictions depends on the prevalence of COVID-19.

Following concerns that singing, wind and brass were potentially higher risk activities DCMS commissioned further scientific studies to be carried out to develop the scientific evidence on these activities. The outcome of these studies has allowed us to reconsider appropriate mitigations and remove the need for extended social distancing that was previously required. Both professionals and non-professionals can now engage in singing, wind and brass in line with this guidance. People should continue to socially distance from those they do not live with wherever possible. Venues, performers and audiences should ensure 2m distancing applies wherever possible.

■ Cinemas: Culture Recovery Fund

Tracy Brabin: [\[98735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many independent cinemas have made applications to the Cultural Recovery Fund; and how many and what proportion of those applications have been (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful.

Tracy Brabin: [\[98736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much financial support independent cinemas applied for through the Cultural Recovery Fund; and how much of that funding was granted.

Caroline Dinenge:

On July 5 the Government announced the Culture Recovery Fund, a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them preserve their local cultural offer and rescue organisations that are at risk of insolvency this financial year. This is the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture. Within this, the British Film Institute (BFI) is allocating up to £30 million in grants on behalf of my department to support independent cinemas in England.

As of Friday 2 October 2020, the Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas has received 72 applications from 109 individual cinema sites (one application can be made on behalf of a small cinema chain), amounting to grant requests of just over £4.5million. From this, 28 grants worth over £650,000 have been awarded to 42 cinema sites across England. This means almost 40% of applications received have been successfully awarded funding so far. The fund is being awarded on a rolling basis and will continue to assess and accept applications through to 30th October. For those organisations which have not yet had decisions, BFI are continuing to assess the evidence provided in line with the eligibility criteria and are working with them to explore their needs.

■ Events Industry

Maria Eagle: [\[97472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the contribution of the live events industry to the UK economy.

Caroline Dinéage:

In 2018, the leisure events industry contributed £39 billion to the UK economy and the GVA contribution was £30.4 billion. This includes arts and cultural events, music events and festivals, and sporting and recreational events.

We appreciate the important role that the live events sector plays in the UK's economy.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus**Darren Jones:****[96998]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to issue guidance on the holding of public firework display events in England during the covid-19 outbreak; and whether the Government plans to make material revisions in relation to those events to its most recent general guidance on outdoor gatherings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

Outdoor events - including firework display events - organised by businesses, charitable organisations, and public bodies are currently permitted provided event organisers follow all relevant Covid-19 Secure guidance, organisers and attendees adhere to all legal requirements including only allowing people to attend in groups of up to 6 people, and the event does not pose a risk to public health.

Industry guidance developed by the Events Industry Forum in collaboration with DCMS outlines the Covid-secure measures that events organisers must put in place in order to host an outdoor event, including a firework display.

Local Authorities are responsible for permitting or prohibiting large organised outdoor events from taking place in their local area. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, and Local Authorities should provide advice to businesses on how to manage events of this type if required.

We will keep the Outdoor Events guidance under review to determine whether further guidance should be provided as government measures to stop the spread of the virus change. The Events Industry Forum's guidance for outdoor events can be found here: <https://www.eventsindustryforum.co.uk/index.php/11-features/14-keeping-workers-and-audiences-safe-during-covid-19>.

■ Football: Coronavirus**Stephen Morgan:****[98277]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling the Sports Ground Safety Authority and respective external Safety Advisory Groups for each English Football League and National League club to make health and safety risk assessments in relation to enabling the return of fan-attended fixtures.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

The Government will continue to work closely with the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) and a whole range of sports to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes the creation of a new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this.

■ Gambling

Margaret Ferrier: [\[96926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of commissioning a longitudinal study of gambling-related harm.

Margaret Ferrier: [\[96927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, (b) the Gambling Commission and (c) the Prime Minister on the Gambling-related harms evidence review.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) works closely with the Department for Health and Social Care and wider government on matters related to gambling harm, and the departments share regular updates, including on the forthcoming evidence review being carried out by Public Health England. The Gambling Commission has no role in the delivery of PHE's evidence review, but DCMS and the Commission work closely together to monitor the wider evidence base on gambling harms.

The Gambling Commission commissioned and published a scoping review looking at the feasibility of a longitudinal study of gambling behaviours and problem gambling, and how that study would best be conducted, and the Commission is now considering next steps.

■ Greyhounds: Animal Welfare

Andrew Rosindell: [\[96802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage members of the betting industry to ensure the welfare of racing greyhounds.

Nigel Huddleston:

The British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF) collects a voluntary levy from bookmakers and uses the funds for greyhound welfare and sports integrity, and to a lesser extent the development and promotion of the sport.

In January 2019 the Government announced an increased funding commitment from bookmakers to ensure the welfare of greyhounds is protected and improved. In 2019/20 the BGRF collected a total of £8.87m, up from £6.95m in the previous 12 months.

This commitment has allowed the BGRF to fund capital grants to stadia, for purposes including welfare and integrity support. In the last calendar year (2019), direct welfare provision totalled 51% of the British Greyhound Racing Fund's overall budget. BGRF support has also assisted GBGB to make emergency welfare payments to trainers, owners and the Greyhound Trust during Covid and to launch the Greyhound Retirement Scheme (GRS) in September.

Government will continue to work with the betting and greyhound industries to make sure that greyhound welfare is safeguarded and remains at the heart of the sport.

■ Insurance: Coronavirus**David Mundell:**[\[96814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations he has received from (a) sporting clubs, (b) theatres, (c) exhibition groups and (d) other event operators on Government support for the contingency insurance market during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinéage:

The government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector on its response to this unprecedented situation. We encourage businesses experiencing financial difficulty to research the initiatives in the Government's support package such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Our schemes are continuously under review to make sure our schemes are accessible, fair and targeted to help those who need it the most.

DCMS also regularly engages with businesses and sector representative bodies in order to properly understand the issues being faced as well as to develop means of offering support. Over recent months DCMS has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders such as Sport England, Society of London Theatre, UK Theatre and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel.

Some of the support the government has offered includes the unprecedented £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund - the largest ever one-off investment in culture - to help countless organisations weather the COVID storm; and the £500 million Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, which will assist the film and TV production sectors who are ready to return to work, but are precluded from doing so by the difficulties they face obtaining insurance cover for Covid-19. The scheme will be available to

compensate Film and TV productions after they have restarted, and where costs are then incurred due to delays or abandonment as a result of Coronavirus.

■ Internet

Jonathan Edwards: [\[96840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the powers available to the Information Commissioner's Office to enforce its decisions against search engines located outside of the UK.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK's data protection laws include extra-territorial scope and allow the Information Commissioner's Office to engage in international cooperation mechanisms to facilitate effective enforcement and to provide mutual assistance through notification, complaint referral, investigative assistance and information exchange.

Both the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018 provide for extra territorial scope, which applies to organisations offering goods or services, or monitoring the behaviour of data subjects within the UK, regardless of whether the processing actually takes place in the UK or not. In certain circumstances, this may allow the ICO to take action against companies located outside of the UK. Where enforcement is required to secure the data protection rights of UK users, the ICO will apply its powers as appropriate.

The Information Commissioner has an international team responsible for engaging with data protection and information regulators globally. The Information Commissioner's investigative teams will, where appropriate, coordinate their investigative and evidence gathering activity; this may be either jointly or individually depending on the circumstances of the case. They also have operational protocols and memoranda of understanding with their international partners in support of this engagement.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[97513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to respond to the letter of 13 August 2020 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, on subtitling on third party platforms.

Mr John Whittingdale:

A response was sent to the Hon Member on 5th October.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Jonathan Edwards: [\[98203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of supporting minority language (a) artists, (b) music

labels and (c) publishers through (i) creating a minority language music grant and (ii) producing guidance for those groups on working with streaming services.

Caroline Dinenge:

No assessment on this has been made, however we are continuing to meet with music stakeholders to understand the issues affecting their industry and provide support and guidance.

The Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This support package will benefit the live music sector by providing support to venues and many other organisations to stay open and continue operating. The Cultural Recovery Fund is devolved, Wales has received £59 million from the Fund under the Barnett formula.

Freelancers working in the cultural and creative sectors in Wales will be able to apply for their share of a £7 million fund – which is targeted specifically at those in the freelance sector hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic. Further support for artists is available through the [Arts Council of Wales](#).

Culture policy is a devolved matter, we would also recommend that this issue is raised with Welsh Government Ministers and Creative Wales.

■ **Performing Arts, Events Industry and Sports: Coronavirus**

David Mundell:

[\[96815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what priority his Department plans to accord to supporting the recovery of (a) theatres, (b) the exhibitions sector, (c) the sporting tournaments sector and (d) live industries ahead of the summer 2021 season; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenge:

We are aware of the struggles of the entire events industry and their supply chain, and DCMS prioritises all of our sectors. We are working hard to provide financial support for all sectors, with businesses being able to access the Government's UK wide support package. We are dedicated to helping all of our sectors survive the winter months ahead.

As part of the Government's 5 stage roadmap to get performing arts and live entertainment sectors back up and running as soon as possible, venues and organisations are able to put on live performances in front of a socially-distanced audience in line with the latest [Covid secure guidance](#).

Similarly, the exhibitions sector will be allowed to continue hosting events providing that they follow all Covid-19 Secure guidance. This guidance has been developed by the Events Industry Forum in collaboration with DCMS so local authorities can safely host a multitude of events.

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

We will return spectators to elite and professional sports events when it is safe to do so.

We have already saved 135 grassroots music venues from imminent collapse. Arts Council England and other DCMS arms-length bodies are currently assessing thousands of applications from other organisations, and successful applicants will be informed from October. We are committed to ensuring that live performances will be fully back up and running when it is safe to do so.

■ Performing Arts: Coronavirus

Barbara Keeley:

[\[96034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including people working in live music and the performing arts on the list of jobs that qualify for exemption from covid-19 quarantine regulations on arrival in the UK, in line with the exemptions for elite sportspersons and those working on film and television productions.

Caroline Dinage:

We continue to work tirelessly with the cultural and creative sectors to explore all options to support them through this challenging period, including on proposals for exemptions from quarantine. All decisions about exemptions and other measures will need to be considered in light of the wider public health context, and will be taken with the Secretary of State for Transport and other Ministerial colleagues.

■ Rugby: Coronavirus

Alberto Costa:

[\[98239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support his Department is providing to professional Rugby Union teams who are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

This government's multi-billion-pound package of business support has enabled many of our sports clubs to survive, but we know that the decision not to reopen stadia to spectators on 1 October will have economic consequences for sports and clubs across the country who relied on those fans for income, including professional rugby union teams.

We have asked for detailed financial returns to see what support they need, and we will work at pace with them to understand the issues that organisations in the most challenging circumstances are facing and what support they may require.

I met with the CEO of Premiership Rugby on 1 October to discuss this very issue and we will continue to engage directly with both the RFU and with Premiership Rugby as part of this process.

■ Television Licences: Non-payment

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[97469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to decriminalise non-payment of the TV licence fee.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government believes that it is right to look again at whether the criminal sanction remains appropriate for TV licence fee evasion, given ongoing concerns about whether the criminal sanction is unfair and disproportionate.

On 5 February 2020, the Government launched a public consultation on decriminalising TV licence evasion.

The consultation closed on 1 April, and received over 150,000 responses. We will listen carefully to those that have responded before setting out our next steps.

■ Zhenhua Data: Data Protection

John Spellar:

[\[95592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the collection of data on UK individuals and others by Chinese firm Zhenhua Data.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Information Commissioner's Office is aware of the reports regarding Zhenhua Data Technology and is making enquiries with the company. Organisations must comply with our legal system and regulatory frameworks. The GDPR and UK's Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA18) impose strict obligations on organisations to ensure that UK citizens' data is processed safely and securely. Organisations which fail to comply may be investigated by the Information Commissioner's Office and where appropriate subject to enforcement action, including fines. If relevant the ICO may contact international partners through their cooperation mechanism.

EDUCATION

■ Assessments: Coronavirus

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[97041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that schools have clear guidance on exams in summer 2021 before students have to submit applications to UCAS.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is working hard to minimise the impact of COVID-19 and the disruption it has caused to young people's education, including those who will be taking exams and applying to university next year.

The Department is working closely with Ofqual, the exam boards, regulators in the devolved administrations, and groups representing schools, colleges and higher education to consider the best approach to ensure that students taking exams next summer receive the qualifications they deserve and that next year's exam series proceeds fairly and efficiently and commands public confidence.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has set out that a further announcement on 2021 exams will be made in October.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[97065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the summer 2021 exam series will go ahead; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of teacher assessments as a contingency in the event that those exams cannot go ahead as planned.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[97066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that GCSE, AS and A-Level exams will take place in summer 2021; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of using teacher assessments as a contingency in the event that those exams do not take place as planned.

Nick Gibb:

The Department knows that exams and assessments are the best and fairest way of judging students' performance, and it is expected that next year's exams will go ahead. The Government is committed to working closely with Ofqual to ensure that students taking exams next summer receive the qualifications they deserve.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has set out that a further announcement on 2021 exams will be made in October.

■ Children: Coronavirus

Gareth Thomas: [\[96748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of (a) primary and (b) secondary school age children who do not have access to appropriate IT equipment at home; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has modelled schools' requirements for support with laptops and tablets to enable pupils to learn at home in case of disruption to face to face education due to COVID-19. To do this, the Department has used data on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in each school, alongside modelling how the device needs of pupils will be met to some extent by the device endowments of schools and colleges.

During the summer term, over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers had been delivered or dispatched to local authorities and academy trusts. This information can be viewed here:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm>

[ent_data/file/912888/Devices_and_4G_wireless_routers_progress_data_as_of_27_August_2020.pdf](#).

In addition to devices already held by schools, the Department has made a further 250,000 laptops and tablets available to support disadvantaged children during the autumn term. Schools will be able to lend the devices to children and reallocate them between pupils as they require.

Devices are available to schools to support the most disadvantaged pupils in year 3 to year 11 who would not otherwise have access to a device and whose face to face education is disrupted. Schools will also be able to support disadvantaged children across all year groups who might be shielding at home on official or medical advice due to one of their household being clinically extremely vulnerable. Where education is disrupted in hospital schools, they will be able to order devices for children in all year groups. Further education colleges registered to teach 14-16 year olds may also apply for devices for disadvantaged children in Key Stage 4.

Schools, local authorities and academy trusts are able to request additional devices if their original allocation by the Department does not meet their needs.

Jim Shannon:

[98220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he taking to help children with (a) anxiety and (b) mental health issues as a result of the lockdown restrictions due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

The government remains committed to promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Access to mental health and wellbeing support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak and the department has taken action to ensure schools and colleges are equipped to support children and young people.

We have in particular 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.

