



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 8 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 08 October 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

**CONTENTS**

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>	■ Public Sector: Internet	14
<b>ATTORNEY GENERAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>14</b>
■ Domestic Abuse: Homosexuality	5	■ Ministry of Defence: Staff	14
<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY</b>	<b>8</b>	■ NATO: Early Warning Systems	15
■ Construction: Coronavirus	8	■ Oman: Military Bases	16
■ Consumers: Protection	8	<b>DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT</b>	<b>16</b>
■ Coronavirus: Direct Selling	8	■ Business: Coronavirus	16
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	9	■ Events Industry: Coronavirus	16
■ Government Internal Audit Agency: Standards	9	■ Gambling	17
■ Housing: Heating	10	■ Internet: Safety	18
■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme	10	■ Sports: Coronavirus	18
■ Post Office: Accounting Officers	11	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>19</b>
■ Post Office: ICT	11	■ Adoption and Foster Care: Coronavirus	19
■ Post Offices: ICT	11	■ Adoption: Ethnic Groups	20
■ Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	12	■ Children: Computers	21
■ Small Businesses: Grants	12	■ Children: Housing	21
<b>CABINET OFFICE</b>	<b>13</b>	■ Children: Quarantine	22
■ Civil Service: Recruitment	13	■ Children: Reading	23
■ Parliamentary Private Secretaries	13	■ Families	24
■ Portsmouth International Port	13	■ GCSE: Coronavirus	24
		■ Outdoor Education: Coronavirus	25
		■ Performing Arts: Coronavirus	25
		■ Remote Education: Finance	26

■ Schools: Coronavirus	27	■ Non-governmental Organisations: Sexual Offences	43
■ Schools: Counselling	27	■ USA: Diplomatic Immunity	44
■ Schools: Energy	28	■ Yemen: Armed Conflict	44
■ Schools: Food	29	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	45
■ Students: Coronavirus	30	■ Abortion	45
■ Students: Housing	34	■ Abortion: Coronavirus	45
■ Students: ICT	35	■ Abortion: Drugs	46
■ Students: Loans	35	■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	46
■ Students: Manchester Metropolitan University	36	■ Care Homes: Visits	49
■ T-levels: Worcestershire	36	■ Coronavirus: Hospitals	50
■ Universities: Coronavirus	36	■ Coronavirus: Manchester University	50
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	37	■ Coronavirus: Screening	51
■ Air Pollution	37	■ Coronavirus: Travel	51
■ Air Pollution: Erith and Thamesmead	38	■ Dementia: Coronavirus	52
■ Flood Control: Yorkshire and the Humber	38	■ General Practitioners: Coronavirus	52
■ Hedgehogs: Conservation	39	■ Health Professions: Vacancies	53
■ Plastics	39	■ Health Services	53
■ Rivers: Environment Protection	40	■ Hospitals: Construction	54
■ Waste Management	40	■ Members: Correspondence	55
■ Water: Environment Protection	40	■ Minor Injuries Units	55
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	41	■ NHS 111: Coronavirus	55
■ Catalonia: Sovereignty	41	■ NHS Property Services	56
■ China: Muslims	41	■ NHS: Property	56
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	42	■ NHS: Staff	57
■ Gender: Equality	42	■ Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	57
■ Myanmar: Rohingya	43	■ Social Services: Coronavirus	58
■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe	43	■ Social Services: Finance	59
		■ Social Services: Qualifications	59
		■ Supported Housing: Coronavirus	59

HOME OFFICE	60	■ Multiple Occupation: Urban Areas	74
■ Asylum: Contracts	60	■ Recreation Spaces: Planning	75
■ Asylum: Employment	60	■ Sheltered Housing	75
■ Asylum: Housing	61	■ Social Rented Housing: Construction	76
■ Asylum: Slavery	61	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	76
■ Crime: Coronavirus	62	■ Trade Agreements	76
■ Crime: Victims	62	■ Trade Agreements: Environment Protection	76
■ Hamas	62	■ Whisky: USA	77
■ Human Trafficking: Children	63	■ Women's Rights: Australasia	77
■ Immigrants: Coronavirus	63	JUSTICE	78
■ Internet: Safety	64	■ Lowdham Grange Prison: Coronavirus	78
■ Members: Correspondence	65	■ Prison Officers: Crimes of Violence	79
■ Migrant Workers: Coronavirus	65	■ Repossession Orders: Coronavirus	79
■ Motor Vehicles: Theft	66	■ Youth Custody: Crimes of Violence and Self-harm	80
■ Raves: Coronavirus	66	NORTHERN IRELAND	80
■ Refugees: Resettlement	66	■ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: Public Appointments	80
■ Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes	67	■ Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission: Public Appointments	80
■ Slavery: Uighurs	67	■ Parades Commission: Public Appointments	81
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	68	TRANSPORT	81
■ Buildings: Insulation	68	■ Cycling	81
■ Caravan Sites: Coronavirus	70	■ Ferries	82
■ Covid-19 Rough Sleeping Taskforce: Public Appointments	70	■ Railways: Concessions	82
■ Evictions: Coronavirus	70	■ Roads: Construction	83
■ High Rise Flats: Insulation	71	■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions	83
■ High Rise Flats: Safety Measures	72		
■ High Rise Flats: Shared Ownership	72		
■ Housing: Insulation	73		
■ Leasehold: Service Charges	74		

■ Shipping: Finance	83	■ Taxation: Treaties	93
■ Thameslink Railway Line: Maidstone	84	WALES	93
■ Transport: Hydrogen	84	■ Regional Planning and Development: North Wales and North West	93
■ Transport: Regulation	84	WORK AND PENSIONS	94
■ Transport: Sustainable Development	85	■ Bereavement Support Payment: Cohabitation	94
TREASURY	85	■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Asbestosis and Diffuse Pleural Thickening	94
■ Bank Services: Older People	85	■ Pension Credit	94
■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme	86	■ Personal Independence Payment: Coronavirus	95
■ Bowling: VAT	86	■ Personal Independence Payment: Wales	98
■ Cider: Excise Duties	87	■ Poverty: Coronavirus	98
■ Clean Air Zones	87	■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses	99
■ Devolution: Finance	88	■ Unemployment: Sutton Coldfield	99
■ Duty Free Allowances: Scotland	88	■ Unemployment: Worcestershire	99
■ Economic Crime Strategic Board: Public Appointments	89	■ Universal Credit	100
■ Financial Ombudsman Service: Parliamentary Scrutiny	89	■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus	100
■ Free Zones	90	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>102</b>
■ National Savings: Interest Rates	91	CABINET OFFICE	102
■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus	91	■ Update to GB-EU Border Operating Model	102
■ Public Expenditure: Scotland	91	HOME OFFICE	102
■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme	92	■ Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (1 June 2020 to 31 August 2020)	102
■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Yorkshire and the Humber	92		
■ Tax Avoidance	93		

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Domestic Abuse: Homosexuality

**Alex Davies-Jones:** [\[99153\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions made by the Crown Prosecution Service involved domestic abuse between individuals in a same-sex female relationship, in each year since 2010.

**Alex Davies-Jones:** [\[99154\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions made by the Crown Prosecution Service involved domestic abuse between individuals in a same-sex male relationship, in each year since 2010.

**Alex Davies-Jones:** [\[99155\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions made by the Crown Prosecution Service involved domestic abuse between individuals in same-sex relationships, by (a) gender and (b) county in England and Wales, in each year since 2010.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) collects finalised prosecutions data showing the sex of defendants for cases flagged as involving domestic abuse. Some, more limited, information is also available showing the identified relationship between defendant and complainant and whether the relationship is between people of the same or different sex.

The table below shows the number of defendants prosecuted for domestic abuse where a relationship was identified as same sex (partner, ex-partner, spouse/civil partner or former spouse/civil partner), during each of the last ten years. It also highlights the number of defendants where the relationship has been recorded. This data is limited, which results in the number of defendants with an identified relationship being under-recorded.

	FEMALE DEFENDANTS	MALE DEFENDANTS	% OF RELATIONSHIPS RECORDED
2010-2011	28	56	16.7%
2011-2012	45	77	30.0%
2012-2013	54	84	47.7%
2013-2014	80	97	52.7%
2014-2015	127	129	55.4%

	<b>FEMALE DEFENDANTS</b>	<b>MALE DEFENDANTS</b>	<b>% OF RELATIONSHIPS RECORDED</b>
<b>2015-2016</b>	160	186	55.6%
<b>2016-2017</b>	136	141	52.4%
<b>2017-2018</b>	108	130	48.7%
<b>2018-2019</b>	88	137	48.9%
<b>2019-2020</b>	84	144	56.4%

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

While the CPS does not collate prosecutions data by county, data is available showing the number of prosecutions in each of the regional Areas of the CPS. The tables below provide the same information as the table above, broken down for each CPS Area.

#### **FEMALE DEFENDANTS**

	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
Cymru Wales	4	2	5	7	8	14	15	14	5	10
East Midlands	0	1	4	5	9	8	10	2	4	8
Eastern	3	2	6	5	5	12	9	5	1	7
London North	1	3	5	4	2	13	14	15	5	3
London South	3	5	0	4	7	15	6	13	7	11
Merseyside & Cheshire	1	2	1	5	7	10	17	6	12	2
North East	4	3	1	4	4	5	9	3	6	5
North West	1	12	9	13	29	17	15	8	14	12
South East	0	1	7	5	10	8	6	7	8	4
South West	0	2	2	6	12	5	5	7	1	1
Thames	2	3	2	3	7	8	4	5	1	2

**FEMALE DEFENDANTS**

and Chiltern

Wessex	2	2	3	6	3	6	4	5	7	3
West Midlands	5	5	5	5	9	26	10	10	10	9
Yorkshire & Humberside	2	2	4	8	15	13	12	8	7	7

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

**MALE DEFENDANTS**

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Cymru Wales	1	4	11	8	4	14	12	2	7	14
East Midlands	1	1	2	7	10	14	10	8	2	9
Eastern	2	5	5	8	8	12	5	5	9	21
London North	1	8	8	13	10	19	11	9	15	12
London South	8	13	7	6	13	18	20	18	15	13
Merseyside & Cheshire	4	2	6	3	6	11	6	5	8	5
North East	9	3	0	4	11	9	6	5	3	7
North West	12	21	12	11	25	25	10	17	18	15
South East	5	2	7	5	9	6	11	9	16	3
South West	1	3	2	9	10	11	5	8	3	5
Thames and Chiltern	5	4	3	2	7	10	8	9	2	9
Wessex	1	5	8	3	4	6	6	5	14	9
West Midlands	5	4	6	10	8	13	17	13	14	6

**MALE DEFENDANTS**

Yorkshire & Humberside	1	2	7	8	4	18	14	17	11	16
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ **Construction: Coronavirus**

**Peter Kyle:** [\[99055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 68388 on Construction Materials, what progress the Government has made on its work with the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force; and what products have been identified as in short supply.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government continues to work closely with the construction sector to ensure that it can support the economic recovery. This includes the work of the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force, which continues to monitor the supply and demand of products.

Products in short supply recently include plaster, ceramic roof tiles, external timber and related products, and hard landscaping products. Whilst the supply situation for most products has steadily improved over time, we continue to work closely with the industry to monitor this.

■ **Consumers: Protection**

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[98901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether consumers will be able to enforce consumer rights against EU-based companies after the end of the transition period.

**Paul Scully:**

When EU-based traders trade in or target their activities at the UK, UK standards will apply. Otherwise, the protection consumers have within the EU after the end of the transition period will depend on the consumer's contract and the laws of the relevant Member State.

■ **Coronavirus: Direct Selling**

**Hilary Benn:** [\[96772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has issued advice to energy companies on doorstep cold-calling during the covid-19 outbreak.



**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The energy regulator Ofgem has a duty to protect the interests of consumers.

Ofgem rules to protect consumers subject to doorstop sales activity, include requirements that companies and their representatives only recommend tariffs that are appropriate to a consumers circumstances and preferences and that a record of the information provided to a consumer is kept for two years.

In an open letter published on 16 June, Ofgem set out their expectation that face to face activities should be in line with Government Covid-19 guidelines.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Sarah Owen:**[\[99128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support the Government is providing to projects working on a covid-19 vaccine.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is supporting efforts to rapidly develop a coronavirus vaccine as soon as possible. This includes reviewing regulations and scaling up manufacturing, so that when a vaccine becomes available, it can be produced quickly and in large quantities. To date the UK government has secured early access to 340 million vaccines doses through agreements with six separate vaccine developers. This includes agreements with University of Oxford's vaccine being developed with AstraZeneca and agreements with BioNTech/Pfizer alliance, Valneva, Novavax, Janssen and GSK/Sanofi Pasteur.

The Government has also taken action to ensure the country's vaccine manufacturing capabilities are scaled up, so that if a vaccine is found to be effective it can be made available to the public as quickly as possible. The Government has announced a £93 million investment to open the UK's first dedicated Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre, and an additional £38 million for a virtual centre of existing capability, in order to begin manufacturing at scale in the near future.