Staff in schools and colleges need to be equipped to understand that some of their pupils may be experiencing feelings such as anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation and how to respond. This is 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. The programme is funding expert advisers in every area of England to train and support schools and colleges during the autumn and spring terms. More details are available here: <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 five of the projects funded support student and staff mental health and wellbeing through online programmes and remote support.

Schools and colleges are not mental health professionals, and it is important that more specialist support is available for children and their families. All NHS mental health trusts have ensured that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. Public Health England and Health Education England have also developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

We have also provided £9.2 million of additional funding for mental health charities, including charities such as Young Minds, to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

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

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[98776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 96213 on Children: Coronavirus, what contact the London regional team has had with the London borough of Bexley on the impact of covid-19 on children's services.

Vicky Ford:

Departmental officials are routinely in touch with local authorities to discuss the progress of their children's services. We have been in contact with all local authorities in recent months, including the London Borough of Bexley, to understand how they are dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak, the impact on children's services, and how the department can support them during this difficult period.

■ Education: Standards

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[\[98659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the changes in the way education is delivered in schools on children's (a) ability to learn, (b) mental health and (c) satisfaction with their schooling; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on attainment and progress is a key research priority for the government.

We have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to provide a baseline assessment of catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England, and monitor progress over the course of the year, to help us target support across the system.

This research will make use of assessments that schools are already choosing to use over the course of the next academic year. This will add no additional burden on schools, and pupils will not have to sit any additional assessments for this research, at this crucial time for the education sector.

This research will be based on a large sample of pupils from years 1 to 11, and will allow the department to understand how best to support the sector and which particular groups of pupils have been affected by time out of school.

There is growing evidence that the COVID-19 outbreak and associated interventions, such as social distancing and stay at home guidance, including school closures, have likely had an adverse effect on the mental health and well-being of children and young people. For some, the COVID-19 outbreak will have disrupted or removed protective factors for their mental health, such as social support, physical activity and routine, and this may be compounded by additional risk factors. There is also increasing evidence that many children and young people are coping well overall and some have reported benefits for their mental health.

While many children and young people have retained some access to mental health support during this period, we know that some children and young people will have struggled to access mental health support in the same way as before the COVID-19 outbreak, which has been associated with worse mental health and wellbeing for some children and young people with existing needs.

Supporting schools and colleges to stay open and provide catch-up support to their pupils, including time devoted to supporting wellbeing, will play a fundamental part in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. To support the return to a full high-quality education programme, we have put in place a range of measures, including guidance for settings and a new £8 million training initiative for educational staff and local authority services, to support children and young people's wellbeing.

Health education was introduced into the curriculum in September, including a range of specific teaching requirements on mental health and wellbeing. Training materials and support are available to schools.

■ Family Hubs: Finance

Fiona Bruce: [98691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department spent the funding allocated in the March 2020 Budget for family hubs on.

Vicky Ford:

There are already many family hubs across the country up and running. We want to ensure that innovations such as family hubs are recognised and shared, and successful approaches can spread. Local areas are using their existing funding pots to move to a family hub model.

The 2020 Budget allocated £2.5 million for research and developing best practice around the integration of services for families, including family hubs. We will be launching the procurement process for this work shortly.

■ Members: Correspondence

Justin Madders: [96939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to respond to correspondence from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston of (a) 9 July and (b) 14 August 2020 on outdoor education residential centres.

Nick Gibb:

I can confirm that a response has been sent to the letters dated 9 July and 14 August, from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

■ Outdoor Education: Coronavirus

Justin Madders: [96940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has to make an assessment of the potential timescale for allowing outdoor education residential centres to open for overnight residential visits during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The guidance for full school opening enables schools to resume educational day visits but continues to advise against UK overnight educational residential visits. This guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The Department's educational visits advice is in line with guidance from Public Health England, the Cabinet Office, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and will be reviewed again in November 2020.

■ Outdoor Education: Finance

Stephen Morgan: [\[97703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of funding the Nature Premium on (a) levels of health inequality, (b) combating mental health issues and (c) levels of learning development among children.

Stephen Morgan: [\[97704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of introducing a Nature Premium scheme.

Stephen Morgan: [\[97705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will meet representatives of the Nature Premium campaign.

Vicky Ford:

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the health and well-being of children and young people. We recognise that playing and learning outside is a fundamental part of childhood and supports children's health and wellbeing. We also know that some children have good access to natural spaces whilst others do not, such as those living in areas of high disadvantage.

We want headteachers to have as much discretion as possible over how they use their funding. It is for schools to decide what teaching approaches and wider pastoral and extra-curricular activity to put in place, as part of a whole school approach, based on the needs of their pupils and drawing on evidence of effective practice. Schools' core funding in financial years is 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 funding levels.

To support children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have better access to natural environments, the Department for Education is funding the 'Children and Nature Programme', working alongside Natural England and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The programme is supporting three delivery projects which include delivering greener grounds and pupil visits to green spaces for schools with the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

I have asked departmental officials to meet with representatives of the Nature Premium campaign to discuss the potential merits further.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Kate Osamor: [\[96965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has issued to schools on pupils wearing masks outside of the classroom while they are on school premises.

Nick Gibb:

On 26 August, the Department revised its guidance on face coverings in schools following a new statement by the World Health Organisation on 21 August, which

advised that “children aged 12 and over should wear face coverings under the same condition as adults, particularly when they cannot guarantee at least a one metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area”. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>.

As the guidance outlines, in areas of national government intervention, face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and pupils in secondary schools when moving around indoors, such as in corridors in communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Otherwise, the Government is not recommending that face coverings are necessary in schools. All schools, including primary schools, have the discretion to require the use of face coverings for adults and pupils in year 7 and above in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances. Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[98777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the educational attainment gap of school closures in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

We know that school closures have had an adverse impact on all pupils, and we believe those from disadvantaged backgrounds will have been particularly affected. To ensure we properly understand all the impacts, we have commissioned independent research, which is currently in its early stages. Meanwhile, we have put in place a number of significant policy measures to help schools address the barriers to success that these pupils face, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package is providing additional funding to support children and young people whose education has been disrupted by the outbreak. The package includes the National Tutoring Programme, which will provide up to £350 million of targeted support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils who are most at risk of falling further behind. From November, this investment will provide schools in all regions access to subsidised, high-quality tuition supplied by approved tuition partners. Schools in the most deprived areas will be supported to use in-house academic mentors to provide intensive catch-up support to their pupils in small groups.

The National Tutoring Programme sits alongside our £650 million universal catch-up premium funding for the current academic year, that will enable schools to prioritise support for specific groups of pupils according to their needs. We have also provided funding to support small group tuition for 16-19-year olds and the improvement of early language skills in reception classes. This £1 billion package is additional to the £14.4 billion 3-year investment in schools that we announced last year. Schools

continue to receive the £2.4 billion pupil premium that allows school leaders to tailor the support they provide, based on the needs of their disadvantaged pupils, to accelerate their progress and improve their attainment.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Subsidies

Daniel Zeichner:

[96924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish detailed information on the Sustainable Farming Incentive schemes proposed to function as a precursor to Environmental Land Management schemes; and when he plans to launch those farming incentive schemes.

Victoria Prentis:

As we phase out direct payments ahead of the full roll out of our Environmental Land Management scheme in 2024, we will offer financial assistance to help farmers prepare, and invest in ways to improve their productivity and manage the environment sustainably.

We will set out further information on funding for the early years of the agricultural transition period, including Direct Payments, later in the year after the comprehensive spending review.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Caroline Lucas:

[97528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether badger culling is (a) permitted to take place and (b) taking place on Forestry Commission land; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

For security reasons we do not comment on specific activities or licences for licensed badger control. Natural England has published this year's badger control licenses on gov.uk which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bovine-tb-controlling-the-risk-of-bovine-tb-from-badgers>

The Forestry Commission would handle requests for access from applicants for a Natural England licence in the same way they do for all other requests to access. If access permission was given it would not automatically mean badger disease control activity would be carried out on land they manage.

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Caroline Lucas:

[96833]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 64285 on chemicals: regulation, by when she plans

that (a) the Health & Safety Executive and (b) the Environment Agency will be fully staffed to deliver the post-transition Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.

Caroline Lucas:

[96834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 64285 on Chemicals: Regulation, how many how many full-time equivalent staff the Government is recruiting; and how long it will take to train new recruits.

Rebecca Pow:

We have been working closely with the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency and are confident that they will have the right resources in place to carry out their responsibilities in relation to REACH from 1 January 2021. Further recruitment is planned after the end of the Transition Period to ensure both organisations have the right capability and capacity for anticipated increase in work load over the coming years. We will keep this situation under review and make further resources available as needed subject to the outcome of the Spending Review.

Training for staff recruited over the past 18 months has been ongoing and planning for new recruitment includes training time ahead of peaks in workload. There will be a comprehensive training plan for new recruits. The length of time to train individual new recruits will depend on the nature of the role and the background and skills of the successful candidates.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Video Conferencing

Stephanie Peacock:

[98746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 10 September 2020, Official Report, column 759, which Members she has had Zoom calls with and when on the issue of flooding.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises the impact that flooding has had on individuals, businesses and local communities and sympathises with all those affected. The Secretary of State, myself and the department have been actively engaging with hon. Members whose constituencies have been affected by flooding.

I am always willing to discuss flooding, or other pertinent matters, with hon. Members, and I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given on 17 September 2020, PQ UIN89799. [<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-14/89799>]

For completeness, meetings and other engagements I have had with hon. Members so far this year are detailed below.

DATE	EVENT
8 October 2020	Meeting with South Yorkshire November 2019 flood-affected Members and other local risk management authorities
7 October 2020	End of day debate, flooding in Staffordshire, led by the hon. Member for Stafford
1 September 2020	Meeting with the hon. Member for South Ribble
30 September 2020	End of day debate, flooding preparedness in Yorkshire, led by the hon. Member for Barnsley Central
21 July 2020	All-Party meeting about the Severn Valley, attended by the hon. Members for Shrewsbury and Atcham, Gloucester, Montgomeryshire, West Worcestershire, North Herefordshire, Stroud, Stafford, the Rt Hon Member for Ludlow, and Defra's PPS the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnorshire
20 July 2020	Meeting with the hon. Member for North East Derbyshire
4 June 2020	Meeting with the Rt Hon Member for Scarborough and Whitby and the hon. Member for Thirsk and Malton
3 June 2020	End of day debate, flood defences for Tenbury Wells, led by the hon. Member for West Worcestershire
14 May 2020	Members surgery with the hon. Members for Don Valley and Barnsley Central
7 May 2020	Meetings with the hon. Members for Don Valley and Brigg and Goole
30 April 2020	Meeting with the hon. Member for Cheadle
23 April 2020	Meeting with the hon. Member for Shipley
16 March 2020	Meeting with the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale
11 March 2020	Westminster Hall debate, flooding of the River

DATE	EVENT
	Severn, led by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham
9 March 2020	End of day debate, improving rainwater attenuation and reservoirs to prevent flooding, led by the hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington
4 March 2020	Opposition debate, flooding, led by the Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the hon. Member for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport
27 January 2020	Meeting with the hon. Member for Macclesfield
30 January 2020	Westminster Hall debate, South Yorkshire flooding, led by the Shadow Minister (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), the hon. Member for Barnsley East
20 January 2020	End of day debate, Lowestoft flood barrier, led by the hon. Member for Waveney

■ Environmental Land Management Scheme

Anthony Mangnall: [\[97040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on developing his policies for the Environmental Land Management scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

In February, we published our ELM policy Discussion Document. This sought views on how the ELM scheme would work, including the proposition of a three-tier scheme design. In parallel, our stakeholder-led ELM Test & Trials Programme, which comprises 67 tests and trials to date, is continuing. Lessons from the tests and trials and the responses we received to the policy discussion document are informing scheme design decisions, ahead of the national pilot which is due to launch in late 2021. A summary of responses received along with our follow up actions will be published in the coming months.

■ Fisheries: Quotas

Peter Aldous: [\[96867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what checks are made by the Marine Management Organisation when applying the economic link condition to ascertain whether 50 per cent of the total crew man days at sea were

accounted for by crew normally resident in UK coastal areas; and what qualifies as (a) normally resident and (b) coastal areas in that assessment.

Peter Aldous: [\[96868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total sale price value was of the fish donated by vessel owners under the economic link rule in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the total quota trading value was of the fish donated by vessel owners under economic link conditions in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the (a) sale price of fish or (b) the tradable quota value is used by the Marine Management Organisation in assessing whether vessel owners have satisfied the economic link condition.

Peter Aldous: [\[96871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the weight was of the fish donated by vessel owners under economic link conditions, by species, in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the (a) value and (b) weight was of fish donated by vessel owners under economic link conditions made available to under 10m vessels through the pool in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the (a) value and (b) weight was of fish donated by vessel owners under economic link conditions made available through the pool and landed by under 10m vessels in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the proportion of landings abroad by UK registered vessels were by UK registered vessels with foreign owners, by value, in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many UK registered foreign owned vessels fished against the UK quota in 2019.

Peter Aldous: [\[96877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of demersal fish landed by UK registered foreign owned vessels were in excess of their fixed quota allocation holdings, in 2019.

Peter Aldous:[\[96878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of (a) UK owned and (b) foreign owned and UK registered vessels landed at least 50 per cent of the weight of their landings of EC quota stocks in UK ports in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

All UK fishing vessels are registered to UK companies (or individuals); the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) does not hold data relating to the degree of foreign investment or beneficial ownership of these companies or fishing opportunities associated with them. Therefore, it is not possible to provide data on landings, quota compliance or vessel numbers split between UK and foreign ownership. The economic link conditions apply to all UK fishing vessels and are enforced through conditions in the fishing licence to ensure that genuine benefits to the UK are realised by the whole fleet.

The licence condition relating to crewing is audited by the MMO through the requirement of a crew manifest detailing the names and addresses of all crew members. The condition requires residence in the UK and does not specifically relate to distance of residence from the coast.

During 2019 quota donations made though the economic link requirements were estimated to have a value of £2.1 million based on average first sale prices. The donated quota totalled 714 tonnes across the range of stocks as detailed in the table below. Donated quota is provided directly to the 10m and under fleet or traded by the MMO for more beneficial stocks for the 10m and under fleet as necessary. The MMO carries out a large number of trades each year through domestic and international swaps to ensure the most beneficial fishing opportunities for the fleet. Economic link related quota donations form part of the overall trading package along with multiple other sources of quota, so it is not possible to state the precise value of this component. For this reason the MMO uses the first sale value of donated quota to assess the economic link compliance.