**■ Government Internal Audit Agency: Standards****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[96793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what remedial steps were taken by his Department in response to the Government Internal Audit Agency rating downgrade in 2017-18.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

In the 2017-18 Annual Report and Accounts, the Group Chief Internal Auditor (GCIA) from the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) provided an overall 'moderate' opinion on the framework of governance, risk management, and control within the Department for 2017-18. This was an increase from the 'limited' level of assurance received by the Department for 2016-17. The Report is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beis-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-to-2018>.

The strengthened assurance rating recognised the good progress made and initiatives taken across the Department to further develop the governance, risk management, and control environment. This included continuing the transformation to a single Department and the introduction of new risk management and contract management frameworks. New control measures were introduced, supported by a new internal controls team to strengthen the Department's approach to assurance and to address control weaknesses identified by the GIAA, such as ensuring internal audit actions are implemented promptly.

Since 2017-18 the Department has continued to make improvements within its internal control environment, more detail on which is set out in subsequent Annual Reports and Accounts.

As noted by the GIAA, this has been achieved against the backdrop of a challenging scale of policy and programme work that the Department has been able to deliver concurrently.

## ■ Housing: Heating

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[97618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of homes expected to be fitted with low carbon heating systems by 2030.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

There are a number of options with the potential to play an important role in decarbonising heat, including heat networks, heat pumps, hydrogen and biogas. Given the diversity of heat demand, no one solution can provide the best option for everyone - a mix of technologies and customer options will need to be available to decarbonise heat at scale.

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings. These actions include the deployment of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating as part of an ambitious programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions on how we achieve the mass transition to low-carbon heat and set us on a path to decarbonising all homes and buildings.

## ■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[99079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the Government has received from its share of the surplus from the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme since the surplus-sharing arrangement was agreed.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Since the agreement was reached in 1994, the Government has received £3,411.8m as its share of surpluses. This is in return for the provision of the guarantee that ensures pensions are paid. The guarantee has enabled an investment strategy that

has resulted in scheme members receiving payments 33% higher than they would have been if they received only their actual earned pension up to privatisation.

#### ■ **Post Office: Accounting Officers**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 6 July 2020 to Question HL5975 on Post Office: Accounting Officers, if he will publish the (a) correspondence and (b) papers relating to meetings that took place between Post Office Limited and his Department in which changes to the Post Office Limited's strategy and legal team were discussed.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 6 July 2020 to Question HL5974 on Post Office: Accounting Officers, if he will publish the (a) correspondence and (b) papers relating to meetings that took place between UKGI and his Department in which changes to the Post Office Limited's strategy and legal team were discussed.

**Paul Scully:**

Discussions between the Post Office and BEIS on this matter are legally privileged and therefore will not be subject to publication.

#### ■ **Post Office: ICT**

**Afzal Khan:** [\[99105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has suspended (a) archival and (b) destruction of (i) files and (ii) other records on Post Office's Horizon computer system.

**Paul Scully:**

Any relevant information located by BEIS that may be in scope of the Post Office Horizon IT inquiry recently launched will be retained by the Department until, at least, the conclusion of the Inquiry.

#### ■ **Post Offices: ICT**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (a) when and (b) how regularly his Department's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee engaged directly with Post Office Limited (POL) or with UKGI to assess the control environments, risk management framework and escalation practices at POL with regard to its Horizon IT system issues.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[96796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how regularly were reports from Post Office Limited's Group Litigation Subcommittee delivered directly or via UKGI to his Department's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

**Paul Scully:**

As BEIS was not party to the litigation and the litigation was handled by Post Office Limited and their own legal team, it has not been included as a specific agenda item for ARAC in the last two years.

**Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme****Helen Hayes:**[\[99062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's announcement of 30 September 2020 of £3 billion of grants for energy efficiency improvements, if he will set out a timeframe for (a) publication of details of the scheme for schools and public buildings and (b) when applications for the scheme are planned to open.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme will help public sector organisations in England, including central government departments and their agencies, local authorities, schools and NHS Trusts, to install energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures.

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme is open for applications, and more details including how to apply, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme-psds>.

**Small Businesses: Grants****Lucy Powell:**[\[98975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish the (a) number and (b) value of grant payments made to hereditaments by local authority area as at 30 September 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

The Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF), the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLCGF) and the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) were part of this government's unprecedented package of support for business in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. We published a full breakdown of SBGF and RHLCGF grants distributed by each local authority following the schemes' closure: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses> We will publish further information on the number and value of grant payments made by local authority under the schemes in due course.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Civil Service: Recruitment**

**Helen Hayes:** [\[87605\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many applications have been made to the Civil Service Commission to make appointments in pay band 2 which would be exceptions to the Recruitment Principles of the Civil Service Commission in each Government Department (a) in each of the last 10 years and (b) since January 2020; and what proportion of those applications have been (a) approved and (b) refused.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[87606\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil service appointments have been made in pay band 2 and above as exceptions to the Recruitment Principles of the Civil Service Commission in each Department (a) in each of the last 10 years and (b) since January 2020.

**Julia Lopez:**

Details of exceptions to the Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles at and above Payband 2 are published by the Civil Service Commission and available on their website. Details for the financial year 2020/2021 will be published in due course.

Details of the proportion of exception requests which are refused are not held centrally.

**■ Parliamentary Private Secretaries**

**Christian Wakeford:** [\[97761\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department plans to publish an updated list of Parliamentary Private Secretaries.

**Julia Lopez:**

The full list of Parliamentary Private Secretaries, updated 1 October 2020, can be found on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

**■ Portsmouth International Port**

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** [\[98660\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the costs of operation Transition to mitigate the reasonable worst case scenario of congestion at the port of Portsmouth at the end of the transition period.

**Julia Lopez:**

Further to the [statement](#) by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 23 September, the Government has announced a £705 million package

of investment for border infrastructure, staff and technology to ensure our border systems are fully operational after the end of the Transition Period.

■ **Public Sector: Internet**

**Marion Fellows:** [\[99015\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of public sector websites (a) comply and (b) do not comply with accessibility requirements mandated by the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

**Marion Fellows:** [\[99016\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to ensure compliance with the legal accessibility requirements for public sector websites mandated by the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government Digital Service (GDS) is testing websites in accordance with the Accessibility Regulation.

GDS is encouraging organisations to engage with them to increase the accessibility of their websites for users.

GDS will periodically publish information about their monitoring. GDS will also, on behalf of the Minister for Cabinet Office, publish a list of websites with non-compliant accessibility statements.

## DEFENCE

■ **Ministry of Defence: Staff**

**Adam Holloway:** [\[98671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many scientific and technical civil servants were employed by his Department in (a) 2020 and (b) 2010.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The number of Civil Servants employed by the Ministry of Defence in the scientific and technical field in 2010 and 2020 are as follows:

2010	5,202
2020	5,404*

Where available, these figures include personnel in delegated Arm's Length Bodies - Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and the Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA).

\*Excluding DE&S for which figures are not available.

**Adam Holloway:**

[\[98672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civil servants were employed in financial posts in his Department in (a) 2020 and (b) 2010.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The number of Civil Servants employed by the Ministry of Defence in the finance field in 2010 and 2020 are as follows:

2010	3,391
2020	1,752*

Where available, these figures include personnel in delegated Arm's Length Bodies - Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and the Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA).

\* Excluding DE&S for which figures are unavailable.

## ■ NATO: Early Warning Systems

**Jack Lopresti:**

[\[98943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the ability of the Government to (a) fulfil its commitments to the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force, the provision of NATO Assurance Measures missions and (b) provide an adequate airborne early warning and control capability on concurrent sovereign operations.

**James Heapey:**

The UK is in regular dialogue with NATO to agree our commitments to the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force and our provision of NATO Assurance Measures missions on a year-by-year basis. These targets are agreed based upon the forecast availability of both UK and NATO aircraft, and output is closely monitored throughout the period; for this year the UK is forecast to meet all of its agreed NATO Assurance Measures commitments.

Commitment of UK AEW&C capability to sovereign operations is based upon the forecast available assets and the RAF is currently able to meet its contingent commitments. The UK retains the authority to prioritise the employment of its E-3D aircraft in support of additional short-notice (contingent) sovereign operations should the need arise.

**■ Oman: Military Bases****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[99151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his Department's news story of 12 September 2020, Defence Secretary announces investment in strategic Omani port, what the budget headings are for the £23.8 million announced investment in the logistics hub at Duqm port.

**James Heappey:**

The recent announcement of the UK investment will triple the size of the existing UK base at Duqm port. The £23.8 million investment is a commercial arrangement with the port and will provide the UK with a secure site for an expanded logistics hub.

Investment costs include the lease of the site; construction and installation of the necessary facilities; and project costs associated with delivering the work.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Business: Coronavirus****Dan Jarvis:**[\[98972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to financially support (a) the events and exhibitions industry and (b) other sectors that are unable to open as a result of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

We are aware that the events and exhibition industry, as well as other sectors, have been severely impacted by Government measures to control the spread of Covid-19.

Businesses can continue to access the Government's UK wide support package. This includes the Bounce Back Loans scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

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

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

**■ Events Industry: Coronavirus****Sarah Owen:**[\[96198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect on levels of job retention in the events industry of not extending the support to that industry during the covid-19 outbreak.



**Nigel Huddleston:**

My Department is in regular contact with Her Majesty's Treasury to closely assess the impact of the Government's interventions to stop the spread of COVID-19 on the events industry.

Events businesses can continue to make use of the Government's comprehensive support package. This includes the various loan schemes, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and the Job Retention Scheme.

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

We continue to engage with stakeholders, through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to closely monitor the situation facing events businesses.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[98680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect on jobs in the events industry in England of exempting children aged 12 and under from the rule of six, in line with the policies of the devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

My department continues to closely assess the impact of COVID-related restrictions on the events industry.

The rule of six does not apply to work, education and training activities. Meetings of up to 30 can still take place in permitted venues, as per the Covid-19 Secure guidance for the visitor economy. Since 11 July, a range of outdoor events have been able to take place.

Where the rule of 6 does apply, we have set out a clear and consistent limit of 6 people. Health is a devolved matter, and each administration has the discretion to implement the policy as they see fit.

As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, our decisions have been and will continue to be based on scientific evidence and the latest public health assessments.

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

**■ Gambling****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[99019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which Departments will participate in the review of gambling legislation.

**Ronnie Cowan:** [99020]

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

**Ronnie Cowan:** [99021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Department for Health and Social Care, (b) the Gambling Commission and (c) the Prime Minister's Office on the establishment of a review of gambling legislation.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport works closely with the Department for Health and Social Care and wider government on issues related to gambling and will continue to do so throughout the forthcoming review of the Gambling Act 2005. Further details will be announced in due course.

The Gambling Commission is the independent regulator for the gambling industry and provides advice to government on gambling related matters, including on the scope of the Gambling Act Review.

As outlined in answer to Question 96926, 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.

**Internet: Safety****Catherine McKinnell:** [96065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times (a) he and (b) his officials working on the Online Harms Bill have met with representatives of (i) Facebook, (ii) Twitter, (iii) Google and YouTube, (iv) TikTok and (v) Ofcom in the last three months.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

Ministers and officials have had regular meetings and discussions with industry, Ofcom and other stakeholders on a range of issues over the last three months, including online safety. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

**Sports: Coronavirus****James Wild:** [99134]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many covid-19 cases have been as a result of transmission at sporting pilot events approved by his Department.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Department does not hold information about covid-19 transmission rates at sports pilot events. However, the sport pilots demonstrated that many risks related to Covid-19 transmission within these events can be mitigated with Covid secure guidance.

We fully understand that fans want to be back watching live sports and other events, and we are continuing to work with the sector on solutions and innovations.

**EDUCATION****■ Adoption and Foster Care: Coronavirus**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[97654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date he became aware that not all of the responses to his Department's consultation on Changes to the adoption and children regulations: coronavirus (COVID-19) had been counted and represented in the consultation outcome document his Department published on 28 August.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[97655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the consultation on Changes to the adoption and children regulations: coronavirus (COVID-19), how his Department defines campaign response when considering submissions to a public consultation; and if he will provide the list of respondents who indicated that they represented an organisation in their response that consultation who were subsequently counted as an individual response in the outcome document.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[97656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference the consultation on Changes to the adoption and children regulations: coronavirus (COVID-19), if he will provide a breakdown of the types of respondents who (a) agreed, (b) disagreed and (c) neither agreed nor disagreed to the proposal to extend regulations on the frequency of children's care inspections using the six respondent categories provided in the document.

**Vicky Ford:**

On 24 April 2020, the Adoption and Children Coronavirus (Amendment) Regulations 2020 were introduced to provide local authorities and children's social care providers with temporary flexibilities to support them to focus on core safeguarding duties during the COVID-19 outbreak. The regulations lapsed on 25 September 2020.

Between 16 July and 5 August 2020, we sought views on those regulations that the government proposed should lapse and those that may be extended for continued use to 31 March 2021. The majority of responses were in favour of extending individual regulations on medical reports, virtual visits, and Ofsted inspections and all other temporary flexibilities should lapse.