STOCK DONATED IN 2019 THROUGH ECONOMIC
LINK CONDITIONS

SUM OF QUANTITY

STOCK DONATED IN 2019 THROUGH ECONOMIC LINK CONDITIONS	SUM OF QUANTITY
Anglers NS (ANF/2AC4-C)	30
Anglers WS (ANF/56-14)	1.1
Cod NS exc IV Norway (COD/2A3AX4)	6
Haddock VIIa (HAD/07A.)	0.2
Hake NS (HKE/2AC4-C)	1
Hake WS incl VII (HKE/571214)	2
Megrim NS IIa(EC), IV(EC) (LEZ/2AC4-C)	6

STOCK DONATED IN 2019 THROUGH ECONOMIC LINK CONDITIONS	SUM OF QUANTITY
Megrim WS (LEZ/56-14)	0.2
Nephrops NS (NEP/2AC4-C)	313.7
Nephrops WC (NEP/5BC6.)	7.1
Other Species IV ex EC Norway (OTH/04-N.)	6.4
Plaice VIIa (PLE/07A.)	2
Plaice WS (PLE/56-14)	0.1
Pollack VII (POL/07.)	154
Saithe VII (POK/7/3411)	10
Saithe WS (POK/56-14)	1
Skates & Rays NS (SRX/2AC4-C)	15.5
Skates & Rays VI, VII a-k exc D (SRX/67AKXD)	15
Skates & Rays VIId (SRX/*07D.) [counts against /67AKXD]	9.2
Sole NS (SOL/24-C.)	37
Turbot & Brill NS IIa(EC), IV(EC) (T/B/2AC4-C)	26
Whiting VIIa (WHG/07A.)	1
Whiting VIIb-k (WHG/7X7A-C)	69.6

Peter Aldous:[\[96874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to conclude the review of the licence conditions that require vessels catching quota species in UK waters to demonstrate an economic link with the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government intends to consult on proposals to strengthen the condition and increase the economic benefits to the UK in October. The response to the consultation will be published in line with the principles for consultation published by the Cabinet Office.

■ Fishing Catches

Luke Pollard: [\[97019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020, what the reasons are for altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing.

Luke Pollard: [\[97020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020 and altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing, what definition of on landing his Department plans to use for enforcement purposes.

Luke Pollard: [\[97021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020 and altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing, what assessment has he made of the availability of fish weighing scales for use by fishermen in all English harbours and landing areas.

Luke Pollard: [\[97022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020 and altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing, what assessment has he made of the availability of mobile phone signal or access to W-Fi in all English fishing harbours and landing areas.

Luke Pollard: [\[97023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020 and altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing, what consultation he conducted with the fishing industry before implementing that change.

Luke Pollard: [\[97024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020 and altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing, what guidance his Department has issued to fishers about that requirement.

Luke Pollard:[\[97025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99), effective from 27 September 2020 and altering the requirement to submit a catch record from before landing to on landing, what assessment has he made of the change in burden on fishers as a results of that alteration; what assessment he has made of the health and safety implications for fishermen and other fish quay users of that alteration; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that alteration of catch quality.

Victoria Prentis:

Currently, more than 58,650 catch records have been submitted using the new catch recording service for under-10m vessels. To date 79% of vessel owners or skippers have signed up to use the app in England and the Isle of Man, and in Wales uptake is 82%.

On 27 September 2020 the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) altered the licensing requirement for under-10 metre commercial fishing skippers to submit a catch record before landing. The alteration is a result of feedback from the catching sector and is designed to support fishermen who have expressed concerns about estimating weights or weighing on board their vessel. The change will enable them to complete this part of their catch record submission on landing if they choose.

The condition says the record must be submitted before removal from point of landing to point of sale. It now allows fishermen to weigh their catch on board their vessel or on shore, ensure connectivity (or phone signal) to submit their record and get assistance from others if needed. Different ports provide different facilities, with some offering provision of scales while others do not. Fishermen are at liberty to purchase scales to assist them should they wish to do so to ensure accuracy.

In case of connectivity problems, the catch app has been designed to be used offline to ensure no fishermen are disadvantaged by landing into ports with poor internet connections. Fishermen can complete and authorise submission of their catch record even if there is no signal where they are. It is then cached on their device to be submitted automatically once the fisherman is in an area with better connectivity.

The alteration to the submission deadline was made in response to feedback from fishermen that was gathered through engagement during the development and user-testing of the app and website, the roll-out of the service and ongoing use of the app. MMO officers in coastal locations are engaging with fishermen on the issue to supplement guidance. It is an optional way of working for fishermen introduced in response to concerns from some about estimating weights or weighing on board their vessel. Fishermen are under no obligation to land their catch before submitting their record and can continue to submit the required data via the app or website before removing the fish from their vessels as they have been doing to date.

■ Food Supply

Bob Blackman:

[\[98702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the resilience of the supply of food to (a) schools, (b) hospitals and (c) care homes.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain. Public sector food provision for specific sectors including schools, hospitals and care homes is led by the relevant government departments. My department is working closely with officials in DfE and DHSC, as the lead departments, to ensure food supply continues to schools, hospitals and care homes. My officials are providing advice and sharing relevant industry intelligence related to broader food supply concerns, in order to support lead government departments with contingency planning. This supports departments in their engagement with their food suppliers. DfE is working in partnership with food suppliers to ensure that schools can continue to provide pupils with nutritious meals. NHS England and DHSC are engaging with the supply chain for hospitals and care homes to ensure their suppliers are fully prepared for the end of the year.

■ Food: Labelling

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[96844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Government next plans to undertake negotiations with the EU on animal health and identification marks.

Victoria Prentis:

We want a relationship with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals, and centred on free trade. In the circumstances, we have no plans to ask for special arrangements on the use of health or identification marks for British exports to the EU. The Food Standards Agency is finalising its new guidance to the food industry covering which health and identification marks should be used on products of animal origin after the end of the Transition Period. We anticipate that this will be published shortly.

■ Members: Correspondence

Emma Hardy:

[\[97009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to reply to the joint letter of 29 July 2020 from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North and the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East on funding for a replacement vessel for the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

Victoria Prentis:

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Members. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. A reply will be sent to the hon. Members in due course.

■ Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes**Damian Hinds:**[\[96849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the operation of the Seasonal Workers Pilot.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra and the Home Office have been working closely to ensure the successful operation of the Seasonal Workers Pilot, and to undertake an effective assessment. The evaluation of the Seasonal Workers Pilot is ongoing and the results will be published in due course. The expansion of the Pilot in 2020 will enable the Government to carry out a more extensive evaluation of the systems and process in place to access labour from non-EEA countries, ahead of any decisions being taken of how the future needs of the sector may be addressed.

■ Wildlife: Smuggling**Anthony Mangnall:**[\[97039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech to the UN General Assembly of 26 September 2020, what steps his Department plans to take to use the UK G7 presidency to tackle the illegal wildlife trade.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK plays a leading role in driving the global response to eradicate illegal wildlife trade. We intend to invest over £66 million between 2014 and 2024 on work to directly tackle the illegal wildlife trade in animals and plants, including to reduce demand, strengthen enforcement, ensure effective legal frameworks and develop sustainable alternative livelihoods.

We are working across Government to define the objectives for the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021. These objectives will be shared in due course.

■ Zoo Animals Fund**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[96907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether remaining funds in the Zoo Animals Fund can be ringfenced to support zoos and aquariums that have more than 12 weeks operating costs remaining and who are therefore ineligible for support from the Zoo Animals Fund.

Victoria Prentis:

A £14 million funding envelope was made available for the initial Zoos Support Fund (ZSF), which closed at the end of July, and this envelope was then rolled forward and expanded to £100 million and made available for the subsequent Zoo Animals Fund (ZAF). It is therefore not the case that there are unspent funds from the ZSF which are available to be allocated to zoos separately from the ZAF. ZAF grant payments to zoos begin when they reach their final 12 weeks of financial reserves. Zoos can though, apply at any time before reaching this 12 week point to help with their business planning. The objective of the ZAF is to provide for operators who, due to a coronavirus-related drop in income, are experiencing severe financial difficulties and need support in caring for their animal collections between now and the start of the next season. It is not a guarantee to ensure that individual zoo operators themselves stay in business. If zoos are downsizing or rehoming their collection the fund can also provide support for this to ensure the animals' welfare. We are monitoring uptake of the ZAF and remain in discussion with zoos about how the scheme is working.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Arab States: Israel****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[97552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the number of Arab League countries that have recently normalised relations with Israel.

James Cleverly:

We warmly welcome the normalising of relations, and the strengthening of ties between Israel and its neighbours. We urge others across the region to follow the example of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The changing regional context and converging Arab and Israeli interests present an opening to develop relations and create the conditions for serious Israeli-Palestinian talks to resume. We profoundly hope that this moment can be used as a step towards direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians, as there can be no substitute in order to reach a two-state solution and a lasting peace.

■ Cameroon: Peace Negotiations**Layla Moran:**[\[98279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department and the diplomatic service are taking with (a) the Government of Cameroon and (b) President Biya to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict in that country.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 6 October 2020]: The UK Government is deeply concerned about the situation the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon

where high levels of violence have driven almost 740,000 people from their homes. The impact on civilians is tragic. Last month I [Minister Duddridge] announced £4.5 million in additional funding to humanitarian efforts in Cameroon, which will provide vulnerable people with vital food packs, sanitation provisions, medical supplies and fund training for health workers. This will bring our total humanitarian support to Cameroon to £13.5 million for 2020.

We continue to raise concerns about the crisis at the highest levels. In May I [Minister Duddridge] spoke to the Prime Minister of Cameroon and stressed the need for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. This message was reinforced by the British High Commissioner in Yaoundé when he spoke to President Biya in July, and to the Prime Minister of Cameroon in September, and urged the Government of Cameroon to engage in further, inclusive dialogue to address the root causes of the crisis. I [Minister Duddridge] have committed to visiting Cameroon soon and will again raise HMG's concerns about the crisis directly with the Government of Cameroon. The UK has shared experiences of conflict resolution with the Government of Cameroon, and through the British High Commission in Yaoundé we are also supporting local partners in their efforts to promote peace. We continue to urge all parties to remain engaged in ongoing Swiss-led efforts to facilitate talks and remain ready to support all credible peacebuilding efforts.

■ **China: Religious Buildings**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[98297\]](#)

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 reported destruction of religious shrines and mosques in Xinjiang province in China.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned by credible reports that mosques and other religious sites have been demolished in Xinjiang, evidence of which British diplomats have seen first-hand. On 25 September at the UN Human Rights Council, we raised our deep concerns about the human rights violations in Xinjiang, including severe restrictions on culture and religion, and called on the Chinese Government to allow unfettered access to Xinjiang. On 28 July, the Foreign Secretary raised our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi.

■ **China: Uighurs**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[98298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recent findings by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute showing 380 detention camps in Xinjiang in China.

Nigel Adams:

The recent Australian Strategic Policy Institute report is further evidence that, despite China's claims to the contrary, internment camps continue to be used to extra-judicially detain Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities across the region. On 25 September at the UN Human Rights Council, we raised our deep concerns about the human rights violations in Xinjiang and called on the Chinese Government to end its policy of extra-judicial detention and to release all those who are arbitrarily detained.

Climate Change: Refugees**Paula Barker:**[\[95246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential number of people who will be (a) internally, (b) regionally and (c) nationally displaced following climate changes in the next (i) 10, (ii) 20, (iii) 30 and (iv) 40 years.

James Duddridge:

Climate change is already negatively impacting people, economies and the environment. The poorest people are often the first and worst affected. The FCDO has begun looking at the studies and analysis available to better understand the links between migration and climate change, including current and future trends.

One of the key priorities for COP26 is to increase action to help communities adapt and build resilience to climate impacts. We will use our Presidency to encourage greater commitment to, and support for, practical adaptation and resilience action, helping those communities most at risk to deal with the impact of climate change.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Sexual Offences**Layla Moran:**[\[97708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of reports of sexual abuse by aid workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the 2018 Ebola outbreak; and what steps his Department is taking to help tackle sexual abuse by aid workers during the covid-19 pandemic.

James Duddridge:

Sexual exploitation and abuse are completely abhorrent. We regularly assess all of our partners against the highest safeguarding standards and expect thorough investigations whenever allegations are made. We take these recent allegations in DRC very seriously; there is no reason to believe they are not credible. The World Health Organization and other agencies have confirmed that they are urgently investigating. We will scrutinise their findings closely and are in close contact with them.

The UK is committed to driving up safeguarding standards across the aid sector, during the COVID-19 pandemic and at all times. We're working with partners to: prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment; listen to those

affected; respond sensitively but robustly when harm or allegations of harm occur; and learn from every case. We will continue to demand the highest standards of our partners and hold ourselves to those same high standards.

In March, the UK commissioned specific guidance for staff and external partners about managing the heightened risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment during the COVID-19 pandemic. This and a wide range of other tools and guidance are on the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub, which FCDO created last year

■ Education: Females

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[98684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will set out the criteria his Department uses to define a girls' education programme.

Wendy Morton:

Girls' education programmes are FCDO investments to increase education access, attainment and opportunities for girls. Standing up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education is a major priority for this Government and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls has become increasingly clear and the focus on girls' education across the world is more important than ever.

Between 2015 and 2020, the UK supported at least 15.6 million children to gain a decent education, of which 8.1 million were girls. Our bilateral programmes and funding to organisations like the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait make the UK a global leader in promoting girls' education.

■ Ethiopia: Politics and Government

Paul Blomfield:

[\[96861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political and security situation in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

The UK is concerned by the political and security situation in Ethiopia, including ongoing violence between ethnic groups, and reports of arrests and abuses by security services. 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 have provided direct support to public consultations on the new civil society legislation and draft media proclamations. The UK is facilitating capacity

building in Ethiopia to ensure that democratic institutions fulfil their constitutional mandate. For instance, we have supported the National Election Board of Ethiopia, contributing over £15 million of funding towards election preparations. 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.

■ Ethiopia: Violence

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[97751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Ethiopian counterpart on the recent ethnic-related violence in that country.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[97752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department has offered to the Ethiopian Government in response to the recent ethnic-related violence in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK is concerned by the ongoing violence in Ethiopia following the murder of Hachalu Hundessa on 29 June, and the widespread ethnically-driven violence that followed in Addis Ababa and the Oromia region. I visited Ethiopia from 27 - 29 July and was able to discuss recent events with the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the President of Oromia Region. I pushed for full and transparent investigations into the violence and that those detained are afforded due process and their cases heard promptly. I 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 have provided direct support to public consultations on the new civil society legislation and draft media proclamations. The UK is facilitating capacity building in Ethiopia to ensure that democratic institutions fulfil their constitutional mandate. For instance, we have supported the National Election Board of Ethiopia, contributing over £15 million of funding towards election preparations. Since 2016, the FCDO has provided over £30 million to support Ethiopia's electoral process, support engagement with citizens and support civil society organisations 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, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

Chris Law:

[\[95665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people were employed by his Department on 1 September 2020.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: On 1 September 2020, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office employed between 7500 and 7999 Home Civil Service and Diplomatic Service Staff, and between 9000 and 9499 Locally Employed Staff and Staff Appointed in Country.