Departmental officials informed me on 8 September 2020 that we needed to update our consultation response to include all emailed responses against all questions in addition to responses received directly through our consultation website.

The respondents defined as campaign responses in this consultation disclosed that they were part of a campaign and all responses were then included in the results. Respondents indicated how they would like their response to be counted (as an individual or as an organisation). Where respondents identified that they were happy to be made public, they have been listed in the consultation response.

Please see the attached table for the breakdown of types of respondents to the proposal to extend regulations on the frequency of children's social care inspections.

**Attachments:**

1. 97654\_97655\_97656\_pdf  
[97654\_97655\_97656\_respondents\_to\_extend\_regulations\_on\_frequency\_of\_children's\_social\_care\_inspections.pdf]

■ **Adoption: Ethnic Groups**

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[97659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage more people from BAME backgrounds to consider adopting children; and what steps he is taking to reduce delays for prospective adopters from BAME backgrounds at the approval and matching stages of the adoption process.

**Vicky Ford:**

Ensuring the right adopters come forward for the children we have waiting for forever homes remains a priority for the government. That is why this year, we gave the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) Leaders' Group £1 million to develop a sector led recruitment campaign. This campaign, launched on 16 September, is challenging preconceived conceptions about who can adopt and encouraging more people to come forward.

The campaign will specifically focus on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities through outreach work in 2 pilot areas, London and Birmingham. There is a focus on BAME communities during the recruitment campaign as children from BAME backgrounds typically wait longer to be placed with a forever family. The RAA Leaders' Group are also funding Home for Good to run a triage service to support prospective adopters from these pilot areas. This will include a safe space to explore adoption and ask further questions, but also seek extra support during the process.

We are working closely with the sector to ensure the prospective adopter journey is consistent for everyone across all agencies.

## ■ Children: Computers

**Damian Green:**

[\[98859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to extend the duration of the scheme for providing computers at home for disadvantaged children; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets, and over 50,000 4G wireless routers, to children who would not have otherwise had online access, as part of over £100 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care.

The laptops and tablets were an injection of support to help local authorities and academy trusts to provide access to education and social care during the COVID-19 restriction period. Laptops and tablets are owned by the local authority, academy trust or school, who can choose to lend unused laptops and tablets to children and young people who need them most, and who may face disruption to face-to-face education in the event of future local COVID-19 restrictions.

The Department is now supplementing this support by making available 250,000 additional laptops and tablets in the event that face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions and children become reliant on remote education. This scheme is intended to enable schools to support disadvantaged children in years 3 to 11 who cannot afford their own laptops and tablets. Schools will also be able to order laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children across all year groups who are shielding as a result of official or medical advice, all year groups who attend hospital schools, and those completing their Key Stage 4 at a further education college.

In the event that face-to-face education is disrupted, we know that it is critical to get schools the support that they need in the shortest timeframe. The majority of laptops and tablets ordered through this scheme will be delivered within two working days, subject to availability.

## ■ Children: Housing

**Mohammad Yasin:**

[\[99073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure accommodation for homeless and looked after 16 and 17 year olds is regulated and safe.

**Vicky Ford:**

We have consulted on a set of ambitious proposals to reform unregulated provision for children in care and care leavers, including how to enforce new national standards for providers to drive up quality, keeping young people safer and delivering better outcomes. We will be responding to this consultation and setting out our plans for ensuring the high-quality of unregulated semi-independent and independent

accommodation in due course. Our proposals are available here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/unregulated-provision/unregulated-provision-children-in-care/>.

The government is clear that any 16- or 17-year-old who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, must be assessed by children's services, as set in the statutory guidance. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation>.

Every child, who children's services have a duty to accommodate, will have to be placed in a setting that meets the new national standards. There are only 2 circumstances in which a local authority might find that a homeless young person should be accommodated by homelessness services under the Housing Act rather than by children's services under section 20 of the Children's Act. These are where the young person is either:

1. Not a child in need.
2. A 16- or 17-year-old child in need who, having been properly and fully advised of the implications and having the capacity to reach a decision, has decided that they do not want to be accommodated under section 20.

In those circumstances, where a young person is accommodated by homelessness services under the Housing Act rather than by children's services, the department will continue to work together with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, local communities, the government and with sector experts, to ensure this group of young people get the right support and accommodation they need.

## ■ Children: Quarantine

**Theresa Villiers:**

**[98902]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether children who have been required to self-isolate at home are allowed to return to school as soon as they have received a negative covid-19 test result.

**Nick Gibb:**

On 2 July, the Department published guidance to help schools prepare for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This includes guidance for how schools should manage cases of COVID-19 amongst the school community. The guidance can be viewed at:

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

Anyone with any of the three main COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and access a test as soon as possible. Where a pupil or member of staff receives a test which delivers a negative result, and they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to COVID-19, they can stop self-isolating. Other members of their household can also stop self-isolating.

If a pupil or member of staff is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including if they are part of a class or group that has been asked to self-isolate, and they develop symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period, they should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection and get a test. Where the test delivers a negative result, the individual must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14-day isolation period as they could still develop COVID-19 within the remaining days.

The guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

## ■ Children: Reading

**Ian Lavery:**

**[95639]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support children who have regressed with their reading levels during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards. We want to make sure that all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding.

A catch up package worth £1 billion has been made available, including a 'Catch Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. Our expectation is that this funding will be spent on the additional activities required to support children and young people to catch up after a period of disruption to their education. This includes the new National Tutoring Programme (NTP), which will provide targeted tutoring support for the children and young people who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education. Up to £9 million of NTP funding will make the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) available at no cost to schools that would particularly benefit. A recent Education Endowment Foundation trial of NELI found that children made on average three months of additional progress compared to children in the comparison group.

Alongside this, the £26.3 million English Hubs Programme already supports nearly 3,000 schools across England to improve their teaching of reading through systematic synthetic phonics, early language development, and reading for pleasure. English Hubs are helping schools prioritise phonics and reading as a key part of their recovery plan to get children back up to expected standards as quickly as possible.

Recognising the importance of reading during the disruption to education this year, we published ten top tips for parents to support children to read and collaborated on a Reading Together Day to celebrate the benefits of reading. We continue to encourage schools to promote reading as one of their main priorities. The ten top tips can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read>.

## ■ Families

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[98935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to paragraph 2.7 of Budget 2020 on the provision of £2.5 million for research and developing best practice around the integration of services for families, what that allocation has been spent 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 Budget 2020 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.

## ■ GCSE: Coronavirus

**Ian Mearns:**

[\[98697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to ensure that young people due to sit GCSE exams in summer 2021 will continue to have access to high quality education from their schools when school attendance is interrupted by (a) a local or national outbreak of covid-19 and (b) class or school level isolation is required in response to a school covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has announced a package of support to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. This includes a universal catch up premium for schools of £650 million and a new £350 million National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils. This £1 billion package is on top of the £2.6 billion increase in school budgets for academic year 2020-21 that was announced last year, as part of a £14 billion three-year funding settlement, recognising the additional work schools will need to do to help students to catch up.

Schools have been working extremely hard over the summer to prepare for full reopening, as well as to develop remote education contingency plans. This is testament to their commitment to ensuring any missed education is recovered and that we minimise any disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. We have a shared responsibility for working to ensure this generation of young people do not face long-term disadvantage.

To ensure that there is no doubt about the roles and responsibilities within the system for providing remote education, the Government published a Temporary Continuity Direction on 1 October, which makes it clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to COVID-19. This will come into effect from 22 October 2020. The direction poses no



additional expectations on the quality of remote education expected of schools beyond those set out in the Department's guidance.

The Department also announced further remote education support intended to support schools in meeting the remote education expectations set out in the schools guidance for full opening published in July. Further details of the support package can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

For schools, this support package includes an additional 250,000 laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and development resources for staff including a good practice guide and school-led webinars. The Department is also investing £1.5 million of additional funding to expand the EdTech Demonstrator programme, which provides peer-to-peer support for schools and colleges. The package is designed to help schools build on and deliver their existing plans in the event that pupils are unable to attend school because of COVID-19, in line with guidance and the law. This adds to existing support including the resources available from Oak National Academy.

The Department is engaging with Ofqual and representatives from schools and colleges in order to consider possible contingency arrangements for next year so that as many students as possible are able to enter exams.

#### ■ **Outdoor Education: Coronavirus**

**Stephen Timms:**

**[98861]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the sustainability of outdoor education facilities affected by covid-19 restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

**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. Information on support for businesses impacted by COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>.

#### ■ **Performing Arts: Coronavirus**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[98299]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department has put in place to support performing arts colleges during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Performing Arts Colleges registered under the department's Dance and Drama Awards programme, are private organisations.

Programme funding offers income-assessed support for students' tuition fees and living costs. The intention being to provide a contribution to the costs of participating for talented individuals who want to become professional actors and dancers.

The organisations themselves could also benefit from the extensive and unprecedented package of support measures for businesses across the country announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, such as loans, tax relief and cash grants.

**Remote Education: Finance****Emma Hardy:****[98753]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his letter to the hon Member for Hull West and Hessle of 21 September 2020, how much of the £100 million allocated to support remote education has been (a) allocated to and (b) claimed by university students.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The department invested over £100 million to help provide laptops and devices for disadvantaged children and young people so they can access education and social care services remotely.

The department distributed laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers for disadvantaged children in year 10, children receiving support from a social worker and care leavers to ensure these children and young people could continue to access education and vital social care services online during the COVID-19 outbreak.

As part of this, we have provided devices for care leavers, including those who might be studying at university.

Information on the equipment distributed to care leavers, including those studying in higher education, is held by local authorities.

Data on the number of care leavers in higher education are included in the report 'Children Looked After in England (including adoption), year ending 31 March 2019'. This data shows that 6% of 19 to 21-year-old care leavers were known to be in higher education. This report is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

The government has also worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that higher education providers can draw upon existing funding to provide hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[\[98996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2020 to Question 88339 on Schools: Coronavirus, what the total value was of claims made by schools under the exceptional costs programme from March to July 2020, as of 5 October 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

The first claims window for the COVID-19 schools fund closed on 21 July. The second window for schools to claim for exceptional costs they faced between March and July will open later in the autumn.

To date, the total value of claims against the published expenditure categories in the fund remains at £104 million. These are: increased premises related costs associated with keeping schools open over the Easter and summer half term holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who were not in school, where schools are not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements. A further £44 million of claims from schools during the first window fell outside the standard expenditure categories.

Schools have already received payments of £58 million where they have claimed only against the published expenditure categories and within the fund's cost limits. The Department is assessing all claims outside the published categories and/or in excess of the cost limits, and these will be paid later in the autumn if they are approved.

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[\[98997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2020 to Question 76046, what recent discussions he has had with school leaders on providing financial support for expenses incurred following the covid-19 outbreak on (a) additional cleaning, (b) signage (c) supply staff, and (d) other anticipated extra costs that they expect to incur from September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

Ministers and officials continue to engage regularly with school leaders and their representatives on a wide range of issues around COVID-19, including discussions in relation to costs faced by schools at this time.

## ■ Schools: Counselling

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[98985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the counsellor to student ratio in (a) secondary and (b) primary schools in each local authority area in England.

**Vicky Ford:**

Schools and colleges have the freedom to decide what support to offer pupils based on their particular needs, drawing on evidence available on effective practice. This

support can come from a number of sources, including counselling. The department has published guidance on how to put in place effective school-based counselling, which schools can use to identify where further counselling support is appropriate for their pupils. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

The department does not ask schools to provide details of support and we do not make estimates of the level of support. Our survey of mental health provision in schools and colleges in 2016 and 2017 found that 61% of schools and colleges (56% of primary schools, 84% of secondary schools and 93% of colleges) reported offering access to a counselling service for their pupils.

The government is investing £8 million in the new Wellbeing for Education Return Programme which is funding expert advisers, who will be able to train and support schools and colleges in every area of England, and can make links to available local authority provision, including counselling.

To increase support in the long-term, we remain committed to our 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.

#### ■ Schools: Energy

**Helen Hayes:** [\[99058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 September 2020 to Question 82193, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the £9.5 billion funding that will be spent on energy efficiency measures; and what steps he is taking to encourage energy efficiency measures.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[99059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the £560 million in capital funding announced for schools that will be used for energy efficiency measures.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[99060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 September 2020 to Question 82193, what assessment he has made of the effect of the eight year payback conditions on the Salix finance scheme on schools' choices for more substantial energy efficiency measures.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[99061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 September 2020 to Question 82193, if he will set out a timeframe for when the application scheme for academies will reopen; and what steps he is taking to ensure that application scheme remains accessible on an annual basis.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has allocated £9.5 billion in condition funding since 2015 to maintain and improve the school estate, including an extra £560 million this financial year. As much of the funding is provided to responsible bodies, such as local authorities, large academy trusts and voluntary aided school bodies, to invest in condition priorities based on local need, we are not able to provide a breakdown of spend on energy efficiency. On top of capital allocations to the school system, the Priority School Building Programme is rebuilding or refurbishing school buildings in the worst condition across the country, covering over 500 schools. In June, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced a new, transformative 10-year school rebuilding programme. This will replace school buildings that are ageing or in poor condition with modern, energy-efficient designs that will help to meet the government's net zero target. We are working to improve schools' capability and efficiency in managing their estates, and have published guidance on good estate management, which includes energy efficiency measures and a checklist that schools can use to help them take action. We are also working in partnership with the Construction Innovation Hub (funded by UK Research and Innovation) to develop a model of sustainable future school buildings using modern methods of construction. More broadly, we are working with colleagues across government on carbon reduction and energy efficiency, and are considering how future capital programmes can contribute further.