■ Gender: Equality

Layla Moran:

[\[97016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Department for International Development's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality: Her Potential, Our Future published in March 2018.

Wendy Morton:

The Strategic Vision for Gender Equality was DFID's guiding document on gender equality but it also reflects and responds to the UK Government's ambitions on this agenda.

We are incredibly proud of what has been achieved under the Strategic Vision. Since its launch in 2018, for example, the UK has supported 2.5 million girls to access education, we have announced £67.5 million to prevent violence against women and girls, the biggest ever investment by a single government, and in 2019-20 alone, we supported 25.4 million women to access modern methods of family planning, helping to save thousands of lives.

The UK Government remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing gender equality and women and girls' rights. The FCDO will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches. We are also responding to the NAO's review of our work on gender published in April. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights, women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls, are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy.

■ Iran: Arms Trade

Dr Jamie Wallis:

[\[97724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to seek an extension of the UN conventional arms embargo on Iran before it expires.

James Cleverly:

The UN conventional arms embargo on Iran is due to expire on 18 October. The UK, alongside our E3 partners (France and Germany), remain concerned about the impact of the expiry on the region. Despite E3 efforts to find a compromise in the UN Security Council, there was no consensus to extend the embargo. We remain committed to countering Iranian proliferation to non-state actors in the region. The EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions will remain in place as will other prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons, including to Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi militia groups and the Houthis. Regional security needs to be addressed through any renewed negotiations with Iran, regional dialogue and by working with partners in the region.

Lebanon: Weapons**Craig Tracey:**[\[97648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on allegations that Hezbollah is producing and storing weapons next to crowded civilian areas in Beirut.

James Cleverly:

We have long been concerned by Hizballah's stockpiling of weapons within Lebanon, in contravention of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). We regularly raise this at the UN Security Council, and we call on the Lebanese authorities to abide by provisions of the relevant UNSCRs. Hizballah's destabilising influence only endangers Lebanon and its people.

Members: Correspondence**Justin Madders:**[\[97612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to correspondence from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston of 20 August 2020, reference MC2020/17426.

James Cleverly:

A response was sent on 2 October.

Non-governmental Organisations: Sexual Offences**Layla Moran:**[\[97707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help prevent sexual abuse by people employed by (a) NGOs and (b) the UN who are delivering (a) UK Official Development Assistance and (b) UK funded humanitarian assistance.

James Cleverly:

Safeguarding remains a top priority for the FCDO and we require all partners, including NGOs and the UN, to adhere to the highest standards of safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH). FCDO

monitors compliance throughout all programmes and staff are provided with guidance and training to do that. If partners do not meet our high standards, we will take swift and robust action.

FCDO convenes eight sets of organisations - including NGOs and the UN - to discuss delivery of the commitments made at the UK-led 2018 Safeguarding Summit to prevent and better respond to SEAH and we publish an annual progress report. FCDO funds initiatives to help partners meet our standards, including the Resource and Support Hub which offers guidance, tools and analysis, focusing on grassroots organisations in developing countries.

FCDO is supporting initiatives to prevent perpetrators of sexual abuse moving around the sector, including the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme which in 2019 prevented 36 people with a history of misconduct from being offered aid sector jobs.

The UK supports safeguarding capability-building initiatives in the UN and uses UN Executive Board discussions and joint initiatives with other major donors to ensure continued focus and improvement in this area.

■ Overseas Aid: Education

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[98682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any girls' education programmes have been (a) paused, (b) undergone budget reductions and (c) ceased as a result of the £2.9 billion projected reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget in 2020.

Wendy Morton:

Championing 12 years of quality education for all girls is a top priority for this Government and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls has become increasingly clear and the focus on girls' education across the world is more important than ever.

Difficult decisions have been necessary to identify the savings needed to ensure we meet the 0.7 per cent Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment this year. As a result, some programme spend for this financial year has been reduced or deferred. The Foreign Secretary chaired a review process across government looking at all strands of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure the UK can maintain operational capacity. This process has made sure there continues to be support and commitment to ODA priorities, including girls' education long term.

■ Overseas Aid: Females

Layla Moran:

[\[97706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's press notice entitled New Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office will lead global action to ensure world's poorest are protected from

ravages of coronavirus and famine published on 2 September 2020, what estimate he has made of the potential number of (a) women and (b) girls that will benefit from the £119m funding package.

James Duddridge:

Tackling the increasing threat of famine and broader acute food insecurity is a key priority for the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The UK's £119 million aid package will help alleviate extreme hunger for over 6 million people in Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Central African Republic, the Sahel, South Sudan and Sudan.

This includes assistance to women, girls and children. For example, as part of this aid package, the UK is supporting a partnership with UNICEF intended to leverage investments from others to collectively reach at least 4.3 million children per year with services to prevent acute malnutrition.

Additionally, our funding for the Sahel Region will provide nutrition screening to 526,250 children and mothers in this region, including emergency malnutrition response treatment to 25,914 children with severe acute malnutrition.

The aid package also includes funding for child protection which is expected to help 10,000 women and children in Somalia who are at risk of famine. Alongside this, we are a major contributor to, and supporter of, the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan, which supports the most vulnerable people in the COVID-19 crisis, including women and girls.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[98683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what effect the £2.9 billion projected reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget in 2020 has had on the Adolescent Girls' Education and Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa Programme.

Wendy Morton:

Championing the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education is a top priority for this Government and the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls has become increasingly clear and the focus on girls' education across the world is more important than ever.

The review of the ODA budget has made sure there continues to be support and commitment to ODA priorities, including girls' education. We are continuing with plans for a new girls' education programme in Africa that will empower marginalised girls.

■ **Palestinians: Children**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[98664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the reported

continued prevalence of night time family home arrests of Palestinian children by Israeli soldiers.

James Cleverly:

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

Paul Blomfield:

[\[96865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Israeli counterpart on those Palestinian children who have been held in Israeli military detention since the end of June 2020.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains concerned about the treatment of Palestinian children detained in Israeli military detention. We are committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including on this issue. We also continue to fund projects providing legal aid to minors and capacity building to local lawyers.

■ **Sub-Saharan Africa: Famine**

Layla Moran:

[\[97013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of food shortages and famine in Sub-Saharan Africa on women and girls in that region.

James Duddridge:

We are closely monitoring the food security situation in sub-Saharan Africa, where over 72 million people are estimated to be in crisis levels of food insecurity, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Climate shocks, an unprecedented locust outbreaks and the impact of COVID-19 are likely to increase needs and widen gaps in gender inequality.

The UK is a leading humanitarian donor, with protection at the heart of what we do. Addressing the needs of women and girls is central to our approach. We have committed £119 million to combat the threat of famine and appointed the first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs. Our funding will include life-saving nutrition services for mothers and children. We ensure a robust gender analysis when addressing chronic hunger and its broader underlying drivers. We invest in gender-responsive social protection. This helps protect and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable families, reducing negative coping mechanisms, such as the exchange of sex for food, water and basic needs.

Layla Moran:[\[97014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that food shortages and famine in Sub-Saharan Africa does not result in increased sexual exploitation of adolescent girls in that region.

James Duddridge:

We are closely monitoring the food security situation in sub-Saharan Africa, where over 72 million people are estimated to be in crisis levels of food insecurity, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Climate shocks, an unprecedented locust outbreaks and the impact of COVID-19 are likely to increase needs and widen gaps in gender inequality.

The UK is a leading humanitarian donor, with protection at the heart of what we do. Addressing the needs of women and girls is central to our approach. We have committed £119 million to combat the threat of famine and appointed the first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs. Our funding will include life-saving nutrition services for mothers and children. We ensure a robust gender analysis when addressing chronic hunger and its broader underlying drivers. We invest in gender-responsive social protection. This helps protect and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable families, reducing negative coping mechanisms, such as the exchange of sex for food, water and basic needs.

We remain committed to improving safeguarding standards across the aid sector and to a zero-tolerance approach to help prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

■ **UNRWA: Finance****Christian Wakeford:**[\[91204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the UK has provided to the UN Relief and Works Agency in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

The amount of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for the requested calendar years is given in the table below. Data is published each year in the Statistics on International Development (SID) publication.

£ (MILLIONS)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total UK ODA to UNRWA per calendar year	65.9	54.4	51.1	65.4	65.6

Source: based on Statistics for International Development but adjusted as SID is reported in line with OECD reporting directives, which classifies some UNRWA

emergency and project funding separately. Therefore, the figures in the table have been adjusted from the SID data for 2018 and 2019 to show £5 million additional funding per year which the UK disbursed for the UNRWA emergency appeal for Gaza. The table has also been adjusted to include an additional £1.9m disbursement to UNRWA in 2015 as part of a CSSF programme in Lebanon. In addition, the 2018 SID data captures a £5m disbursement to UNRWA's Syria Appeal made in 2018. This payment contributed to UNRWA's 2019 appeal and is therefore captured in the 2019 figures above. The figures above reflect actual total UK funding to UNRWA, including emergency appeals.

■ West Bank: Demolition

Paul Blomfield:

[\[96862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle Israel's demolition of structures in the West Bank and resulting displacement of Palestinians during the covid-19 pandemic.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[96863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies in the context of the covid-19 pandemic of reports of Israel's demolition of water, sanitation and hygiene structures used by Palestinians in the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

The UK is seriously concerned by the continued demolitions of Palestinian structures by Israeli authorities, particularly at this time. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, is harmful to the peace process and weakens the capacity of Palestinians to withstand the impact of COVID-19. Under IHL, an occupying power has the duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene in the occupied territory to the fullest extent of the means available to it and with the cooperation of the local authorities. We call on both parties to avoid any provocative action which might undermine the cooperation that is so critical.

Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our concerns about demolitions with Israeli Ministers and senior officials, and urged them to cease the counter-productive policy of demolitions, and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. The British Government also supports Palestinians facing demolition or eviction in Area C of the West Bank through our legal aid programme. This helps residents challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Ambulance Services: Emergency Calls****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[95191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure ambulance emergency control room computer systems have effective back-ups and safeguards to prevent control room staff from having to use paper based systems for 999 calls.

Edward Argar:

Local ambulance trusts have responsibility for their own computer systems with governance processes in place to regularly monitor the risk of IT failure. Each ambulance trust in England has a least two control centres with separate infrastructure so they can continue to provide emergency services in the event of IT issues on one site.

NHS England and NHS Improvement support ambulance trusts to increase their infrastructure resilience through the Ambulance Improvement Programme building on the findings published in Lord Carter's report entitled 'Operational productivity and performance in English NHS ambulance trusts: Unwarranted variations'.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitals**Julian Sturdy:**[\[94407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using the network of Nightingale hospitals as the primary treatment centres for covid-19 patients to enable local hospitals to concentrate on delivering planned and routine care.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service Nightingale hospitals are an unprecedented response to an unprecedented challenge and created additional capacity to ensure the NHS can respond to demand if needed.

The Nightingale hospitals are available to support the NHS when needed. Local clinical leaders are working to determine how this is done whilst considering the needs of all patients requiring NHS care.

■ Coronavirus: North West**Derek Twigg:**[\[92633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis was for the decision to include Halton with the rest of the Liverpool City Region and Warrington as subject to additional covid-19 measures, announced on Friday 18 September 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 25 September 2020]: The Government makes decisions on local interventions through the Local Action Committee (GOLD) chaired by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, escalating to other Ministers and the Prime Minister as necessary. GOLD considers the latest data and advice from experts, including our epidemiologists and the Chief Medical Officer, but also consults local leaders and Directors of Public Health. We consider case rates, trends in the data and causes, but also local geography and an assessment of the local response and plans, before making judgements about whether restrictions are needed and if so, what restrictions are most appropriate.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Helen Hayes:****[82195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish, by local authority area, the number and proportion of close contacts of those who have been, or are suspected as having been, infected or contaminated with covid-19 who (a) are undergoing covid-19 testing, (b) have tested positive for covid-19 and (c) have received advice as a result of that contact tracing to self-isolate or quarantine.

Helen Whately:

The information is not currently broken down to level of the number and proportion of close contacts. However, all information regarding those transferred to the contact tracing service is available at GOV.UK by region, upper tier local authority, total and percentage reached at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912562/NHS_T_T_Regional_Breakdowns_28May_19Aug.csv/preview

Further information on COVID-19 testing and capacity is available on GOV.UK at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/testing>

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence**Catherine West:****[91111]**

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

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: The Government attaches great importance to the effective and timely handling of correspondence. Departments are seeing a significant increase in correspondence during the pandemic but are required to provide a substantial response to all correspondence from Parliamentarians in 20 days. Government departments are not required to keep a record of the average response time but the Department has responded to 21.6% of correspondence from hon. Members in 18 days since 1 April 2020.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**Fiona Bruce:**[\[98693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 21 September 2020 to Questions 90109 and 90110 on Coronavirus: Congleton, when he plans to provide substantive answers to those questions.

Helen Whately:

We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all hon. Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The hon. Member's questions will be answered as soon as possible.

■ Halton Hospital and Warrington Hospital**Mike Amesbury:**[\[95210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on providing support for new capital bids for Warrington and Halton hospital sites.

Edward Argar:

The Department has focused on improving how it supports projects centrally, for example through joint central approvals and work on hospital design standards.

Future National Health Service capital funding will be determined as part of the Department's multi-year settlement at the next Spending Review.

Trusts should continue developing their plans and priorities for local NHS infrastructure and discuss their proposals with NHS England and NHS Improvement. Then, once the capital settlement has been confirmed with HM Treasury, the Department will consider carefully how new bids can be prioritised within it.

■ Health Services: Coronavirus**Grahame Morris:**[\[93578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure access to routine healthcare and dental treatment during a second wave of covid-19.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 25 September 2020]: At the height of the pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement set up urgent dental care centres (UDCs) to provide clinically necessary urgent treatment to patients. Over 600 UDCs remain open to ensure that dental treatment needed urgently can be accessed while practices make sure their own expansion of services is done as safely as possible. Routine face-to-face National Health Service dental services resumed from 8 June with the aim of

increasing levels of service whilst taking into account infection control procedures and personal protective equipment requirements.

Our focus is on accelerating the return of all non-COVID-19 health services, including routine treatments, to near-normal levels, including making full use of available capacity between now and winter, whilst also preparing for winter demand pressures. This will be done alongside continued vigilance against further COVID-19 spikes locally and possibly nationally.

■ **Hospitals: Coronavirus**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[92665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will secure additional facilities to enable Nightingale hospitals to accommodate patients that are not intubated.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 24 September 2020]: The Nightingale hospitals are available to support the National Health Service when needed. Local clinical leaders are working to determine how this is done whilst considering the needs of all patients requiring NHS care.

■ **Hospitals: Private Sector**

Lucy Allan:

[\[93609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many private hospitals the NHS has rented facilities from since April 2020; and what the total cost to the public purse was of those rentals.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ **Intensive Care: Coronavirus**

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[95725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) average stay, (b) maximum recorded stay and (c) average intensive care unit stay is for patients admitted to hospital after testing positive for covid-19.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: This data is not available.

■ **Medical Equipment: Licensing**

Chris Green:

[\[95660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the Spring publication by NHS England of its MedTech Funding Mandate has not yet been published; and what the timescale is for issuing that publication.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [52079](#) on 10 June 2020.

Members: Correspondence**John Spellar:** [\[90040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 17 June 2020 from the hon. Member for Warley on his constituent Sally Taylor.

Edward Argar:

The Department replied to the Rt hon. Member's letter on 23 September 2020.

Out-patients: Coronavirus**Karin Smyth:** [\[94464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS trusts have adequate information on future funding to facilitate planning for rescheduling outpatient appointments cancelled as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

On 21 July 2020, the Chancellor launched the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review. The Spending Review, which will be published later this year, will set out the Government's spending plans for health and social care, setting resource budgets for the years 2021/22 to 2023/24 and capital budgets for the years 2021/22 until 2024/25. Any additional funding secured to reduce elective care backlog would be communicated by NHS England and NHS Improvement via planning guidance.

£3 billion of additional funding was announced by the Prime Minister in July to support the National Health Service. £2.7 billion will go directly to local NHS systems as part of their block contracts for the second half of the year. The remainder is direct commissioning funding which will be distributed at a regional level. The funding will be available to organisations to cover the period from the 1 October to the end of the financial year, which has been calculated to provide systems with the resources to manage ongoing COVID-19 pressures alongside recovering activity levels.

Screening: Havering**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[93545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to phlebotomy services in the London Borough of Havering.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[93546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy of waiting times for and (b) access to phlebotomy services in the London Borough of Havering.

Edward Argar:

In March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust targeted provision of phlebotomy services for priority groups only including, inpatients, oncology, haematology, children under

12 and a small number of other patients whose treatment is ongoing and reliant on blood testing.

We are aware that our community blood testing services are currently experiencing a high level of demand and have been working with service providers to increase capacity. We are establishing phlebotomy services in community settings and work is underway to reduce waiting times for patients who require non-urgent blood tests. We have also introduced online booking, implemented fast track priority booking system, introduced specialised phlebotomy general practitioner services and developed a new communication strategy for local residents.

■ Supply Chain Coordination

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[95613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) progress has been made on his Department's review of Supply Chain Coordination Limited, (b) timelines he has applied to that review and (c) opportunities will be available for stakeholders to provide input into that review.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: It is normal practice to review the performance of all companies owned by the Department, which includes Supply Chain Coordination Limited (SCCL), to assure operational performance and strategic fit. The Department is currently considering the conclusions of the internal review work that it has undertaken in respect of SCCL.

A number of stakeholders have been consulted in assessing the service, stakeholder requirements and opportunities for the Company's strategic direction.

■ Thromboembolism

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[94469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with NHS England and NHS Improvement on replacing the NHS safety thermometer.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have no plans to replace the National Health Service safety thermometer. The data generated from the thermometer has been shown to be not fit for current purposes and is available from other existing sources.

NHS England and NHS Improvement discussed discontinuing the NHS safety thermometer with the Department during 2018/19 and 2019/20, due to emerging evidence that the data collected was incomplete and not being used as intended to support safety improvement. The specific decision to stop data collection in March 2020, in part to support the COVID-19 response by freeing up nursing time, was discussed with Departmental officials during March 2020.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Housing****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[89732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to move residents from asylum accommodation hotels into dispersal housing; and what the target timeframe is for that work to be completed.

Chris Philp:

It is Home Office policy to move people into suitable Dispersed Accommodation (DA) once their claim for support has been assessed.

The current global pandemic has presented significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation. This has included the need to source sufficient accommodation to meet demand.

Work to explore further options to accommodate asylum seekers included work with the Ministry of Defence to identify and to utilise MOD sites at short notice.

This accommodation is contingency accommodation, whilst pressures in the system are addressed and will be discontinued as soon as the Home Office is able to do so.

A comprehensive cessation plan has been established with input from Local Authorities, Other Government Departments and Stakeholders to reduce the number of people in hotels.

Our accommodation providers are working to maximise their procurement plans throughout the UK, but they can only do so with Local Authority agreement. It is our intention to move all individuals in contingency accommodation into suitable DA as soon as reasonably practical.

■ Computer Misuse Act 1990**Simon Fell:**[\[96192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to review the effectiveness of the provisions of the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

James Brokenshire:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to PQ56039 on 11 June 2020.

■ Contact Tracing: Passengers**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**[\[83880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visits to addresses given by people on Passenger Locator Forms, returning from countries that are not included in the Government's travel corridors, each police force has carried out 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 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.

■ **Home Office: Training****Neil O'Brien:**[\[86151\]](#)

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

James Brokenshire:

The table below shows the spend for the last two financial years. There was no spend for the financial years 16/17 or 17/18. Figures for the financial year 15/16 are not available.

Spend on Unconscious Bias Training

PERIOD	SPEND
1 April 18 to 31 Mar 19	£7,949
1 April 19 to 31 Mar 20	£46,131

■ **Immigrants: Finance****Neil Coyle:**[\[91061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to improve response times to Subject Access Requests from people who have applied to have their No Recourse Public Fund conditions lifted.

Chris Philp:

The department is currently meeting the statutory timescales for completing SARs.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Louise Haigh:**[\[93633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of the 4 September 2020 on the Warrington Peace Foundation's work supporting victims of terrorism.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Secretary responded on 24 September 2020.

■ Modern Slavery Act 2015**Anthony Mangnall:** [\[97034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 2019 Independent review of the Modern Slavery Act, what plans she has to introduce penalties for non-compliance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Anthony Mangnall: [\[97035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 2019 Independent review of the Modern Slavery Act, if she will amend the Companies Act 2006 to include a requirement for companies to refer to their modern slavery statement in their annual reports.

Anthony Mangnall: [\[97036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the 2019 Independent review of the Modern Slavery Act, if she will bring forward legislative proposals to (a) fulfil modern slavery statement reporting requirements or (b) act when instances of slavery are found an offence under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

Anthony Mangnall: [\[97037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that companies consider the entirety of their supply chains when fulfilling their obligations under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government accepted the majority of the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act. The details are set out in the Government response to the Independent Review, published on 9 July 2019 at www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-review-of-the-modern-slavery-act.

As part of its response to the Independent Review, the Home Office launched a public consultation on potential changes to the Modern Slavery Act's transparency legislation on 9 July 2019. The Government response to the consultation, published on 22 September 2020, committed to introducing an ambitious package of measures to strengthen and future-proof the legislation, including:

extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more;

mandating the specific reporting topics that statements must cover

requiring statements to be published on the new Government digital reporting service

setting a single reporting deadline; and

taking forwards options for penalties for non-compliance in line with the ongoing development of the Single Enforcement Body for employment rights.

These measures require legislative change and as such will be introduced when parliamentary time allows.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions**

Matt Western: [\[98270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many vehicles have been stopped by police for producing a hazardous amount of smoke in the last 12 months; and what proportion of those vehicles were confiscated;

Matt Western: [\[98271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many vehicles have been stopped by police in the last 12 months for their windscreens or front side windows being tinted beyond legal limits; and what information she holds on the steps taken in relation to those vehicles.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold this information centrally.

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 lay down certain requirements that all vehicles have to meet strict emission standards and be constructed and maintained so as not to emit any avoidable smoke. It also governs the amount of light that must pass through the windows of a vehicle and therefore how clearly the windows can be seen through.

It is for the police to take enforcement action as they consider appropriate against those in breach of the Regulations.

■ **Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes**

Damian Hinds: [\[96850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to make a decision on whether to continue the Seasonal Workers Pilot scheme under the new points-based immigration system.

Kevin Foster:

We are working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Work and Pensions to evaluate and consider the findings of the Pilot, including balancing measures to recruit in the UK Labour Market with any access to overseas labour.

We will publish further details in due course.

■ **Slavery: EU Nationals**

Jess Phillips: [\[96911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure victims of modern slavery with EU or EEA nationality, living in the

UK before December 31 2020, can apply for settled status in the event they do not meet the deadline to apply as a result of their experience of exploitation.

Jess Phillips: [\[96912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the accessibility of the EU Settlement Scheme to victims of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Jess Phillips: [\[96913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to incorporate EU Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims into domestic law.

Victoria Atkins:

In line with the citizens' rights agreements, the Government has made clear that, where a person has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme by those resident here by 31 December 2020, they will be given a further opportunity to apply. We intend to publish guidance early in 2021 on what constitutes reasonable grounds for missing the deadline, but examples will include the victims of abusive situations or controlling relationships who were prevented from applying.

There is a range of direct and indirect support available for vulnerable EU citizens. This includes a telephone helpline available where citizens and their carer's and helpers can discuss any aspect of the application with a trained caseworker at any point during the process. For those who need assistance with IT, the Home Office has put in place an Assisted Digital solution which provides support over the phone, at one of around 300 local centres across the UK or at home with a trained tutor. We have also provided a paper application form for those whose specific individual needs require it.

We have also provided up to £9 million of grant funding in the last financial year to 57 voluntary and community sector organisations across the UK. A further £8 million of grant funding has also been committed this financial year to continue this Home Office funded support. These organisations are being funded and supported by the Home Office to deliver practical assistance to vulnerable or at-risk EU citizens in applying to the scheme. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens/list-of-organisations>

In addition, potential victims of modern slavery who are referred into the National Referral Mechanism, will be directly signposted to the EUSS support services which are available.

The Government is committed to eradicating human trafficking and the scourge of modern slavery. The UK currently gives effect to obligations on modern slavery under The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT), Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the EU

Anti-Trafficking Directive (2011/36), through the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and policy guidance. At the end of the EU Exit transition period in December 2020, the UK will no longer be bound by EU law. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 and relevant policy guidance will be unaffected. The UK will remain bound by international obligations in relation to preventing and combatting human trafficking and modern slavery.

■ UK Border Force: Postal Services

Layla Moran:

[\[97012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of items of post entering the UK from (a) the Netherlands and (b) other EU member states opened by the Border Force (i) in the last five years and (ii) since 31 January 2020.

Chris Philp:

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

Border Force routinely carries out risk based inspections of post and parcels imported into the UK. The purpose of this is to both deter and prevent the entry of goods that would harm the national interest and the safety of its citizens.

Section 159 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 as amended by regulation 7 of the Postal Packets (Revenue and Customs) Regulations 2011 provides the power for designated Customs officials to inspect, and open, any postal packet for the purpose of examining anything that designated Customs officials suspect it may contain, for example, goods which may not have duty paid or are prohibited or restricted. A warrant is not obtained as it is not required for postal packet inspections.

■ Vetting: Employment

Valerie Vaz:

[\[97565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether employers are legally required to follow Disclosure and Barring Service guidance on identification.

Victoria Atkins:

An employer, or Registered Body, is responsible for verifying the applicant's identity in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service's identity checking guidelines. They are legally required to follow Disclosure and Barring Service guidance on identification. This is one of the conditions attached to registration within The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Registration) Regulations 2006.

Valerie Vaz:

[\[97566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether employers are able to refuse an employee's Disclosure and Barring Service check application if the employee does not provide photographic identification.

Victoria Atkins:

The DBS identity guidance (see link below) includes the provision for non-photographic documents. Employers or Registered Bodies may require photographic identity documents to be shown as part of their own employment policies or recruitment processes.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/documents-the-applicant-must-provide>

■ **Vetting: Photographs****Valerie Vaz:**[\[97564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether photographic identification is required for a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Victoria Atkins:

Photographic identification is not required for a Disclosure and Barring Service check. Non-photographic documents, for example UK birth certificates, can be used in conjunction with other documents; council tax or bank statements, so that identity can be confirmed without the need for photographic identification.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **Affordable Housing: Construction****Margaret Greenwood:**[\[98713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of Section 106 commitments on the levels of affordable housing in (a) England, (b) the north of England and (c) Wirral.

Christopher Pincher:

It is important that we analyse the consultation feedback thoroughly. We will respond to the consultation in due course.

■ **Affordable Housing: Rural Areas****Ben Everitt:**[\[97058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he is taking steps to ensure that the proposals set out in the Planning for the Future white paper are rural proofed with regard to demand for affordable homes in rural communities.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government recognises the importance of affordable homes in rural communities. National planning policy makes it clear that in rural areas, housing development that reflect local needs should be supported, and that affordable housing can be sought for residential developments that are not major developments in designated rural areas. None of our proposals change this overall approach.

In *Planning for the Future*, we propose to replace the existing system of developer contributions with a new Infrastructure Levy, which will deliver at least as much onsite

affordable housing as at present. We are currently consulting on this approach, which will inform our assessment of the impacts of the proposed Levy.

■ Biodiversity and Green Belt

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[98711\]](#)

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 Government consultation on Changes to the current planning system on (a) the green belt and (b) biodiversity in (i) England and (ii) Wirral.

Christopher Pincher:

In *Planning for the Future* we put forward for consultation some significant changes to the focus and the processes of planning to secure better outcomes, including improving our precious countryside and environment alongside increasing the supply of land for new, beautiful homes and sustainable places. One key proposal is that local plans would categorise all land as areas for growth, for renewal or for protection. The proposal makes clear that, under the reformed system, local authorities would use the plan-making process to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of Green Belt and biodiversity, in line with our policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. The consultation remains open until 29 October 2020. Following consideration of the consultation responses received, we will publish the Government's response in due course. This will set out any decisions and how we intend to implement them.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Gareth Thomas:

[\[96754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 81500, what equivalent evidence could be used to demonstrate to a mortgage lender that a building is safe; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

Not all lenders request an EWS1 form and we are encouraging lenders to accept a broader range of evidence to assure themselves of a building's safety. This could include a fire risk assessment that includes external walls or a recent building control certificate.

Gareth Thomas:

[\[96755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 85101, when he plans to hold the next roundtable with mortgage lenders; if he will make it his policy to publish the minutes of roundtables with mortgage lenders; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Minister for Building Safety intends to next meet with mortgage lenders this month. Minutes of the roundtable are not published due to the commercial in confidence nature of the meetings.

High Rise Flats: Insulation**Sarah Olney:**[\[98740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to publish monthly updates of projected completion dates for all remaining high-rise buildings with ACM cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

We are committed to publishing all appropriate information in the Building Safety Programme's data release when ready and we will consider the inclusion of information on projected completion dates.

Housing: Construction**Ben Everitt:**[\[97057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on local infrastructure of proposals in the Planning for the Future white paper to identify land suitable for development as growth areas, where permission in principle would be automatically secured for forms and types of development specified in the local plan.