On 1 October, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced a £1 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. The scheme is being provided via Salix Finance and schools are eligible to apply for grant funding for capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects. This is a grant scheme, hence there is no payback criteria set on this funding.

The application round for the Salix Energy Efficiency Fund for academies is due to reopen in mid-October 2020. BEIS is responsible for this programme, and future funding is subject to the Spending Review. Academies that are eligible for the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) can also apply through the annual CIF round for an interest free energy efficiency Salix loan for all or part of the CIF project funding if an element of the project will provide revenue savings for energy efficiency works.

**Schools: Food****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[98897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 51681, what progress he has made with Public Health England on updating School Food Standards based on refreshed Government dietary recommendations.

**Vicky Ford:**

We already have very robust school food standards set in legislation, which require school caterers to serve healthy and nutritious food and drinks, to ensure children get

the energy and nutrition they need across the school day. We are working closely with schools to ensure these are consistently followed.

As schools and their kitchens are now open, healthy and nutritious meals are available for all pupils. We have asked schools to work with their existing suppliers to provide meals or food parcels to pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals where they are self-isolating. LACA and Public Health England have published advice to schools to help them prepare healthy food parcels, which is available here: <https://laca.co.uk/laca-view/free-school-meals-guidance-producing-food-parcels>.

Due to the priority of responding to the COVID-19 outbreak, and considering the robustness of the existing standards, the government has no further plans to update the School Food Standards.

## ■ Students: Coronavirus

**Jack Lopresti:**

**[96053]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) a student flat in halls, (b) a student house of multiple occupation and (c) each room within that flat or house is categorised as one household for the purposes of a covid-19 lockdown; and if he will publish guidance on the covid-19 locking down of student accommodation.

**Michelle Donelan:**

On 10 September, the government issued updated guidance for providers on reopening campuses and buildings to help providers make informed decisions about their provision. This includes guidance on households in student accommodation. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campus/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campus>.

Student accommodation providers should identify 'households' within their estate, within which routine contact can be managed safely. These households will also form the units by which any response to a suspected or confirmed positive COVID-19 case will be managed. The approach to deciding what constitutes a household will depend on the physical layout of the accommodation, taking into account who shares a kitchen or bathroom. A household in halls of residence should generally be made up of those students living in the same flat, or on the same floor, who share a kitchen and/or bathroom, rather than an entire block. Accommodation providers should make clear which kitchen(s) and/or bathroom(s) are intended for each household's use. If a household within student accommodation is not obvious, providers may need to allocate students to specified households (these households may be greater than 6 people).

Students living in halls of residence, or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), who develop symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate in their current accommodation. Students should discuss this with their higher education provider, and with the manager of their halls if they are privately owned, or the landlord of their HMO.

If a resident has COVID-19 symptoms, all residents in that household must isolate for 14 days. The department has published guidance on isolating in residential educational settings, available here:

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

Higher education providers have been asked to aim to ensure that staff, such as catering staff, are available to give support on halls management for students self-isolating or subject to local restrictions. We would also expect higher education providers to continue to provide students with mental health and wellbeing support, which may be provided online.

**Liz Twist:**

**[96993]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to provide additional mental health support for students in response to covid-19 restrictions.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Protecting all students', domestic and international, mental health and wellbeing continues to be a priority for this government. The disruption and uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak has impacted all age groups, but particularly young people who are making transitions during this time.

Higher education providers are best placed to identify and address the needs of their particular student body as well as how to develop the services needed. Many providers have boosted their existing welfare and counselling services to ensure support services can be accessed, which is particularly important for those students having to self-isolate or who are affected by local restrictions.

Student Space, funded with £3 million from the Office for Students (OfS), provides dedicated support services (phone and text) for students and a collaborative online platform to help students access vital mental health and wellbeing resources. The platform bridges gaps in support for students arising from the outbreak and is designed to work alongside existing services.

The government has recently provided over £9 million to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. In addition, NHS mental health trusts are ensuring 24/7 access to crisis telephone lines to support people of all ages.

We have asked providers to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of students during this period and have enabled them to use funding, worth up to £23 million per month from April to July this year and £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 starting from August, to go towards student hardship funds and mental health support.

**Liz Twist:**

[\[96994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on safe home visits for students at Christmas 2020.

**Michelle Donelan:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has regularly discussed the reopening of higher education (HE) providers with his Cabinet colleagues, including with my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The arrangements for the end of the autumn term were discussed on Monday 28 September.

As the Secretary of State for Education announced to the House on Tuesday 29 September, the department is working with universities to make sure that all students are supported to return home safely and spend Christmas with their loved ones, if they choose to do so. Where students choose to stay in their university accommodation over Christmas, universities should continue making sure that they are safe and well looked after. The department will work with universities to publish guidance on students returning home safely at Christmas, shortly.

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in HE is always our priority, and the government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying at HE providers in this unprecedented situation, while mitigating the impact on education.

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[98983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve student wellbeing during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Protecting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people continues to be a priority for this government. Access to mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. This government is working to promote good mental health in schools and further and higher education settings.

In July, the government announced a £1 billion COVID catch-up package, with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020/21 academic year, to support education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place.

In addition, £8 million has been invested in the 'Wellbeing for Education Return' project, providing schools and colleges with the knowledge and practical skills to help improve how to respond to the emotional impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. A link to this programme can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-for-education-return-grant-s31-grant-determination-letter>.

I have asked providers to boost their existing welfare and counselling services to ensure support services can be accessed. This is particularly important for those students having to self-isolate or who are affected by local restrictions.



Student Space, funded with £3 million from the Office for Students, provides dedicated support services through a collaborative online platform to help students access vital mental health and wellbeing resources. The platform bridges gaps in support arising from the COVID-19 outbreak and is designed to work alongside existing services. A link to Student Space's website can be found here:

<https://studentspace.org.uk/>.

We have also asked higher education providers to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of students, enabling them to use funding, worth up to £23 million per month from April to July this year and £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 starting from August, to go towards student hardship funds and mental health support.

In August, we established a cross-sector COVID Higher Education Taskforce. On 5 October, we agreed to convene a new working group, as a sub-group of the taskforce, with a specific focus on student mental health issues. The group will seek to gather direct feedback from the sector to better understand and address any systemic barriers getting in the way of good support.

The government has provided over £9 million to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need and NHS mental health trusts are ensuring 24/7 access to crisis 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 to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, available here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing).

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[98986]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to assess the longer-term effect of the covid-19 lockdown on the mental health and wellbeing of (a) school and (b) university students.

**Vicky Ford:**

We know that across society, the COVID-19 outbreak has had an impact on wellbeing and mental health, but it has had a particular impact on children and young people. In September, Public Health England, who is closely monitoring the situation, published a report on the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on mental health and wellbeing. This report is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report>.

The department is continuing to work with other government bodies, academics, the voluntary sector and private organisations to understand how children and young people's wellbeing develops as they return to schools, colleges, universities, apprenticeships or to jobs with training. This will inform the department's focus in providing further support. In particular, we will continue to publish our annual 'State of the Nation' report, summarising the evidence on children and young people's

wellbeing. The next report will include a consideration of the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak. Last year's report is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-nation-2019-children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing>.

The evidence emerging over the spring and summer pointed to the importance of getting young people back into education for their longer-term 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 our new £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return Programme. This will train local experts to provide additional advice and resources for schools and colleges to help support pupil and student wellbeing, resilience and recovery in light of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. It will give staff the confidence to support pupils and students, parents, carers and colleagues, and the knowledge of how and where to access appropriate specialist support where needed.

In higher education, the Office for Students has funded the Student Space platform which provides a range of dedicated resources to support students' mental health. We have asked higher education providers to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of students during this period and have enabled them to use funding, worth up to £23 million per month from April to July this year and £256 million for 2020-21 academic year starting from August, to go towards student hardship funds and mental health support.

## ■ Students: Housing

**Sarah Owen:**

**[98769]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 96196 on Students: Housing, if he will publish the minutes of his discussions with representatives of Unite and Unipol at the Higher Education Taskforce.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Higher Education taskforce was created to discuss and take quick actions on higher education (HE) admissions and acceptances and to discuss COVID-19 related challenges faced by HE providers and students.

The group consists of members from Universities UK, the Office for Students, the University and Colleges Admissions Service and several university groups. Unite and Unipol were invited, by exception, to a meeting where student accommodation was a focus of the agenda.

The taskforce is ongoing and, although we do not currently have plans to publish the read-outs from the meetings, we will review this in due course. The main items of discussion at this meeting included the increase in COVID-19 cases amongst young adults, COVID-secure practices and supporting students to remain on campus in cases of local COVID-19 outbreaks.

## ■ Students: ICT

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[97691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to his oral contribution of 29 September 2020, official report, on students' return to universities, whether funding is available for new applications from students or education institutions for support with digital access.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The department invested over £100 million to help provide laptops and devices for disadvantaged children and young people so they can access education and social care services remotely. As part of this, we have provided devices for care leavers, including those who are studying at university.

The government has also worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to provide hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment.

## ■ Students: Loans

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[97571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that women do not face unfair financial hardship as a result of the requirement to continue paying student loan repayments during maternity leave.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The repayment of student loans is governed by the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations (2009) (as amended).

The current system protects borrowers, including people on maternity and other forms of parental leave, if they see a reduction in their income. Repayments are made based on a borrower's monthly or weekly income, not the interest rate or amount borrowed, and no repayments are made for earnings below the repayment threshold. Repayments are calculated as a fixed percentage of earnings above the relevant repayment threshold – if income drops, so do the repayments made. Any outstanding debt is written off at the end of the loan term with no detriment to the borrower.

If at the end of the year, the borrower's total income is below the relevant annual threshold, they may reclaim any repayments from the Student Loans Company made during that year.

**■ Students: Manchester Metropolitan University****Jake Berry:**[\[96866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the legal basis is for the detention of students within halls of residence at Manchester Metropolitan University who are not displaying symptoms of covid-19 and have not tested positive for the disease.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE providers in this unprecedented situation, while mitigating the impact on education.

Students should follow the latest health advice, meaning that they should stay in their accommodation in the event that they, or anyone in their household, develops symptoms or are otherwise required to self-isolate.

Decisions on which measures to apply should be made by the local public health team, based on the information received through NHS Test and Trace. HE providers should work with Public Health England to agree on which instructions they provide to students and should ensure that students understand what is required of them if they need to self-isolate.

**■ T-levels: Worcestershire****Sajid Javid:**[\[97535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students in (a) the Bromsgrove constituency and (b) Worcestershire enrolled on to a T-Level course in the academic year 2020-2021.

**Gillian Keegan:**

There are now 44 schools, colleges and other training providers teaching the first 3 T levels. Five of these 44 are in the West Midlands region. The confirmed enrolment figures for T levels (at a national level) will be available once the September recruitment has been formally reported in summer 2021. We have been monitoring the situation closely and are confident that recruitment has progressed well and a viable cohort of young people will benefit from taking these new, high quality qualifications, leaving them in a great position to move into skilled employment or further training.

**■ Universities: Coronavirus****Jonathan Gullis:**[\[97736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking the help ensure that universities can deliver safe (a) teaching and (b) student services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks to those working and studying in our HE providers in this unprecedented situation, while mitigating the impact on education.

We have drawn on the expertise of the HE taskforce that we set up, and we have been providing robust public health advice and regular updates to the HE sector to help providers to plan carefully to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

We have also updated our guidance for providers on reopening campuses, which provides advice on teaching, accommodation and services to students. Our guidance takes account of the latest scientific advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, which has been considering the risks of re-opening HE providers. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campus/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campus>. As with all of our education settings, we continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the latest scientific advice, adapting policies as the situation changes.

We have worked with universities to ensure that they all have response plans for the COVID-19 outbreak. These have been or are being agreed with local Directors of Public Health. The plans cover a range of scenarios and ensure that providers are prepared to respond quickly to an outbreak in their university or wider community.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Air Pollution****Abena Oppong-Asare:****[99150]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK meets its targets on air quality.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK meets all legal air quality obligations, except for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentration limit values at the roadside, and the latest UK compliance data in 2019 shows an improvement since 2018.

The Government published the UK plan for tackling roadside NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in July 2017, followed by a supplement in October 2018. The plan and supplement set out how the Government will achieve compliance with legal limits for NO<sub>2</sub> in the shortest possible time, supported by a £3.8 billion investment into air quality and cleaner transport.