Christopher Pincher:

The White Paper makes it clear that development plans, including the identification of Growth Areas where outline consent would be automatically granted, should continue to be informed by appropriate infrastructure planning. We are also proposing to introduce a new Infrastructure Levy, which will aim to collect more than the current system of developer contributions, and which local authorities will be able to use to fund infrastructure (including onsite provision). We are currently consulting on these proposals, which will inform our assessment of their impact.

Local Government Finance: Coronavirus**Gareth Thomas:**[\[96760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on ensuring local authorities can meet the additional costs arising as a consequence of the covid-19 outbreak in the financial year 2021-22; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Councils are at the front line as we continue to tackle this pandemic and we are determined that they have the resources they need to respond to the pandemic in their areas. That is why we've given councils an unprecedented £4.8 billion to deal with the pandemic, comprising £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and over £1.1

billion for the Infection Control Fund. In total, over £28 billion has been committed to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities across Government. We are currently undertaking a programme of engagement with the sector, which includes our ongoing financial monitoring survey and direct contact with councils and their representatives, local leaders and Chief Executives to understand the challenges and pressures experienced by councils from the Covid-19 outbreak. We recognise that even with the considerable support already provided, there will be individual authorities with either unique circumstances or residual issues resulting in unmanageable pressures. We would ask that any local authority who is faced with an unmanageable pressure or is concerned about their future financial position should approach MHCLG for discussion.

■ Night Shelters: Coronavirus

Tim Farron:

[\[96831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the availability of winter night shelter provision during the covid-19 restrictions.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The current advice remains that night shelters should remain closed for now – and providers should continue to explore alternative options for self-contained accommodation.

However, we recognise that the sector needs clarity on provision as winter approaches. We are working with the sector and health experts to consider operating principles shelters would need to follow so that they can be reopened as safely as possible, when self-contained accommodation cannot be made available. We will be setting out further advice on this as soon as possible.

On 17 September we announced local authority allocations for the short-term funding aspect of Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). £91.5 million was allocated to 274 councils in England to help vulnerable people housed during the pandemic. The remaining £13.5 million of funding will be used to support local authorities to tackle new and emerging challenges over the winter.

We are also funding significant longer-term accommodation for rough sleepers via the NSAP – 3,300 homes this year alone – and tailored support so as few people as possible housed in emergency accommodation return to life on the streets.

■ Property Development

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[98712\]](#)

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 Government's consultation on Changes to the current planning system on the ability of developers to landbank in England.

Christopher Pincher:

We recognise the concerns that some developers are not delivering new sites as quickly as possible, despite planning permission being in place. Our *Planning for the Future* White Paper has put forward proposals to support build out through planning, including revising national policy to encourage masterplans and design codes for substantial development sites to see a variety of development types by different builders come forward at once. We will be exploring further options to support faster build out as part of the wider package of reforms and look forward to reviewing the consultation responses in full.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**

Emily Thornberry: [\[97491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 9 July 2015 air-strike on a school in Tuban was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 30 March 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Khor Maksar was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 18 August 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Al-Dhuha was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 25 August 2015 air-strike on a house under construction in Bait Al-Faqih was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[97495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 9 September 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Khadir was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[97496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 15 September 2015 air-strike on houses in Baqim was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[97497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 15 September 2015 air-strike on a car in Baqim was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[97498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 15 September 2015 air-strike on a market in Sharis was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[97499\]](#)

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

Emily Thornberry:[\[97500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 8 October 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Dhubab was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b)

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

Emily Thornberry: [\[97501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 17 October 2015 air-strike on a house in Al-Wazi'iyah was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 4 November 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Taizz was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 19 November 2015 air-strike on fishing boats in Al-Hodeidah was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 20 November 2015 air-strike on a car in Majz was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 28 November 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Mawza was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[97506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 13 December 2015 air-strike on houses

in Harad was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[97507\]](#)

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[97508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 31 December 2015 air-strike on a house in Khayran Al-Mahriq was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[97509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 19 January 2016 air-strike on a residential area in Salah was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[97510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 26 August 2016 air-strike on a residential area in Baqim was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

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

■ Furs: Imports

Emily Thornberry:

[\[98167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if the UK's future approach to the import of fur and fur products has been discussed during her Department's negotiations of potential rollover free trade agreements with (a) Canada, (b) Mexico, (c) Moldova, (d) Turkey, and (e) Norway.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the UK's future approach to the import of fur and fur products has been discussed during her department's negotiations of a free trade agreement with the United States.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the UK's future approach to the import of fur and fur products has been discussed during her Department's negotiations to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the UK's future approach to the import of fur and fur products was discussed during her Department's negotiations of the rollover free trade agreements signed with (a) South Korea, (b) Jordan and (c) Lebanon.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the terms of the trade agreements effective from 1 January 2021 with (a) South Korea, (b) Jordan and (c) Lebanon permit a ban on the import of fur and fur products from those countries.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the UK's future approach to the import of fur and fur products was discussed during her Department's negotiations of the rollover free trade agreements signed with (a) the Central America trade association, and (b) the Cariforum trade bloc.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the terms of the UK-Central America association agreement permit a ban on the import of fur and fur products from (a) El Salvador, (b) Nicaragua and (c) Panama.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the terms of the rollover free trade agreement signed by the UK with the Cariforum trade bloc permit the UK to impose a ban on the import of fur and fur products from Belize.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her Canadian counterpart on the continued right of that country to export specified varieties of fur and fur products into the UK after 31 December 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[98176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her Mexican counterpart on the continued right of that country to export specified varieties of fur and fur products into the UK after 31 December 2020.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[98177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her Turkish counterpart on the continued right of that country to export specified varieties of fur and fur products into the UK after 31 December 2020.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[98178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her Moldovan counterpart on the continued right of that country to export specified varieties of fur and fur products into the UK after 31 December 2020.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[98179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her Norwegian counterpart on the continued right of that country to export specified varieties of fur and fur products into the UK after 31 December 2020.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. There are restrictions on some skin and fur products, which cannot be legally imported into the United Kingdom. These include fur from cats and dogs, seal skins and products from commercial hunts. Legislation has prohibited farming of animals for their fur since 2000 in England and Wales, and 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Once our future relationship with the EU has been established, we will have the opportunity to consider further steps we could take in relation to fur sales – and our commitment to tackling the illegal wildlife trade more generally.

For continuity trade agreements, it is important to be clear that these are the EU's trade agreements that we are simply seeking to replicate in order to secure continuity for British businesses, but foreign partners should be under no illusion that HM Government is clear in its commitment to protect endangered species and uphold our animal welfare standards.

■ Trade Agreements: Food

Stuart Anderson:

[\[97027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what safeguards are in place to help ensure consumer confidence in food quality standards as part of future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government is proud of its high food safety standards. Having left the EU, and as we leave the transition period, we will take back control of our laws, standards and regulations. Without exception, imports will meet our stringent standards.

The Food Standards Agency will continue to oversee our food standards, for both domestic production and imports, and provide independent advice to HM Government.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Jonathan Gullis:

[98293]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with the US.

Greg Hands:

The fourth UK-US Free Trade Agreement negotiating round took place from 8 September to 18 September 2020. A Written Ministerial Statement was published on 22 September 2020, updating parliament on the progress of the round.

Significant progress has been achieved since launching negotiations in May 2020, and talks are at an advanced stage. Negotiators are now in the process of consolidating texts in most chapters.

Shortly before the 4th negotiating round both sides exchanged their first tariff offers, allowing a series of detailed market access discussions to be held during the round- a notable milestone which demonstrates momentum.

In parallel to the negotiations, the International Trade Secretary held a series of key meetings with the United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert Lighthizer. They share an ambition for a comprehensive trade agreement. The UK has been clear there is no set deadline for agreeing a deal.

In total, 162 sessions have been held over four negotiating rounds. The fifth round of talks will take place later in October, with additional intersessional discussions taking place in the meantime.

■ Trade and Agriculture Commission

Daniel Zeichner:

[96923]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when the Trade and Agriculture Commission plans to publish its preliminary report.

Greg Hands:

The Trade and Agriculture Commission will be providing my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade with a report on the progress it has made towards its final recommendations on future trade policy, as set out under the terms of its appointment which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-and-agriculture-commission-tac/trade-and-agriculture-commission-terms-of-reference>. A summary of the progress report will be published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trade-and-agriculture-commission-tac>.

JUSTICE**■ Community Rehabilitation Companies****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[96826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2019–20, published on 24 September 2020, what assessment he has made of the reasons for worsening performance across the following key performance indicators for Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) (a) CRC completion of accredited programmes, (b) CRC sentence plan timeliness, and (c) and CRC initial contact; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

National performance met or exceeded targets for four out of the 18 Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) measures in the most recently released figures. CRC contracts continue to be managed throughout COVID and the contract exit period. Where performance issues arise, these are managed by the relevant contract management teams and contractual levers applied, for example service credits or performance improvement plans.

As a result of the COVID pandemic all CRCs have been operating under the obligations within their Exceptional Delivery Models (EDM). This has meant that CRCs have had to adapt to an alternative way of working. The EDMs are subject to robust assurance and compliance activities, which are carried out by the Authority on a regular basis to ensure that CRCs continue to operate to their contracted obligations and continue to deliver front line probation services to protect the public.

There was minimal impact from COVID-19 on performance for Q4 (1st January – 31st March) 2020. However, there may be small localised effects due to government regulations introduced in the week commencing 23rd of March 2020 which saw some normal probation operations temporarily suspended, group-sizes reduced, or CRCs operating by alternative practices that may not be fully reflected in performance reporting.

■ Convictions and Police Cautions: Young People**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[96824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the highest number of convictions is given to a person aged between 18 and 24.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[96825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people aged between 18 and 24 have (a) 10-14, (b) 15-19, and (c) 20 or more cautions and convictions in total.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[96829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people aged between 18 and 24 have (a) three to five (b) six to nine, (c) 10-14, (d) 15-19 and (e) more than 20 cautions and convictions of (i) violence against the person, (ii) sexual offences, (iii) drug offences,

(iv) theft offences, (v) robbery, (vi) possession of weapons and (vii) miscellaneous crimes against society.

Chris Philp:

Obtaining the necessary information to answer these questions involves accessing the secure Police National Computer (PNC) system, which my relevant officials were unable to do in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although PNC access has now restarted, work to catch up the data loading needs to be completed before these questions can be answered and there is reduced capacity to do this due to the need to adhere to social distancing guidelines. I will write to the Hon Member in due course with the information requested and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

■ **Electronic Tagging: Contracts**

Mr David Lammy:

[\[96767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether any recent (a) arrangements have been entered into and (b) contracts signed to provide for electronic tagging.

Lucy Frazer:

On the 13th May 2020 PQ42887 provided details of the new contracts that had been signed to deliver additional electronic tagging capacity for the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme in place during the Covid-19 outbreak.

On the 18th May 2020, the Ministry of Justice agreed a contract with Alcohol Monitoring Services Ltd for the provision of monitoring hardware and data analysis services. The contract was let in support of new legislation which came into force on the 19th May 2020 to allow for the roll out of the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement across England and Wales which will begin shortly.

The contract was awarded through an appropriate existing public framework

■ **Offences against Children: Trials**

Sarah Champion:

[\[98705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications for special measures for vulnerable witnesses to give evidence in court proceedings on child abuse cases were (a) received, (b) denied and (c) denied because of lack of facilities in 2018-19.

Chris Philp:

Special measures applications received, refused, and their reasons for refusal are recorded in part, but HMCTS management information systems does not hold the data needed to answer the question. The information requested is not held centrally and can only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

■ **Prison Officers: Resignations**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[96827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2019–20, published on 24 September

2020, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in the resignation rate for band 3-5 prison officers.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly workforce statistics for Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. The most [recently published data](#) for band 3-5 officers operational prison officers, shows the resignation rate was 7.2% in the year ending 30 June 2020, which is a decrease of 0.8 percentage points since the year ending 31 March 2020. Of those band 3-5 operational prison officers that have resigned there is an increasing proportion of leavers with lower time in service: in March 2018 69% of all resignations were for staff within their first three years of service, whereas in March 2019, March 2020 and June 2020 it was 78%, 76% and 75% respectively.

Since 2016, we have recruited around 4,000 new prison officers who have worked through unprecedented challenges to protect prisoners and the public. A larger workforce means more leavers, but we are working hard to retain staff with better pay, additional training to progress their careers, and significant investment in tools to keep them safe.

We have created a retention programme which is linked to wider activities around employee experience, employee lifecycle and staff engagement at work. We are looking at leaver trend data and using exit interviews to establish the drivers of attrition in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. This work consists of reviewing existing policy, process and benefit arrangements for staff to establish how best to optimise them in order to retain a leading presence in the labour market, as an employer of choice.

■ **Prison Visitors**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[96823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the uptake of physical visits since those visits were restarted of prison policies on (a) contact between parents and children, (b) length of visits, (c) use of punishment against parents in prison who violate rules against contact with their children.

Lucy Frazer:

Under the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services it is for Governors to set out how visits run in their prison in a Covid secure manner using available resources and public health guidance.

Governors are empowered to decide how long visits should last, recognising issues such as additional movement and cleaning times that may be needed to ensure visits remain Covid secure for the men, women and children in our care, their visitors and staff.

Current policy is visits should last for a minimum of 45 minutes in prisons, where it is safe to do so in an adapted Covid safe manner. All visitors are required to maintain social distancing if not part of the same household, in line with public health guidelines.

The remedial action taken for any breaking of contact rules on visits (which are set out on GOV.UK and at the time of booking for the purposes of protecting visitors, residents and staff) is a matter for local discretion and based upon the nature and seriousness of each case.

We have kept our policies under constant review to ensure that lessons learned are taken into account going forward. We will continue to make adaptations if required to ensure safe operating procedures, particularly when considering the regime we offer during the winter period.

■ Prisons: Coronavirus

Mr David Lammy:

[\[96768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison staff have (a) been taken to and (b) required ventilation in hospital as a result of covid-19.

Lucy Frazer:

As of 31 August 2020, 68 prison staff had either been taken to hospital following a reported diagnosis of Covid-19 or had subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 in hospital.

This number includes staff not directly employed by HMPPS but who work within the prison such as healthcare and maintenance staff and includes staff in privately managed prisons. The number also includes some staff who were taken to hospital for non-COVID reasons and then subsequently tested positive in hospital.

The origins of the virus will often come from prison officers returning to the community, and we work hard to minimise the import of it into the prison estate.

We do not hold the figures on the number of the staff who required ventilation.

These figures have been drawn from the HMPPS COVID-19 data collection. Care is taken when processing and analysing returns, but the detail is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system particularly where data is self-reported.