In January 2019, the Government also published a comprehensive Clean Air Strategy, which aims to cut air pollution across all sectors and sits alongside the 2017 plan. This strategy sets out the comprehensive action required across all areas of

government and society to reduce air pollution and meet our ambitious air pollutant emission targets for 2020 and 2030.

The Environment Bill delivers key parts of the Clean Air Strategy and will enable and drive more effective action to improve air quality.

#### ■ **Air Pollution: Erith and Thamesmead**

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

[99149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of nitrogen dioxide in the air in Erith and Thamesmead constituency.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Mayor of London is responsible for air quality in the capital and has reserve powers under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to reflect this.

As part of these responsibilities the Mayor of London carries out monitoring of air quality in London, and this is likely to include an assessment of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels in Erith and Thamesmead.

The most recent national compliance assessment for NO<sub>2</sub> shows that all road links in Erith and Thamesmead that are included in the assessment were below the annual mean limit value for NO<sub>2</sub> of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in 2019, with the highest concentration recorded at 37.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup> on the A2016. The full data is available online at <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/gis-mapping/>.

The UK is compliant with our air quality obligations for all pollutants with the exception of NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at roadside locations, and we have put in place a £3.8 billion plan to tackle this issue. More widely, the Government's Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollution from a wide range of sources. Our Environment Bill delivers key parts of this strategy and makes a clear commitment to set a legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter and enables local authorities to take more effective action to tackle air pollution in their areas.

#### ■ **Flood Control: Yorkshire and the Humber**

**Tracy Brabin:**

[98734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his comments in York on 16 February 2020, when he plans to hold a flood summit for the whole of Yorkshire.

**Rebecca Pow:**

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

The hon. Member will be aware that at the adjournment debate of 30 September I confirmed that I will be meeting with flood affected Members on 8 October with a

focus on South Yorkshire following the letter from the hon. Member for Barnsley Central.

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

## ■ Hedgehogs: Conservation

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[98926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of moving hedgehogs to schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to allow them greater protection.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) has recently commenced the seventh Quinquennial Review of schedules 5 and 8 (protected species) to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The JNCC will, late next year, make evidence-based recommendations to the Secretary of State as to which species warrant additional legal protections to secure their future conservation. It is not possible, at this time, to confirm which species, including hedgehogs, may be included in these proposals.

## ■ Plastics

**Patricia Gibson:**

[\[99014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made on reducing the use of plastics.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Our target is to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste over the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan, and we have already made good progress. We have introduced one of the world's toughest bans on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, reduced sales of single-use carrier bags by over 95% in the main retailers through the 5p charge, and, since 1 October this year, have banned the supply of plastic straws, cotton buds, and stirrers, with exemptions. And we will not stop there. Next year we will extend the carrier bag charge to all retailers and increase the minimum charge to 10p, consult again on the introduction of a deposit-return scheme for drinks containers, and, from 2022, will introduce a tax on plastic packaging containing less than 30% recycled content.

Our landmark Environment Bill includes a number of measures that will enable us to further tackle plastic waste. These include measures to impose charges on single-use plastic items and make producers cover the costs of collecting and managing plastic packaging waste.

**■ Rivers: Environment Protection**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[96835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential effects of ending the one-out-all-out rule for rivers for (a) ecosystems and wildlife and (b) people who use rivers for leisure purposes.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We have not made such an assessment as there are no plans to end the one-out-all-out principle which forms part of the current regulatory framework. However, we are willing to consider further methods to overcome any shortcomings associated with using only one composite assessment in our work on improving the water environment.

**■ Waste Management**

**Anthony Mangnall:** [\[97038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2020 to Question 21397 on Waste Management, when he plans to announce the two waste streams for which his Department will consult on introducing extended producer responsibility schemes by 2022.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We are continuing to review our evidence base to inform our prioritisation of these waste-streams for consultation on the basis of environmental impact. We will confirm our priorities in due course.

We also continue to progress extended producer responsibility reform for packaging and will undertake a second consultation on proposals in 2021.

**■ Water: Environment Protection**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[96836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to introduce new metrics to measure improvements in individual aspects of water quality in (a) rivers and (b) other inland freshwater bodies.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Last year, the Government published an indicator framework designed to describe and measure progress towards the 10 goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan, including the goal of clean and plentiful water and the target to return 75% of our surface water to as close as possible to its natural condition, as soon as is practicable. Seven of the 66 indicators, such as pollution loads entering water, specifically cover changes to the water environment. There is always room to refine environmental metrics. The indicator framework serves as a new basis to improve metrics to monitor changes in the natural environment and ensure that we are taking appropriate action.



**Caroline Lucas:**[\[96837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a long-term target to improve quality of freshwater that includes (a) the extent of waters achieving high ecological status, (b) an inland bathing standard, (c) small waters such as headwater streams, small lakes, ponds and ditches and wetland habitats that are not currently covered by the Water Framework Directive; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government has introduced a long-term target to bring three quarters of England's rivers and other surface water to as close as possible to their natural condition, as soon as is practicable. This equates to good ecological status.

Inland bathing waters are currently assessed to the standards set out in the Bathing Water Regulations (2013). They apply where bathing water designations are made following applications from interested parties using the established process. To date only a small number of inland lakes have been designated as bathing waters although Defra is currently consulting on an application for bathing water status in a stretch of the River Wharfe at Ilkley.

We recognise that small water bodies are an important component of the aquatic environment. Whilst headwaters should broadly be in as good a condition as the rivers they feed into, the science is not developed enough to allow target setting for the diverse range of headwaters, nor the other types of small water bodies. The Environment Agency is planning to start wider monitoring in some headwater and smaller streams next year as part of its new River Surveillance Network.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ **Catalonia: Sovereignty****Owen Thompson:**[\[99046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Spanish counterpart on the disqualification of Quim Torra as President of Catalonia.

**Wendy Morton:**

This is a matter for Spain and the Spanish courts. The Foreign Secretary has had no discussions with his Spanish counterparts on this matter.

■ **China: Muslims****Shabana Mahmood:**[\[98929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to (a) his counterpart in China, (b) international bodies and (c) individual countries on the detention of (i) Uighur and (ii) other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang in China.

**Nigel Adams:**

We regularly raise our serious concerns about the extra-judicial detention of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, both directly with the Chinese authorities and at the UN alongside international partners. On 6 October, the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York expressing deep concern at the situation in Xinjiang, including the mass detention of Uyghurs in political re-education camps. This growing coalition reflects UK diplomatic leadership, including the personal involvement of the Foreign Secretary in raising the issue with a wide range of partners. On 28 July, the Foreign Secretary raised human rights violations in Xinjiang with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[95719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government response to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Second Report of Session 2019–21, Merging success: Bringing together the FCO and DFID (HC 525), published on 22 September, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of preparation for the Prime Minister's announcement to merge DFID and the FCO.

**James Duddridge:**

Prior to the Prime Minister's announcement on 16 June 2020, officials from the Department for International Development (DfID), the Cabinet Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) were working together to realise the Prime Minister's ambition to strengthen alignment between DfID and the FCO, building on previous work, including the appointment of seven joint Ministers in February 2020. As with any government change, the announcement of the forthcoming establishment of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office came first to Parliament.

**Gender: Equality****Layla Moran:**[\[97015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his timescale is for appointing a new Special Envoy for Gender Equality.

**Wendy Morton:**

*[Holding answer 7 October 2020]:* Gender equality is a core part of the FCDO's work as a force for good in the world. The UK has a proud track record in a number of areas. For example, the right of every girl around the world to receive 12 years of quality education remains a top priority. The Prime Minister appointed Baroness Sugg as the UK Special Envoy for Girls' Education in March 2020. Between 2015 and 2020, we supported 8.1 million girls gain access to a decent education. Our Strategic Vision for Gender Equality reflects and responds to the UK Government's ambitions and works alongside our National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security.

**■ Myanmar: Rohingya****Shabana Mahmood:**[\[98930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness of the legal action taken through the International Criminal Court against the Government of Myanmar on the Rohingya population and (b) potential merits of similar international action on the detention of Uighur and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang in China.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK is monitoring the Prosecutor's investigations into alleged crimes by the Myanmar military. The UK is clear that the Myanmar military bears responsibility for atrocities against the Rohingya and other minorities. There has been no meaningful accountability for these acts. Accountability is essential to any long-term progress on the crisis.

In respect of the situation in Xinjiang, the UK is focused on building a coalition of likeminded partners and raising concerns at senior levels bilaterally with China to increase pressure on China to change course. Most recently, on 6 October the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York expressing deep concern at the situation in Xinjiang, including the mass detention of Uyghurs in political re-education camps.

**■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[97664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what attempts his Department has made to visit Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in the last sixty days.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran does not recognise dual nationality or grant consular access to dual-nationals; even while on furlough, the authorities continue to treat her as an Iranian national only. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office remains in regular contact with both Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and her family, and we continue to provide support. We will continue to make decisions in line with what we believe will produce the best outcomes for her.

**■ Non-governmental Organisations: Sexual Offences****Layla Moran:**[\[97709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government has taken since (a) 2018 and (b) 31 December 2019 to tackle sexual abuse by aid workers.

**James Cleverly:**

Sexual exploitation and abuse are completely abhorrent. Since 2018, the Government has taken action to prevent abuse by aid workers and to improve the

response when it happens. We introduced enhanced safeguarding standards and regularly assess partners against them. We created Project Soteria with Interpol to strengthen vetting of aid workers and information sharing among law enforcement agencies. We champion the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme which prevented 36 individuals from being offered aid sector jobs in 2019. We created the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub which provides resources for all aid organisations. In October 2019 we published reports summarising work over the previous 12 months including these and many other measures.

In 2020 as well as continuing with the work above, the UK and 14 other donors agreed common language on safeguarding for funding agreements with multilaterals, aligned with international standards. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is finalising a programme to support victims and survivors. We regularly convene the groups who signed commitments at the October 2018 London Safeguarding Summit and will publish a further annual progress report this month. Last month the Government published a safeguarding strategy covering all UK aid spend which builds on commitments made at the 2018 Summit.

#### ■ **USA: Diplomatic Immunity**

**Alex Sobel:** [\[99102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many US personnel hold diplomatic immunity at (a) RAF Menwith Hill, (b) The Joint Intelligence and Analysis Centre at Molesworth, (c) RAF Fairford, (d) RAF Lakenheath and (e) RAF Mildenhall.

**Wendy Morton:**

US personnel at the establishments listed do not enjoy privileges and immunities under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961.

#### ■ **Yemen: Armed Conflict**

**Neil Coyle:** [\[98230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the implementation of the recommendations of the September 2020 report from the UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[98231\]](#)

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 recommendations in the UN Group of Eminent Experts' report on Yemen calling on (a) the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Yemen to the International Criminal Court and b) third states to stop transferring arms to parties to the conflict in Yemen.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK supports the UN Group of Eminent Experts (GEE), which is an important mechanism for ensuring accountability and supporting the promotion and protection of human rights in Yemen. We supported resolutions of the UN Human Rights

Council to establish the GEE in 2017 and to renew its mandate in 2018 and 2019. The UK is deeply concerned by the allegations in the GEE's latest report. The UK calls on all the parties to the conflict to engage constructively with the GEE, investigate these allegations, protect human rights and comply with their obligations under International Humanitarian Law. The Government takes its export responsibilities extremely seriously and assesses all export licences in accordance with strict licensing criteria. We will not issue any export licences where to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria. Yemen is a human rights priority country for the UK. In the latest Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office human rights report, we highlighted our concerns over women's rights including girls' education, the recruitment of child soldiers, arbitrary detention, and attacks on freedom of religion or belief and on freedom of speech and association.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Abortion

**Nick Fletcher:**

[\[94589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to include consultation on reducing the general time limit for surgical abortions in his Department's upcoming consultation on at-home use for both stages of early medical abortion.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 28 September 2020]:* The Government has committed to undertake a public consultation on whether to make permanent the COVID-19 measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. Further details on the consultation will be available in due course.

### ■ Abortion: Coronavirus

**Scott Benton:**

[\[92912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect on levels of maternal death during early medical abortion of the temporary approval of home use for both stages of early medical abortion decision of 30 March 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

We continue to closely monitor the impact of the temporary approval for women's homes to be classed as a place where both sets of medication for early medical abortion can be taken up to 10 weeks gestation.

Since the 1 April the Department has not been notified of any maternal deaths relating to abortion. The Department is aware of reports of two women who died after seeking abortion treatment earlier this year. Both sought care before the temporary approval came into force on 30 March and physically attended an abortion clinic. Both deaths have been appropriately investigated and in one case investigations are

continuing. For the other case, the coroner concluded that there was no evidence to suggest the pregnancy or abortion contributed to the death either directly or indirectly.

### ■ **Abortion: Drugs**

**Nick Fletcher:** [\[89877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many medical abortions have taken place at home since the introduction of temporary provisions permitting the application of both sets of abortion pills at home.

**Helen Whately:**

From April to June 2020, there were 23,061 medical abortions where both medications (Antiprogesterone and prostaglandin) were taken at home.