■ Prisons: Video Conferencing

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[96822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which prisons did not have secure video calling technology being used by prisoners as of 28 September 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

We fully acknowledge the importance of family contact for those in custody, in line with the recommendations of Lord Farmer's Reviews. This is why, following the necessary suspension of prison visits in March to keep prisoners, their families and staff safe during the pandemic, we introduced a range of measures including the introduction of secure video calls.

As of 28 September, we have live services operating in 103 out of the 110 establishments in scope of the roll-out. The seven prisons which have not yet been able to go live are: HMPs Hollesley Bay, Kirkham, Leyhill, Swaleside, The Mount, Warren Hill and, Oakhill Secure Training Centre. These establishments have all taken receipt of the necessary equipment and staff have been trained. However, they have experienced networking and connectivity issues and, in some cases, have had to wait for broadband upgrades to the establishments as a whole. They are currently undertaking test calls and expect to go live as soon as possible.

■ Reoffenders

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[96821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the next proven reoffending statistics release is planned to be published; and what time periods that release will cover.

Lucy Frazer:

The next proven reoffending stats publication is due out at 9.30am on Thursday 29 October. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the MoJ to have to change its data gathering, access and release practices which has impacted the production process of the proven reoffending statistics. This has meant that the offender cohort periods to be covered in this next publication are yet to be determined, although an announcement in relation to this will shortly be made on the gov.uk website.

■ Reoffenders: Children and Young People

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[96828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Annual Report and Accounts 2019–20, published on 24 September 2020, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increase in the one-year proven reoffending rate for children and young people leaving custody.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of children leaving custody is relatively small, so some volatility in the annual reoffending rate is to be expected. Although the 2017/18 rate was slightly higher than the previous year, it is still in line with the average for the last decade. The government has committed to trialling secure schools as a new innovative approach to helping children move away from crime and lead productive lives.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Advocate General for Scotland

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[98678\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what plans he has to appoint a new Advocate General for Scotland.

Boris Johnson:

An appointment will be announced in the usual way.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Carbon Emissions****Jim Shannon:**[\[96895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to support carbon-free air travel.

Robert Courts:

The recently formed Jet Zero Council will focus on developing UK capability to deliver net zero emission commercial flight. This includes considering how to develop and industrialise clean aviation and aerospace technologies, establish UK production facilities for sustainable aviation fuels and develop a coordinated approach to the policy and regulatory framework needed to deliver net zero aviation by 2050.

The Government has a range of additional programmes to support research and technology on electric flight. These include the Aerospace Technology Institute Programme (£1.95 billion public funding commitment, 2013 to 2026) and the Future Flight Challenge (£125 million public funding).

The Government has also supported the establishment of an Innovation Hub within the Civil Aviation Authority which supports the regulator to engage with innovative companies - such as those developing electric flight - to bring products to market safely.

Recent changes to the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation make renewable aviation fuels eligible for reward. The Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition makes £20 million of capital funding available to projects that will produce low carbon waste-based fuels to be used in aeroplanes and lorries

We are planning to consult shortly to update the Government's position on aviation and climate change. It is critical that aviation plays its part in delivering the UK's net zero ambitions.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Caroline Nokes:**[\[96860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average distance is between electric vehicle fast charge points in the UK; and what the average distance is between petrol stations in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

Complete data covering the whole of the UK is not held. On 1 July 2020 there were 3,187 rapid public charging devices rated at 43kW or above in Great Britain (GB) and, according to Experian, in May 2020 there were 8,362 fuel stations in GB. Total

road length in GB is 247,055 miles which means there is a rapid device for every 78 miles of road and one fuel station for every 30 miles of road.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Romsey and Southampton North**

Caroline Nokes: [\[96857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric vehicle fast charge points have been installed in Romsey and Southampton North constituency in the last 12 months.

Caroline Nokes: [\[96858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric vehicle fast charge points have been installed in Hampshire in the last 12 months.

Caroline Nokes: [\[96859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric vehicle fast charge points have been installed in the UK in the last 12 months.

Rachel Maclean:

Data on electric vehicle charging devices are presented in the table below. Figures include rapid charging devices whose fastest connector is rated at 43kW and above, and charging devices that were available on 1st July 2020 and installed in the 12 months previous (since 1st July 2019).

AREA	TOTAL PUBLIC DEVICES ¹	RAPID DEVICES
(a) Romsey and Southampton North constituency	8	0
(b) Hampshire county	113	25
(c) UK	4,969	1,030

1. Total devices represent publicly available charging devices at all speeds.

■ **Incontinence: Public Lavatories**

Rachael Maskell: [\[98718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who experience bowel or bladder frequency issues are recognised as requiring the ability to park next to public toilets (a) at airports and (b) more widely.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

People who qualify for a Blue Badge by virtue of experiencing very considerable difficulty walking will benefit from on-street parking concessions. In car parks, including at airports, it is for the operator to determine the terms of parking and any concessions. Airports offer drop-off areas for passengers travelling with a companion that are closest to the terminals, as well as Blue Badge parking spaces.

Large Goods Vehicles: Tachographs**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[97466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the merits of continuing to adhere to the EU rules on working time and digital tachographs for UK lorries driving in EU Member States after 31 December 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

The future drivers' hours and tachograph rules which will apply between the UK and EU from 1 January 2021 will be determined by the outcome of the current negotiations on the UK-EU Free Trade Agreement; which are still ongoing.

Members: Correspondence**Owen Thompson:** [\[98722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has responded to the letter sent to the Prime Minister on 27 August 2020 from the British Educational Travel Association; and what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues copied into that letter on its contents.

Robert Courts:

The letter copied to the Secretary of State has been received. However due to the high number of correspondence the Department has received we have been unable to respond. However, I would like to assure the honourable member for Midlothian, that a response will be sent shortly.

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with the travel industry regarding the challenges facing the sector as a result of COVID-19. The sector is crucial to the UK's economy and businesses across the industry are able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time.

This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, two business interruption loan guarantee schemes for different sizes of business, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

Railways: South East**Rehman Chishti:** [\[96049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to bring forward flexible ticketing for rail travel in (a) the South East, (b) Kent and (c) Medway.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Government recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behaviours.

In response, the Department for Transport has proactively worked with the rail industry, and is currently considering proposals received from train operators,

including Southeastern who operate in the South East, Kent, and Medway, to try to ensure better value and convenience for part-time and flexible commuters.

These are unprecedented times and our immediate focus is on ensuring that we keep the railway available and safe for those who rely upon it.

■ Railways: Tickets

Rehman Chishti:

[\[96050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the success of Train Operating Companies' flexible ticketing trials.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Some train companies have already introduced flexible products including c2c, Chiltern, East Midlands, Gatwick Express, Greater Anglia, Northern, South Western, Govia Thameslink Railway and West Midlands Railway. These differ in their terms and conditions, and are not available to all commuters. We are currently considering proposals received from train operators to try to deliver better value and convenience for part-time and all flexible commuters.

■ Roads: Noise

Damian Hinds:

[\[98205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2020 to Question 63308 on roads: noise, what plans his Department has for the further development and testing of noise camera technology.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department's initial trials of a prototype acoustic camera have concluded, and the results will be published shortly. The outcome of the trial is currently being considered, including what further development would be required to enable the technology to be used for more targeted and efficient enforcement.

Some of the challenges include blending of noise from other vehicles and the surrounding environment, and the effect of changing ambient conditions.

Damian Hinds:

[\[98206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2020 to Question 63308 on roads: noise, what assessment his Department has made of the potential deployment of noise cameras in rural environments which do not have complex traffic and environmental scenarios.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department recognises that simpler traffic scenarios and road layouts can be found in rural environments but there are still difficulties in measuring vehicle noise in an uncontrolled environment.

Before the acoustic camera can be recommended for wider use, we will need to establish confidence that the camera can detect excessive noise offences to avoid

penalising law-abiding motorists and motorcyclists. This will require further development of the instrument.

■ **Ryanair: Coronavirus**

Mark Tami: [\[96780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of Ryanair on (a) continuing to fly to countries where British holidaymakers will not be admitted due to covid-19 restrictions, and (b) Ryanair's policies on refunds to passengers on the grounds that those flights have gone ahead.

Robert Courts:

It is a commercial decision for airlines on whether to continue to fly to countries where COVID-19 related border restrictions apply as the restrictions may not apply equally to all customers. We have urged airlines and travel agents to be reasonable and flexible in their refund and rescheduling policies. Customers who are restricted by destination border conditions, applied after they booked travel, should discuss any compensation claims with the airline or their travel insurance provider, in the first instance.

■ **Shipping: Environment Protection**

Emma Hardy: [\[97010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of a potential growth in green shipping on the UK's environmental targets ahead of COP26.

Robert Courts:

The UK's greenhouse gas emissions target for Net Zero by 2050 covers domestic shipping, and the sector will need to be decarbonised as part of our national effort to tackle climate change.

Research carried out for the Department as part of the 2019 Clean Maritime Plan included a scenario analysis that assessed the factors that will drive the growth of green shipping and the resulting emission pathways to Net Zero. This research informs the Department's work on this issue and has been published on Gov.UK.

At UN level the UK is actively engaged in the work of the International Maritime Organization to decarbonise the global shipping industry and we have supported the IMO's recent '4th Greenhouse Gas Study' that considers the relationship between growth and global emissions targets.

■ **Taxis: Coronavirus**

Justin Madders: [\[97613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish guidance for taxi drivers on how to be covid-secure.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has published 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators' on the safe provision of transport services during the pandemic. Taxi drivers, as transport providers, should follow this guidance.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[98677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 96010 on Taxis: Protective Clothing, whether it is (a) his Department's or (b) another organisation's responsibility to ensure operators are carrying out adequate covid-19 risk assessments.

Rachel Maclean:

It is the operator's responsibility to follow Government [Safer Transport Guidance for operators](#). This includes the recommendation to conduct risk assessments to ensure suitable protective measures are in place for both transport workers and passengers.

TREASURY**■ Digital Technology: Taxation****Julian Sturdy:**[\[98679\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Digital Services Tax does not result in cost increases for the customers and selling partners of large technology corporations.

Jesse Norman:

The Digital Services Tax is designed to ensure that digital businesses pay UK tax reflecting the value they derive from UK users. It is a fair, proportionate, and temporary measure, to be removed once an appropriate global solution is in place.

It is for businesses to decide their own pricing strategies.

■ Job Support Scheme: Parish Councils**Grahame Morris:**[\[98695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the Government's guidance relating to the Job Support Scheme to confirm whether parish and town councils are eligible to use that scheme for their employees.

Jesse Norman:

Further detail about eligibility will be included in the guidance for the Job Support Scheme, which HMRC will publish in due course.

■ Members: Correspondence**Emma Hardy:** [\[97008\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the letter of 3 June 2020 from the hon Member for Hull West and Hessle on the Youth Enterprise Bank and Making Changes for Careers Programme in Kingston upon Hull.

Kemi Badenoch:

I have responded to the hon Member.

■ Revenue and Customs: Staff**Bill Esterson:** [\[98703\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HMRC staff were allocated to Loan Charge counter-avoidance activities in (a) July, (b) August and (c) September 2020.

Jesse Norman:

In July, August, and September 2020, HMRC had about 1,000 staff working to help taxpayers affected by the Loan Charge to settle their use of disguised remuneration tax avoidance schemes.

■ Sharing Economy: Employee Ownership and Save As You Earn**Sarah Olney:** [\[98738\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of widening the scope of eligibility for (a) Share Incentive Plans and (b) Save As You Earn schemes to include gig economy workers.

Jesse Norman:

The Save As You Earn (SAYE) scheme and Share Incentive Plans (SIPs) are tax-advantaged employee share schemes.

SIPs are intended to encourage businesses to share financial rewards with their employees, in order to motivate their workforces better, support productivity and help recruit and retain staff. The SAYE scheme is intended to support staff retention and engagement, by encouraging employees to save a regular amount towards a financial reward offered by their employer.

Both schemes must be open to all employees in a participating firm. Whether a 'gig economy' worker is employed or self-employed is determined by the terms and conditions under which they work.

The Government believes that the current eligibility rules for these schemes are an appropriate way to support their policy objectives of staff retention and engagement, as well as helping align company and employee interests. The Government keeps all taxes and reliefs under review.

■ Taxation

Dan Carden:

[\[98755\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Questions 96179 and 96180, what his timescale is for publishing (a) further aggregate statistics on the data held by HMRC on non-resident account holders as reported by UK financial institutions and (b) aggregate statistics on the data received by HMRC from countries participating in information exchange on financial accounts.

Jesse Norman:

The Government will consider publication of further statistics in due course.

■ Working Tax Credit: Coronavirus

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[98715\]](#)

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 (a) Wirral West constituency and (b) the UK, in each month since that uplift was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The latest available information on the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit at the parliamentary constituency level is for April 2020. In April 2020, the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit in the Wirral West constituency was 600: <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: Staff

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[98687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on her staff's wellbeing of being asked to return to the office during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

The wellbeing of our employees is paramount. Since the start of the pandemic, we have adapted our wellbeing offer at pace to bring our colleagues targeted solutions to support their wellbeing. This has focused on colleagues working in the office as well as those required to work from home.

As key workers, our staff have continued to attend our offices throughout the pandemic but we have also provided digital kit to our staff to enable more flexible working, in particular working from home. This has enabled us to ensure that our offices are COVID-19 secure and we can maintain social distancing.

An individual Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) risk assessment is available for colleague to work through with their line manager to address their individual concerns.

All BAME colleagues have also had the opportunity to participate in a small group talking session, facilitated by trauma managers/counsellors. This has provided BAME colleagues with the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have had about returning to work, which may have been heightened by COVID-19, and to work with specialists to put strategies in place to combat.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Wales**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[98686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with (a) the Welsh Government and (b) Welsh local authority leaders on her Department's staff being asked to (i) travel to work in county boroughs which are in local covid-19 lockdown and (ii) hold face-to-face assessments in county boroughs which are in local covid-19 lockdown.

Jonathan Edwards:[\[98688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish any Health and Safety Impact Assessments her Department used when taking the decision to ask staff to travel into Jobcentre Plus offices which are located in Welsh County Boroughs in local lockdown.

Jonathan Edwards:[\[98690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy (a) only to permit urgent face-to-face jobcentre appointments to take place in Welsh county boroughs which are in local covid-19 lockdown and (b) to require her staff to work from home where possible during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

Since the start of Covid-19 as key workers, DWP employees have played a crucial role in the national effort, in line with government guidelines.

In accordance with Government social distancing guidance we have provided digital kit to our staff to enable more flexible working – in particular working from home. This has enabled us to ensure that Jobcentres are Covid secure for those customers who

are best supported face to face, whilst still providing services over the phone and online.

As we double the number of Work Coaches, we will continue to expand our multi-channel engagement with claimants, including booking appointments across our network to support people face-to-face where they need it.