**Nick Fletcher:** [\[89878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many maternal deaths have occurred among women who have taken home abortion pills since 1 April 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department is aware of reports of two women who died after seeking abortion treatment earlier this year. Both sought care before the temporary approval came into force on 30 March and physically attended an abortion clinic. Both deaths have been appropriately investigated and in one case investigations are continuing. For the other case, the coroner concluded that there was “no indication either from the physical examination or toxicological evaluation to suggest the pregnancy or attempted abortion contributed directly or indirectly to the death.”

We continue to closely monitor the impact of the temporary approval for women’s homes to be classed as a place where both sets of medication for early medical abortion can be taken up to 10 weeks gestation.

### ■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[81618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of guidelines that suggest limiting care home residents to a single constant visitor on the well-being of (a) residents and (b) their families during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

All our guidance is designed with care users in mind, to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity and respect and that their particular needs are addressed.

We recognise that limiting visits in care homes has been difficult for many residents and families who want to see their loved ones. Our first priority is to prevent infections in care homes, and this means that visiting policy should still be restricted with alternatives sought wherever possible. Visiting policies will be tailored to the individual care home, and will be based on a local dynamic risk-based approach.

To limit risk, where visits do go ahead, this should be limited to a single constant visitor, per resident, wherever possible. This is in order to limit the overall numbers of visitors to the care home and the consequent risk of infection.

Our aim is to enable residents to be reunited safely with their loved ones. This guidance will be updated as the risk posed by COVID-19 continues to change.

**Greg Clark:** [\[90097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have been discharged from hospital into care homes having either (a) not been tested for covid-19 immediately prior to their move or (b) having tested positive in each month to date since, and including, March 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* The Department does not hold data on the number of patients who have been discharged from hospital into care homes having either not been tested for COVID-19 immediately prior to their move or having tested positive in each month to date since, and including, March 2020.

As set out in the Adult Social Care Action Plan on 15 April, all individuals are required to be tested prior to discharge from hospital to a care home, and no care home should be forced to admit residents if they do not feel they can provide the appropriate care.

We will continue to work closely with the sector to keep our policies and data under review.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[90953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage care homes to allow family members to safely visit their relatives during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

We recognise how important it is to allow care home residents to safely meet their loved ones, especially for those at the end of their lives. Our first priority remains to prevent infections in care homes and protect staff and residents.

Our Winter Strategy Plan sets out tightened infection prevention and control measures to enable visits to continue safely. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-coronavirus-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021/adult-social-care-our-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021>

These measures build on the published care home visiting guidance framework that allows for local decision making, based on the assessment of the Director of Public Health and the care provider. We appreciate the extra strain that constraints on visiting may have put on staff, residents and their families and we continue to encourage providers to find innovative ways of allowing safe contact between residents and their family members.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[91101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the weekly care home covid-19 testing programme.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* Protecting care home residents and staff has been one of our top priorities and this includes increasing access to testing. We are continuing to prioritise care home testing, where we are issuing more than 100,000 tests a day to care homes across the country. We have met our 7 September target of providing testing kits to all care homes for older people and people with dementia who have registered for regular retesting kits. In addition, all other care homes have been able to place orders for test kits from 31 August. Since they were eligible to apply for regular repeat testing on 31 August, 4,576 specialist homes in England have applied for tests. Where an outbreak has been identified, we test all staff and residents as a priority, with all those who test negative being tested again four to seven days later. Any home with a current outbreak can continue regular testing of staff and residents who have previously tested negative.

We have done everything we can to encourage care homes to register to receive test kits, including contacting every eligible care home provider that have not yet registered to receive their test kits. We recently wrote to Directors of Public Health and Directors of Adult Services about the new bulk registration services and they have been engaging with care homes in their local areas. We have also asked them for help in promoting weekend testing in their local area and thanks to their swift actions we have been able to increase the amount of testing we can do and make full use of the available daily lab capacity.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[91678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which care home providers have refused to participate in the programme of weekly testing for care home workers.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 22 September 2020]:* The Department does not hold this data.

**James Murray:**

[\[93700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he is putting in place to ensure that residential care homes do not experience a shortage of (a) covid-19 tests and (b) personal protective equipment in the event of a second wave of covid-19 infections.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 25 September 2020]:* The Adult Social Care Winter Plan outlines the Government's commitment to provide free personal protective equipment for COVID-19 needs for adult social care until March 2021. The plan also provides advice and guidance on our testing strategy for adult social care.

We are issuing more than 100,000 tests a day to care homes across the country. As part of the drive to towards the target of a 500,000-a-day testing United Kingdom



capacity by the end of October, the Government has announced the addition of new Lighthouse laboratories in Newport and Charnwood to the national lab network, and work is ongoing on plans to expand the UK's laboratory capacity even further over the coming months. The recent £500 million investment will increase testing capacity and rollout new cutting-edge testing technology to deliver rapid tests.

## ■ Care Homes: Visits

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[85003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has received on allocating key worker or equivalent status for family carers, enabling them access to (a) regular covid-19 testing, (b) PPE and (c) training on infection control so that they are able to visit their loved ones in care homes safely; what discussions he has had with (i) infection control experts and (ii) charities representing people living in care homes about those representations; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

We continue to work closely and listen to the views and concerns of carer organisations and those they represent during this period.

Current clinical advice is that testing of individuals without symptoms, including family visitors of care home residents, should be used where clinically appropriate, predominantly for outbreak investigation and infection control. Our primary focus at present is testing all symptomatic people and asymptomatic people in specific circumstances, to ensure that everyone who needs a test can get one. That said, we have listened to unpaid carers' concerns about getting access to testing and have made them a priority group for COVID-19 testing. They are now included in the list of essential workers that can get a COVID-19 test if they show symptoms.

We are not currently recommending that personal protective equipment be used by family carers unless it would ordinarily be used in delivering care to the individual, or if advised to do so by a healthcare professional. We are keeping this policy under review.

We have published guidance for unpaid carers on GOV.UK providing general advice, including advice on infection control, links to other information and support, and advice on caring where someone has symptoms.

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[87706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of easing covid-19 visiting restrictions for care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

We are aware that limiting visits in care homes has been difficult for many families and residents who want to see their loved ones. The decision on whether or not to allow visitors, and in what circumstances will be for the relevant Director of Public Health and managers of each individual setting to make. Care homes will be

supported by local infection control leads in making decisions about visiting, to ensure that the balance of risks and benefits is appropriately considered.

The Visiting guidance will be updated as the risk posed by COVID-19 continues to change.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Hospitals**

**Sir Mike Penning:**

[\[97480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits where geographically expedient of using Nightingale hospitals as covid-19 centres of excellence to take all covid-19 cases and free up local acute hospitals to ensure that they remain covid-free; and will he make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* 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.

**Kate Griffiths:**

[\[97725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with local hospitals on transferring covid-19 patients to Nightingale hospitals.

**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: Manchester University**

**Sir David Amess:**

[\[96741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of students attending Manchester University who have been admitted to hospital with covid-19 symptoms since the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* The data requested is not centrally collected.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[53615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase covid-19 testing capacity for (a) staff and (b) residents in care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

Protecting care home residents and staff is a top priority for the Government and this includes increasing access to testing.

We are continuing to prioritise care home testing, where we are issuing more than 100,000 tests a day to care homes across the country. Since the launch of whole care home testing, we have provided over nine million test kits to over 17,000 care homes in the United Kingdom.

8,500 specialist care homes have received orders for test kits since the start of the testing programme across the UK (5,913 in England) . Since they were eligible to apply for regular repeat testing on the 31 August, 4,576 specialist homes in England have applied for tests.

The Government has announced the addition of new Lighthouse laboratories in Newport and Charnwood to the national lab network, and work is ongoing on plans to expand the UK's laboratory capacity even further over the coming months.

The recent £500 million investment will increase testing capacity and rollout new cutting-edge testing technology to deliver rapid tests. It will help to scale up testing capacity to 500,000 tests per day by the end October.

## ■ Coronavirus: Travel

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[86644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has received on the effectiveness of the application of the overseas quarantine regulations to healthcare professionals.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 September 2020]:* The Department received feedback from a number of stakeholders and experts on the application of the quarantine regulations to healthcare professionals and they were amended as appropriate.

As of 31 July, all health and care workers entering the United Kingdom from non-exempt countries or territories are required to self-isolate for 14 days. Before this date, healthcare workers had been exempted but this was removed in order to ensure consistency with the general public and to protect public health and the wider healthcare sector. We continue to keep this position under review to ensure consistency with current evidence and developments.

**■ Dementia: Coronavirus****Bob Blackman:****[94400]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure people with dementia can have safe social contact with their family and friends during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government guidance 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): Meeting with others safely (social distancing)' provides guidance for seeing friends and family and can be used by people living with dementia and their family and friends. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

The Government also published guidance on how people can make a support bubble with another household. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household>

Local lockdown regulations exempt those providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person from the prohibition on household mixing.

In the 'Adult social care: coronavirus (COVID-19) winter plan 2020 to 2021', published on 18 September, we set out tightened infection prevention and control measures to enable visits to care home residents to continue safely. The plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-coronavirus-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021>

We published visiting guidance on 22 July 2020 which outlined how providers, based on the views of their local Director of Public Health, could take a dynamic risk-based approach to allow visiting where safe. This guidance will shortly be updated to reflect the changes announced in the winter plan and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

**■ General Practitioners: Coronavirus****Jim Shannon:****[98222]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to (a) allocate additional funding and (b) mitigate the effect on levels of demand of GP referrals to hospitals during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

In July, the Chancellor announced an extra £31.9 billion for health services, plus an additional £16.4 billion to tackle COVID-19.

The Government has also allocated £3 billion of additional funding to support the National Health Service by ensuring Nightingale hospital surge capacity is available during winter, that the NHS has ongoing access to additional independent sector capacity and providing funding to support the safe discharge of patients from NHS hospitals. The Prime Minister also committed £450 million capital funding to upgrade accident and emergency departments ahead of winter.

In August NHS England wrote to all practices about the COVID-19 Support fund for general practitioners. This is reimbursing the sector for the additional net costs incurred as a result of the pandemic; specifically absence cover, bank holiday opening and the additional costs of personal protective equipment and other consumables.

### ■ Health Professions: Vacancies

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[90149]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of NHS hospitals have had vacancies for medical staff unfilled for more than (a) one, (b) two, (c) three and (d) four years.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* The Department does not hold the data requested. The latest quarterly NHS England and NHS Improvement vacancy data published by NHS Digital can be found at the following link:

<http://digital.nhs.uk/pubs/vacancystatsprovApr15Jun20>

### ■ Health Services

**Munira Wilson:**

**[95230]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken to develop post-covid-19 plans for tackling waiting lists for the next five years for (a) hospital appointments, (b) treatment times, (c) elective surgery and (d) non-elective surgery; and how advanced that planning is.

**Edward Argar:**

The current focus is on accelerating the return of non-COVID-19 health services 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 with respect to any COVID-19 spikes locally or nationally.

First priority will be given to clinically urgent patients and then the longest waiting patients.

The Department continues to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement on the longer-term recovery of NHS services. To help facilitate this the Chancellor announced an extra £31.9 billion for health services, plus an additional £16.4 billion to tackle coronavirus.

**Hospitals: Construction**

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 293621 on hospitals: construction, what assessment his Department has made of the amount of VAT that will be payable in respect of the 40 hospital building projects.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 293621 on hospitals: construction, whether the business cases should be published.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 293621 on hospitals: construction, whether the business cases should be supported by the relevant sustainability and transformation partnership.

**Edward Argar:**

Funding in relation to the 40 hospital building projects and other capital schemes includes provision for Value Added Tax (VAT) under current VAT rules and recovery will be assessed for each scheme in line with current guidelines. Our funding allocation for the Health Infrastructure Plan has been built up by overall cost estimates of the schemes inclusive of VAT, however the amount of VAT that will be payable will be determined once schemes have been fully scoped.

National Health Service organisations undertaking investment schemes are required to produce business cases to support their decisions. Business cases are prepared by the NHS. The Department does not routinely publish business cases and the decision to publish the outline or full business cases would be for the lead NHS organisation.

Business cases will be supported by a range of stakeholders including sustainability and transformation partnerships and NHS regional teams. We have announced changes to the process for approving business cases, including looking at offering more assistance for providers in developing their business cases, and releasing some funding earlier and streamlining the approvals process for submitted cases.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 8 October 2019 to Question 293621 on hospitals: construction, whether the criteria used referred to in paragraph five of that answer will be published.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* The criteria used to arrive at the 21 projects covering 34 hospitals, identified to receive seed funding to kick start their schemes considered various aspects. The estates and facilities running costs were a factor, and backlog - in particular, Critical Infrastructure Risk, a subset of the highest risk

elements of backlog with a potential for significant impact, for example, fire safety. Other areas considered were unused and functionally unsuitable space and incidents having an impact on clinical services. Furthermore, the list was checked to ensure regions were fairly represented. All this took place with engagement through National Health Service regional teams taking their view on overall investment need and local prioritisation.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[89621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made in investigating the matters raised in the letter dated 11 August 2020 from the Rt hon Member for Chipping Barnet regarding decisions made by the Windsor Ascot & Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group, now part of NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, on the continuing care of the late Valerie-Anne Culliford.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 17 September 2020]:* The Department replied to the hon. Member's letter on 15 September 2020.

## ■ **Minor Injuries Units**

**Anthony Mangnall:** [\[97042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reopen town-based minor injuries units that were closed in the initial response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, a number of type 3 and 4 services have been temporarily closed or reconfigured due to a number of issues related to the outbreak. For example, reduction in footfall, requirement to redeploy staff due to system pressures elsewhere or sites unable to comply with social distancing guidelines.

Taking into consideration pressures associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, the re-opening and reconfiguration of services is being led locally and reviewed on an ongoing basis, supported by NHS England and NHS Improvement regions.

## ■ **NHS 111: Coronavirus**

**Kate Osamor:** [\[96968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the minimum training standards were for new call handlers recruited to the NHS 111 service in response to the covid-19 outbreak in March and April 2020.

**Kate Osamor:** [\[96969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the guidance issued to call-handlers recruited in March 2020 to NHS 111 in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

All call handlers recruited to the NHS 111 COVID-19 Response Service are trained by accredited National Health Service staff and supported by experienced clinicians. They receive mandatory training in areas including safeguarding and patient data privacy, as well as a comprehensive training course on the COVID-19 clinical pathway and must pass an assessment before taking any live calls.

COVID-19 call handlers use an internal online tool for guidance, which is continually updated as more becomes known about the virus. This guidance is subject to stringent clinical review and approval before use to ensure its accuracy.

**■ NHS Property Services****Karin Smyth:****[97628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the terms of reference for the periodic review of NHS Property Services Limited referred to by Sir Chris Wormald in his oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on 9 September 2020.

**Karin Smyth:****[97629]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the periodic review of NHS Property Services Limited referred to by Sir Chris Wormald in oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on 9 September 2020 will include an assessment of the effect of the recent trend by NHS trusts to set up wholly owned subsidiary companies to manage their estates and property.

**Edward Argar:**

Sir Chris Wormald gave his oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on their hearing into NHS Property Services Ltd (NHSPS) on 9 September 2019 following the publication of an NAO report into NHSPS in June 2019.

The scope of the review of NHS Property Services Limited is an update of the strategic context and justification for the company delivery model; a review of the Company's operational and financial performance; and both with reference to changes to the role and function of the Department since the formation of the company in 2013.

The review has been completed and the findings were published on 24 September 2020 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/results-of-department-of-health-and-social-cares-review-of-nhs-property-services>.

**■ NHS: Property****Karin Smyth:****[97630]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what process is in place to authorise the transfer to local ownership of NHS properties currently owned and managed by NHS Property Services.



**Karin Smyth:** [\[97633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many requests have been made to transfer to local ownership NHS properties owned and managed by NHS Property Services.

**Edward Argar:**

The guidance for National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts on requesting transfer of estate in the ownership of the NHS Property Companies, which includes NHS Property Services, is published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/requesting-transfers-of-estate-owned-by-nhs-property-companies>

To date, business cases have been approved for six properties. Of these, two transfers have been completed and it is anticipated that the remaining four will transfer in the coming months, subject to the terms of transfers being met. Trusts have expressed an interest in around 30 other properties and are considering how they want to proceed.

#### ■ NHS: Staff

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[95021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of giving NHS staff paid leave when they are required to self-isolate.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* It is essential for infection control purposes that staff members who should self-isolate, do so. To support this, we have issued guidance to employers to ensure all National Health Service staff, including those who would normally need to be physically present at an NHS facility to fulfill their role and who are unable to work from home, continue to receive full pay should they be required to self-isolate as a result of public health advice.

Our guidance states that employers should use their usual methods for calculating full pay using agreed processes at a local level and in line with NHS terms and conditions. The full guidance on self-isolation can be found on the NHS Employers' website at the following link:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/staff-terms-and-conditions/self-isolation>

#### ■ Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

**Daniel Kawczynski:** [\[97517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ensure the development of the Futurefit scheme at Shropshire and Telford Hospital NHS Trust sites.

**Edward Argar:**

We continue to support Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust to progress the Shropshire Future Fit scheme.

As with any capital investment there is a necessary process of assurance to ensure the outcome is as intended i.e. it transforms services for the benefit of patients, as well as providing value for money for taxpayers. This process is led by the Trust, with funding usually provided when the Full Business Case has been approved. However, funding may be provided prior to this where appropriate to speed up delivery overall.

Recent improvements have been introduced to support projects centrally, for example a streamlined business case process with joint central approvals. In addition, our work on hospital design standards also provides a stronger approach to project delivery, to ensure that funding is reaching the frontline as soon and efficiently as possible.

**■ Social Services: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:**[\[95071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Coronavirus Act 2020 analysis which states that local authorities have used Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 responsibly and complied with guidance, if he will publish the work undertaken by Chief Social Workers on which that analysis is based.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* The Department has used a number of routes to gather evidence on the use and impact of temporary easements to the Care Act 2014. Departmental officials, including the Chief Social Workers, have been working with the Principal Social Worker Network and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) to gather local intelligence. These conversations have shown that local authorities have used provisions responsibly and complied with guidance.

ADASS and Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP) have been engaging with local authorities operating under easements, and those that did not, to understand lessons learned from this period. A TLAP Insight Group has been meeting regularly to coordinate intelligence of TLAP partners on the impact and views of people accessing care and support and unpaid carers. Both organisations aim to publish their findings as soon as it is feasible.

**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[95215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review social care easements alongside the upcoming review of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, all provisions must be reviewed every two months and debated every six months. The first debate occurred on 28 September 2020. The Department has kept the Care Act

2014 easements under review and, on the basis of expert clinical and social care advice, has concluded that they have been used appropriately by local authorities and should remain in place at this time.

#### ■ Social Services: Finance

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[93645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people with mental health problems who accessed publicly funded social care in each year since 2015.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[93646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department collects on the number of people with mental health problems with unmet social care needs in England; and what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of unmet social care needs of people with mental health problems.

**Helen Whately:**

Information is not available in the format requested.

#### ■ Social Services: Qualifications

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[93642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people who have attained social care qualifications in each year since 2010.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[93643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of people working towards social care qualifications.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not hold this information centrally.

#### ■ Supported Housing: Coronavirus

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[84977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to enable care workers providing services in supported living facilities for disabled people to get themselves regularly tested for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

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

We have been piloting testing initially with Bromley, Hertfordshire and Sheffield, and we are now looking to roll out testing nationally in these settings.

As with care homes, we will use the data from the initial testing rounds to inform our retesting approach and take forward any lessons learnt from the pilots.

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

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Asylum: Contracts

**Paula Barker:**

[\[95248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any part of the asylum casework process is outsourced by her Department.

**Chris Philp:**

No part of the asylum case work process has been outsourced by her department. Asylum interviews have not been outsourced, at this stage we are only exploring the potential feasibility.

### ■ Asylum: Employment

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[97586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what methodology the Government's review of the restrictions on asylum seekers' rights to work, initiated in December 2018, will use to determine the potential fiscal effects of any changes to those rules.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum seekers are allowed to work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months or more, through no fault of their own.

Those permitted to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is based on expert advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

The Home Office is currently reviewing policy on the right to work for asylum seekers. As part of the review the Home Office will assess the fiscal effects of changes to the policy. Once the review is completed and published, the Home Office will be able to answer questions in respect of its methodology.

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[98726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Under-Secretary of State of 11 June 2020, Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill (fourth sitting), Official Report, column 123, if she will publish the evidential basis for the Government's view that unrestricted access to employment opportunities for asylum seekers may also act as an incentive for more people to choose to come here illegally.

**Chris Philp:**

There is already published, independent evidence showing that good economic conditions and essential services can create an incentive for people to choose to go to a particular country illegally. This is because it is easier to work under such conditions – and we cannot ignore that access to the labour market is among the reasons that so many people choose to come to the UK illegally, rather than remain in any of the countries through which they transit.

That is why it is important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here, who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Our wider policy could be undermined if migrants bypassed work visa Rules by lodging unfounded asylum claims here.

**■ Asylum: Housing****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[96929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she consulted public health directors in asylum dispersal areas on her recent decision to resume cessation of asylum support for people whose applications for refugee status have been refused.

**Chris Philp:**

At the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Home Office paused ending support for people who had been granted asylum, or whose claim had been refused. This was to ensure that people were not made homeless and able to follow social distancing. We said from the outset that this was a temporary measure which would be brought to an end as soon as it was safe to do so.

The Home Office has started cessations of support in a phased way which will reduce demand on the asylum system while prioritising the safety of those within the asylum system. This means moving people out of Home Office accommodation and ending subsistence payments from the Home Office.

We have been working closely with National and Local health Colleagues throughout the pandemic to inform our approach and will continue to do so.

We remain committed to working closely with the accommodation providers and communicating with local authorities to relieve pressure and capacity as much as possible and ensure that health guidance is being followed.

**■ Asylum: Slavery****Karen Bradley:**[\[R\] \[98962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training requirements her Department plans to include in outsourcing contracts for people undertaking asylum interviews to identify cases of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum Operations are exploring many options to reduce the number of outstanding asylum claims. Alongside seeking temporary resource from within the Home Office

and other government departments, we are also exploring with third-party suppliers to test the viability of whether they can deliver the support required as a temporary, short term measure. Asylum interviews have not been outsourced, and at this stage we are only exploring the potential feasibility.

Third party interviewing officers will complete a bespoke training package, delivered by the qualified asylum operations training team, that has been designed specifically to meet their needs. The course will include training specifically about modern slavery and safeguarding awareness. Anyone who conducts asylum interviews receives thorough training to ensure they are fully equipped for the role.

To guarantee governance and accountability, mechanisms are in place to provide oversight of third-party interviews, the department has a quality assurance process which assesses the quality of decisions, interviews and the application of Home Office policy. This will include those interviews conducted by third party interviewing officers

#### ■ **Crime: Coronavirus**

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[99078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the number of phone calls received by the police relating to people breaking covid-19 restrictions since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government does not hold information on how many phone calls the police have received relating to people breaking covid-19 restrictions since the start of the covid-19 outbreak

#### ■ **Crime: Victims**

**Peter Kyle:** [\[99056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of victims of crime have subsequently committed criminal offences in each of the last five years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office does not hold information on the number of victims of crime who subsequently go on to commit crimes.

#### ■ **Hamas**

**Simon Fell:** [\[88394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment the Government has made of whether Hamas is a unified organisation under a single leadership.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

## ■ Human Trafficking: Children

**Jess Phillips:**

**[96914]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Government is planning to expand Independent Child Trafficking Guardians to the local authorities that currently have none.

**Chris Philp:**

Following previous questions and the commitment given to UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), Change of Conditions information is now part of the transparency data which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-august-2020>. The relevant data is in tab CoC\_01.

Currently we cannot provide the data that you have requested because this information is not readily available and would require a more detailed examination of all Change of Conditions cases to establish whether the data requested is held and would meet the quality requirements for release.

As part of the regular publication of this data the Home Office will review whether the data can be meaningfully broken down any further. The next update of this data is due to be published in November 2020.

## ■ Immigrants: Coronavirus

**Mr Clive Betts:**

**[96771]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional support the Government will provide to people with No Recourse to Public Funds who lose their jobs during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic. We have introduced a range of measures to ensure people can stay safe and many of these are available for those with a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition.

For those whose jobs are impacted but have retained employment status, the assistance provided under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (which remains in place until 31<sup>st</sup> October) and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme are not classed as public funds and are available to all those who are legally working or self-employed respectively, including those with NRPF status and those on zero-hour contracts. Statutory sick pay and some other work-related benefits, which are also not classed as public funds and so are also available to all.

If an individual with NRPF has been working in the UK and lost their employment, if sufficient national insurance contributions have been made, they may be entitled to claim contributory Employment and Support Allowance.

We have also temporarily extended the eligibility criteria for free school meals to support some families with NRPF, in recognition of the difficulties they may be facing during these unique circumstances. More information, including eligibility details can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>. For families facing hardship, further government support is available which can be found on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support>.

Individuals whose lawful basis of stay in the UK is based on their family life or human rights can apply to have the NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

The Government has published guidance and support for migrants affected by Covid-19 on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>.

#### ■ Internet: Safety

**Catherine McKinnell:**

**[96066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times (a) he and (b) his officials have met with representatives of groups working to tackle online harms in respect of (i) anti-black racism, (ii) anti-Muslim hatred, (iii) antisemitism, (iv) homophobia, (v) child sexual exploitation and abuse and (f) terrorism in the last three months; and if he will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Across Government, we regularly engage with civil society representatives to understand the online threat communities face and to help inform our efforts to tackle online harms. We are clear that what is unacceptable offline should be unacceptable online.

Within the Home Office, we work closely with our international partners and engage with industry colleagues to discuss how platforms can best safeguard their users from terrorism, while also encouraging tech companies work together as one coordinated body through the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), to reduce the availability of terrorist content online. We are also working with civil society partners and social media platforms to encourage victim reporting of online hate crime, including hateful online abuse related to Covid-19.