■ Foster Care: Coronavirus

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[99146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing statutory sick pay to foster carers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are off work sick, or deemed incapable of work. It is paid in full by employers. To receive SSP from their employer, individuals must meet all SSP eligibility conditions, including being classed as an employee.

SSP is just one part of the government's safety net and the support to people in times of need during the pandemic. Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick or self-isolating, for example where they are not eligible for SSP, and they require further financial support they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on individual circumstances. Working people on low incomes who are required to remain at home by NHS Test and Trace to help stop the spread of the virus and cannot work from home can also now receive £500.

Background

- SSP is paid at a flat rate of £95.85 per week to eligible employees.
- We have already strengthened our wider safety net by temporarily increasing the standard allowance of Universal Credit by the equivalent of £20 per week, meaning that claimants will be up to £1,040 better off for the 20/21 tax year.

■ Occupational Pensions: Regulation

Gill Furniss:

[\[98733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what sanctions are available to the Pensions Regulator in cases where an employer has consistently withheld pension contributions from an employee's workplace pension.

Guy Opperman:

The Pensions Regulator (TPR), as the compliance authority for workplace pensions, has a range of statutory powers including the ability to issue fixed and escalating penalty fines to employers for failure to comply with the law.

Information about the use made of those enforcement powers can be found in TPR's quarterly automatic enrolment compliance and enforcement bulletins, the most recent of which is published on its website, here:

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/enforcement-activity/enforcement-bulletins/compliance-and-enforcement-quarterly-bulletin-april-to-june-2020>

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Jonathan Edwards: [\[98689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what comparative assessment she has made of the effectiveness of her Department carrying out face-to-face and virtual assessments during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

No comparative assessment has been made of virtual and face-to-face Jobcentre appointments.

■ Universal Credit

Neil Coyle: [\[96908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to provide additional funding to ensure the adequacy of the Universal Credit Transition Fund.

Will Quince:

The outbreak of COVID-19, which led to an unprecedented surge of over 3 million new Universal Credit claims, resulted in the Department refocusing its resources to deliver frontline activities. This meant we regrettably had to take the decision not to pursue the Universal Credit Transition Fund as had been planned in April 2020. This decision was reported to the Work and Pensions Select Committee in July of this year.

The Universal Credit Transition Fund was intended to assist partner organisations in providing extra help to the most vulnerable claimants, improving access to welfare and labour market opportunities.

The Government has increased the funding for the Flexible Support Fund by £150 million in Great Britain, including to increase the capacity of the Rapid Response Service, which can be spent on delivering support to claimants in conjunction with local partners. The Department also continues to grant fund Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, worth up to £39 million, to deliver tailored, practical support to people making a Universal Credit claim up to their first full correct payment being received.

Justin Madders: [\[96942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of security for online universal credit journals.

Will Quince:

The Department, like other government departments, is obliged to comply with legal, security and regulatory requirements, including published minimum government security standards. Universal Credit, including the journal function, complies with all relevant security standards.

The security of the Universal Credit system is continuously monitored.

Justin Madders:[\[96943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information his Department holds on online security breaches and hacking of universal credit accounts.

Will Quince:

The security of the Universal Credit system is continuously monitored.

For security reasons, we do not disclose what information about security monitoring including information relating to cyber-attack attempts.

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus**Kate Osamor:**[\[96139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to her Answer of 24 September 2020 to Questions 91106 on Universal Credit: Coronavirus, for what reason she initially sought to exclude existing universal credit claimants from the £20 a week uplift to universal credit.

Will Quince:

The £20 uplift is for everyone on Universal Credit and the Department did not consider excluding existing UC claimants.

Margaret Greenwood:[\[98714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families with children received the £20 per week uplift in universal credit standard allowance payments, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 20 March 2020, in (a) Wirral West constituency and (b) the UK, in each month since that uplift was introduced.

Will Quince:

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

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

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

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

Jon Trickett:[\[98882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2020 to Question 33416 on Universal Credit: Coronavirus, what the average processing time was for a universal credit claim in (a) February, (b) March, (c) April, (d) May, (e) June, (f) July and (g) August 2020.

Will Quince:

The latest available information on Universal Credit payment timeliness is published and can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

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

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

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Annual report on the exercise of powers over the Office for Nuclear Regulation**

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

(Nadhim Zahawi):

[\[HCWS494\]](#)

Later today, the annual report to Parliament setting out the use of the Secretary of State's powers exercised to the Office for Nuclear Regulation during the year, will be published.

This is in accordance with Section 108(1) of the Energy Act 2013.

■ **Business Update**

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):

[\[HCWS491\]](#)

Today, the Prime Minister announced new investment of £160 million to support offshore wind, and a new level of ambition for the next round of the renewable Contracts for Difference energy auction.

This funding will support major new port side manufacturing hubs, so that the UK can host the factories making the next generation of offshore wind equipment.

The Government also confirmed a boost to its previous target to deliver up to 30GW of offshore wind to delivering 40GW by 2030.

The Government also announced a new ambition for 1GW of the new 40GW by 2030 target to come from floating offshore wind – a brand new technology allowing windfarms to be built further out to sea in deeper waters, boosting capacity even further. This will put the UK at the forefront of the next generation of clean energy.

Together with planned stringent requirements on supporting UK manufacturers in Government-backed renewables projects, these measures will help the industry to reach its target of 60% of offshore wind farm content coming from the UK, helping to also boost lower-carbon supply chains.

To help deliver these ambitious targets and accelerate the country's progress towards net zero emissions by 2050, the Government has confirmed that the next round of the renewable energy auction will open in late 2021 and aim to deliver up to twice the capacity of last year's successful round – potentially providing enough clean energy for up to 10 million homes.

Today's announcement marks the latest stage of the Government's support for renewable energy and acceleration of the transition to net zero. The Prime Minister has set out new plans to build back better and build back greener by making the UK the world leader in clean wind energy – creating jobs, reducing carbon emissions and boosting exports.

TRANSPORT**■ HS2 Phase 2b Update****Minister of State (Andrew Stephenson):****[[HCWS492](#)]**

I have today published new information on the development of the Western Leg of HS2 Phase 2b, running between Crewe and Manchester with a link to the West Coast Main Line. This includes:

- A Government consultation on four proposed changes to the design;
- A response to Western Leg changes included in the 2019 Design Refinement Consultation;
- A route-wide update, which sets out how the route has developed, including changes in response to feedback from affected communities; and
- Updated Safeguarding Directions for the Western Leg.

The Government has accepted the findings in the review by Douglas Oakervee that Phase 2b should be delivered in smaller sections with legislation brought forward as it is ready. Therefore, HS2 Ltd has taken forward work to develop legislation for the Western Leg of HS2 Phase 2b.

The Government has also accepted the Oakervee recommendation that plans for HS2 and other major schemes need to be brought together in an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the North and Midlands.

The IRP will set out the form, scope and phasing of the Phase 2b route, across the Western and Eastern legs, and the Government will therefore consider responses to this consultation alongside the IRP outcomes. If the IRP favours any major changes, further redesign will need to take place. This consultation seeks to ensure that unnecessary delay is avoided in the event that the IRP does not support change.

Work on HS2 Phase One from London to Birmingham is already well underway at over 250 active sites, stimulating the economy and providing jobs through the approximately £10 billion worth of contracts already announced, two thirds of which will go to small and medium sized enterprises.

Legislation for Phase 2a, from Birmingham to Crewe, is currently being considered by Parliament.

The proposals I am putting forward today are the next step in developing the design and legislation for the Western Leg of Phase 2b, following the 2019 Design Refinement Consultation. Phase 2b of HS2 is key to delivering Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and the consultation includes proposals to integrate the designs at a series of “touchpoints”, which are pieces of infrastructure to enable future connections between NPR and HS2. These proposals have been developed in partnership with Transport for the North and will reduce the amount of infrastructure required to deliver NPR in the future.

This consultation deals with four technical refinements to the Western Leg of Phase 2b: a new Crewe Northern Connection, which would also support the vision for a Crewe Hub;

changes to the already proposed rolling stock depot at Crewe; expansions to the stations at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport; and a newly proposed facility for stabling rolling stock at Annandale in Scotland.

Changes at Manchester Piccadilly to facilitate Metrolink and Manchester Airport High Speed station are subject to the agreement of local funding contributions. We continue to collaborate positively with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Manchester Airports Group and other Greater Manchester delivery partners on this matter. Greater Manchester partners have confirmed that they are prepared to prioritise the funding of the local proposals for Metrolink underground at Piccadilly in future funding rounds. This will form part of the shared programme between DfT and Greater Manchester in implementing the Manchester HS2 Growth Strategy. In the 2020 budget, Government made £4.2bn of funding available to eight city regions for intra-city transport initiatives over the period 2022/23 to 2026/27.

In addition to today's consultation, I am publishing my response to the proposed Western Leg changes included in the June 2019 Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation. The Government has decided to proceed with these changes subject to the outcome of the IRP.

I have also published a route-wide update which sets out wider developments to the route. The Safeguarding Directions for the Phase 2b Western Leg route have also been updated to reflect the project's updated land requirements.

Engagement with affected communities is at the heart of our plans for HS2 and it is our commitment to ensure we listen to those affected by these proposals. Restrictions put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic mean that we will not be able to hold local information events in the same way that we usually would as part of our formal consultation process. HS2 Ltd will deliver information events via digital platforms instead. These digital events will allow those affected the same opportunities to understand what refinements are being proposed and to ask any questions that they may have to our representatives. Where owners of land or property are newly affected by the proposals, they will be contacted directly by HS2 Ltd to arrange online or telephone appointments.

Copies of the consultation Command Paper and Safeguarding Directions will be placed in the House of Commons and House of Lords libraries.

■ Transport Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS496\]](#)

I committed to keep the House updated on proposals for testing international arrivals to safely reduce the 14-day self-isolation period in my statement on 7 September; this statement provides an update on next steps.

The introduction of Travel Corridors in July was a major step forward in safely re-starting international travel whilst retaining the Government's ability to act quickly if public health was at risk, with international passenger numbers handled at UK airports up by around 400% between June and July to 3.1m passengers.

However, many of our major markets remain or have become high risk, and therefore are not eligible for our Travel Corridor list. A potential solution that has been widely debated is the use of testing to reduce or replace the need for self-isolation.

As I made clear in my statement to the House on 7 September, based on scientific evidence, the Government does not support the use of a single test on arrival as an alternative to self-isolation. However, a combination of self-isolation and testing is promising.

Since then, my department and the Department of Health and Social Care have been working extensively with clinicians, health experts and the private testing sector on the practicalities of such a regime. My Ministerial colleagues and I have agreed that a regime, based on a single test, provided by the private sector and at the cost of the passenger after a period of self-isolation, could achieve our objectives.

The next step is to further develop how this approach could be implemented. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that, at the request of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and I are standing up the Global Travel Taskforce.

The overall aim of the Taskforce will be to consider what steps the Government can take, both domestically and on the international stage, to enable the safe and sustainable recovery of international travel. To do this, the Taskforce will work at pace to consider:

- How a testing regime for international arrivals could be implemented to boost safe travel to and from the UK;
- What steps we can take to facilitate business and tourist travel on a bilateral and global basis, through innovative testing models and other non-testing means; and
- More broadly, what steps we can take to increase consumer confidence and reduce the barriers to a safe and sustainable recovery of international travel.

The Taskforce will further consider what day that testing should be taken on, informed by public health analysis of when this would be effective, but taking into account economic and other factors, as well as finalising a delivery plan. However, testing is not the only solution and so the Taskforce will also consider steps to support the recovery of international travel more broadly, including non-testing based interventions.

Facilitating safe international travel is not a task that can be undertaken by the Government alone, so this Taskforce will operate in collaboration with the transport industry, the tourism and local business sectors and the private testing sector. It will also engage with partners from governments across the globe, including on the development of bilateral testing pilots.

Each country has understandably implemented its own measures, but these are confusing and complex for the consumer and for operators, so we will show global leadership by developing a framework for international travel to provide that global consistency, while protecting public health.

The Taskforce will be chaired by myself and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It will include collaboration between officials from departments across

government, and will liaise with the travel sector in order to work on the operationalisation of testing approaches designed to safely reduce self-isolation.

The Taskforce will operate at pace for a time limited period, and will formally report back to the Prime Minister no later than early November. I will update the House on its conclusions and outputs. I have published Terms of Reference alongside this statement on gov.uk and will place a copy in the libraries of both Houses.

TREASURY

■ Freeports Consultation Response

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay):

[\[HCWS493\]](#)

On 7 October, the Government responded to the recently closed public consultation on Freeports.

A Freeport is a place to carry out business inside a country's land border but where different customs rules apply. A firm can import goods into a Freeport without paying tariffs, process them into a final good and then either pay a tariff on goods sold into the domestic market, or export the final goods without paying UK tariffs. They also allow goods to be temporarily stored without paying duties. Countries around the world have successfully used Freeports to drive investment and prosperity.

The creation of Freeports across the UK will be a cornerstone of the Government's plan to level up opportunity across the country. Freeports will be national hubs for trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK. They can attract new businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country.

Our published response confirms our intent to deliver Freeports and sets out how our proposals will be achieved. At the centre of our new Freeports policy is an ambitious new customs model which will improve upon both the UK's existing customs facilitations and the Freeports the UK previously had. Our model also introduces a package of tax incentives for businesses to invest in Freeports to level up some of our most deprived communities. We are introducing new measures to speed up planning processes to accelerate development in and around Freeports and new initiatives to encourage innovators to generate new ideas to create additional economic growth and jobs.

Freeports will be selected through a fair, transparent and competitive process, and will be expected to collaborate closely with key partners across the public and private sectors.

We want all the nations of the UK to share in the benefits of Freeports. As such, we are working constructively and collaboratively with the devolved administrations to seek to establish at least one Freeport in each nation of the UK.

The "*Freeports Response to the Consultation*" CP302 has been laid in Parliament. Copies are available in the Vote Office and Printed Paper Office, and also at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/freeports-consultation>.

■ Public Service Pensions, Guaranteed Minimum Pension indexation consultation**The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay):****[[HCWS495](#)]**

The government is today publishing a consultation on 'Public Service Pensions, Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) indexation'. The consultation sets out how the government proposes to ensure it continues to meet its past commitments to public service employees regarding the full indexation of public service pensions, including for any GMP element related to membership of a public service pension scheme.

On 6 April 2016, the government introduced the new State Pension (nSP). The reformed system simplified pension provision but removed the mechanism that enabled those public servants in 'contracted-out' employment to have their Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) fully price protected. An 'interim solution', full indexation, was introduced in 2016, which was later consulted on and extended until 5 April 2021. This ensured that public service pensioners had the GMPs they had earned in public service fully indexed by their public service pension scheme.

The consultation will last for 12 weeks and close on 30 December 2020. The consultation document can be found on: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/public-service-pensions-guaranteed-minimum-pension-indexation-consultation>