Home Office officials also meet a range of stakeholders regularly to discuss the online child sexual exploitation and abuse threat and what can and is being done to tackle it. This includes technology companies, non-governmental organisations and other government partners. We have recently been engaging with relevant



organisations on the Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the government's online harms agenda.

The Government does not routinely comment on Ministerial meetings which are held as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Kirsty Blackman:** [\[98229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence which requested an urgent response from the hon. Member for Aberdeen North of 29 July 2020 regarding a constituent, HO Ref: CTS Ref M15333/00.

**Kevin Foster:**

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member's correspondence, and a response will be provided shortly.

## ■ **Migrant Workers: Coronavirus**

**Claudia Webbe:** [\[98797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to provide dependant family members of all migrant NHS workers Indefinite Leave to Remain during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

Migrants working in the NHS and wider health and care sector have made a huge contribution in tackling COVID-19 and the Government has taken un-precedented measures to ensure the sector is supported fully.

We are granting immediate indefinite leave to remain (ILR), free of any charges, to family members of migrant NHS, health and care workers who unfortunately lose their lives as a result of contracting COVID-19.

All other dependant family members of migrant NHS workers may be granted ILR if they meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

**Claudia Webbe:** [\[98798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will waive the NHS health surcharge for all migrant frontline workers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government has now exempted NHS and care workers from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge, and this is not just for the duration of the pandemic.

This is in recognition of the contribution they make to the NHS. The purpose of the surcharge is to benefit the NHS and support patient care, something NHS and care workers do directly through their work. However, it is fair to expect people arriving in the UK to work in non-health related roles to contribute to the comprehensive range of NHS services available to them from when they arrive in the UK.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Theft****Steve McCabe:** [\[98872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to convene the next meeting of the vehicle theft taskforce.

**Kit Malthouse:**

In May I convened a meeting with industry leaders and the police to start working through what more can be done collectively to tackle vehicle crime.

We are working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Vehicle Crime, through a National Vehicle Crime Working Group, to take forward a programme of work to tackle vehicle crime, overseen by the Government's Crime and Justice Taskforce. This governance structure has superseded the vehicle theft taskforce.

**■ Raves: Coronavirus****Jim Shannon:** [\[98967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to help prevent illegal raves during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kit Malthouse:**

On Friday 28 August, the Government introduced legislation to provide the police in England and Wales powers to issue a £10,000 FPN to anyone holding, or involved in the holding of, an illegal gathering of over 30 people.

Police forces also have the power to direct rave goers to leave, and failure to comply with this direction constitutes a criminal offence. Individuals who attend illegal raves can be fined £200, doubling with each offence up to a maximum of £6,400.

Forces continue to work hard to gather and share intelligence in order to detect and disrupt unlicensed music events which are purposely organised at short notice to avoid detection, and continue to engage, explain, encourage, and enforce these fines where necessary.

**■ Refugees: Resettlement****Kate Osamor:** [\[98727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugee resettlement places the Government plans to make available for each year up to and including 2026.

**Chris Philp:**

In June 2019, the Government reaffirmed the UK's commitment to refugee resettlement by announcing a new, global UK Resettlement Scheme. While we hoped to have both met our commitment to resettle 20,000 vulnerable refugees through the VPRS, and started the new scheme earlier this year, the unprecedented restrictions and pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has meant this has not

yet been possible. We are evaluating how to respond to these ongoing restrictions and pressures, but we expect to resume refugee resettlement activity when safe.

Ultimately the number of refugees we resettle every year depends on a variety of factors including local authorities' capacity for supporting refugees and the extent to which Community Sponsorship continues to thrive. We look forward to working with local communities to welcome thousands more of those in need in the years to come.

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[99107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what consultation her Department has undertaken with representatives of (a) local authorities and (b) voluntary organisations on their preparedness to accommodate refugee resettlement arrivals in response to the proposed resumption of refugee resettlement flights.

**Chris Philp:**

We maintain regular dialogue with a variety of resettlement stakeholders, including local authorities, Strategic Migration Partnerships and other support providers. To date, our resettlement schemes have been supported by over 300 local authorities across the UK, and we are extremely grateful for this support. Additionally, the successful Community Sponsorship Scheme puts in place the Government's commitment to develop a scheme to allow community groups, charities and faith groups to support refugees directly

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) related restrictions and pressures, both overseas and in the UK, it is not currently possible to undertake any refugee resettlement activity.

We continue to evaluate how to respond given these restrictions and pressures, but we expect to resume refugee resettlement activity when safe to do so.

#### ■ **Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes**

**Stuart C McDonald:**

[\[98994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers pilot scheme; and when she plans to make an announcement on its future.

**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: Uighurs**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[94472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of whether Xinjiang cotton made in forced labour camps by Uighur detainees is a product of modern slavery.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government has serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, with credible reports of forced labour. It has always been the case that, where we have concerns, we raise them, as we did on this issue on 6 October in a joint statement signed by 39 countries at the UN Third Committee. We urge all UK businesses to conduct appropriate due diligence to ensure their supply chains are free of forced labour.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 made the UK the first country to require businesses to report how they tackle modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. Section 54 of the Act was designed to empower consumers, investors, civil society and others to scrutinise the action that businesses are taking to identify and address modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

On 22 September, the Government published our response to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation, and committed to taking forward an ambitious package of changes to strengthen the Act's transparency legislation, including:

- Mandating the specific reporting topics statements must cover;
- Requiring organisations to publish their statement on the new Government digital reporting service;
- Setting a single reporting deadline on which all modern slavery statements must be published;
- Extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more;

Taking enforcement options forward in line with the ongoing development of the Single Enforcement Body for Employment rights.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Buildings: Insulation****Gareth Johnson:**[\[97544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with mortgage lenders to ensure industry-wide consistency in only requiring an EWS1 certificate for properties over 18 metres in height.

**Christopher Pincher:**

To support the valuation process for high-rise residential blocks, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors designed the EWS1 process. This is not a regulatory requirement and my Department is urging a more pragmatic approach, especially for lower rise blocks. The form should only be used where there is clear need, and where no reasonable assurances or regulatory evidence exists to support valuations. The Building Safety Minister has met with lenders and UK Finance on a number of occasions and will meet with them this month to seek assurance on progress.

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[98982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure (a) mortgage lenders and (b) insurers do not refuse (i) mortgage applications or (ii) valuations due to requests for (A) external wall fire reviews and (B) the production of EWS1 certificates on buildings outside of the scope for these inspections, as defined by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 process was introduced by industry to assist in the valuation of high-rise residential buildings for mortgage purposes. Not all lenders request an EWS1 form and the Government does not support a blanket approach in EWS1 for lower risk properties. The Department is 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.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[99007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 84342 on High Rise Flats: Insulation, what data the Government is collecting on the average length of time taken to complete the EWS1 process.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The External Wall System form (EWS1) was introduced by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) to assist in valuation of high-rise residential buildings for mortgage purposes. The Department does not hold this information.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[99071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that building owners meet a standard of service in communication with residents throughout the process of the remediation of dangerous cladding.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is taking steps through the Building Safety Bill to give residents a stronger voice in the system, ensuring their concerns about safety issues are not ignored. There will be increased opportunities for residents to have their say on decisions made about the safety of their building, including through a new streamlined complaints route direct to the new regulator. In addition, building owners applying to the Private Sector Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) Fund to remediate a high-rise residential building with unsafe ACM cladding or applying to the Building Safety Fund to remediate unsafe non-ACM cladding are expected inform leaseholders and residents of the nature of the works they intend to carry out and should provide regular updates to leaseholders and residents on the progress of their funding application and remediation works.

**■ Caravan Sites: Coronavirus****Andrea Leadsom:** [\[98963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to review the regulations on the occupation of caravan sites during the winter months in response to the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

There are no specific planning regulations controlling the occupation of caravan sites during the winter months. Occupation during these months may be subject to planning conditions as part of the planning permission for the site. The Government issued a Written Ministerial Statement on 14 July which says that local planning authorities should prioritise planning applications which vary conditions to extend the operation of caravan sites beyond the usual summer season. In doing so, they should have regard to any advice from the Environment Agency where there may be a risk of flooding on a site, whilst considering the benefits of longer opening season times to local economies as they recover from the impact of Covid-19.

**■ Covid-19 Rough Sleeping Taskforce: Public Appointments****Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[99010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to appoint a successor to Dame Louise Casey as leader of the Rough Sleeping Taskforce.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The COVID-19 Rough Sleeping Taskforce was set up to ensure that as many people as possible who were brought in off the streets in this pandemic do not return to the streets.

Dame Louise Casey led the Taskforce through its emergency phase, tackling the immediate issues and establishing a clear roadmap for continuing this vital work.

The Government will continue to drive forwards this important work.

**■ Evictions: Coronavirus****Jon Trickett:** [\[97457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason renters who were issued eviction notices from 26 March to 28 August 2020 are not entitled to a six month notice period.

**Christopher Pincher:**

It is always important to consider retrospective effect when creating new legislation – we must strike a balance that is fair to landlords and tenants.

Thanks to provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020, landlords serving notice of their intention to seek possession before 29 August would have been required to give their tenants at least three months' notice.

Those who received notice before 29 August were also protected from eviction by the suspension of possession proceedings until 20 September - and will continue to be protected by new court rules introduced on 20 September and the prioritisation of the most serious cases.

In addition, bailiffs have been asked to ensure that no enforcement of possession orders will proceed where local lockdown measures are in force which restrict access to premises – ensuring tenants remain protected. Furthermore, bailiffs should not enforce possession orders over the Christmas period, other than in the most serious of cases.

### ■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

**Mike Amesbury:**

[98286]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking in the data collection exercise on high-rise residential buildings to ensure the accuracy of results.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Local authorities and housing associations have been asked to undertake a data collection exercise on residential buildings 18 metre and over in height to identify their external wall systems. The responsibility for collecting and providing information for the data collection lies with local authorities and housing associations. Local authorities have powers under Section 235 of the Housing Act 2004 to require building owners to provide documentation. This may be used to require information on the external wall system of a building. New burdens funding has been provided to local authorities to offer support for the completion of the External Wall Systems data collection.

**Shabana Mahmood:**

[98933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to provide additional fire safety advice, further to the guidance issued by the National Fire Chiefs Council, to leaseholders and tenants living in high-rise properties that have not yet had remediation works undertaken to remove flammable cladding.

**Christopher Pincher:**

My Department has no plans to issue additional advice to that provided by the National Fire Chiefs Council. The latest version of "Guidance to support a temporary change to a simultaneous evacuation strategy in purpose-built blocks of flats" was published by the NFCC on 1 October and can be found on-line at [www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-evacuation-guidance](http://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Simultaneous-evacuation-guidance). General advice to leaseholders is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme-other-fire-safety-concerns>.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Safety Measures

**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[98931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the updated guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council on simultaneous evacuation strategies for high-rise flats; and what steps the Government is taking to communicate that guidance to people living in those buildings.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We welcome the publication of the revised simultaneous evacuation guidance produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and published on their website. The revised guidance reflects best practice and emphasises that these are short term measures. The guidance encourages greater use of more cost-effective measures such as alarm systems to replace or reduce dependency on waking watch wherever possible. The NFCC has engaged with leaseholders during the drafting process to ensure the revised guidance reflects their views in as far as it was possible to do so. The Department regularly engages with leaseholders and others with an interest in building safety and will ensure that there is awareness of the revised guidance. In addition, the Department intends to publish data on Waking Watch costs shortly. The revised NFCC guidance will be communicated as part of that publication.

**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[98932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his Department's strategy is for communicating updated building safety guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council to leaseholders and tenants living in high-rise properties.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We work closely with the Home Office and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) on all aspects of building safety. The NFCC publish a full range of guidance on their website. The NFCC has engaged directly with leaseholders on building safety, including on the development of their revised guidance on simultaneous evacuation. In addition, the Department regularly meets with leaseholders and others with an interest in building safety. We also host a page on the gov.uk website: Fire safety of your building: advice for tenants and residents - which provides a link to NFCC advice on high rise safety for residents.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-of-your-building-advice-for-tenants-and-residents> .

## ■ High Rise Flats: Shared Ownership

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[99008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of flats in high-rise residential multi-occupied buildings of 18 metres or more in height, or more than six storeys (whichever is reached first), which are in shared ownership.



**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department does not hold this data. The number of high-rise residential multi-occupied buildings of 18 metres or more in height, or more than six storeys (whichever is reached first) in England is published in the Building Safety Programme: monthly data release. The 2017-18 English Housing Survey estimates that shared ownership properties make up a very small proportion of all owners (1 per cent or 157,000 households).

**Housing: Insulation****Gareth Johnson:**[\[97543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of residential sales currently unable to proceed as a result of the lack of an EWS1 certificate.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 form was introduced by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) to assist in valuation of high-rise residential buildings for mortgage purposes. Each lender has their own policies regarding valuation requirements. Some do not require an EWS1 form, and other seek them for a greater range of buildings than the process was designed for. Where requested the EWS1 assessments are commissioned by individual building owners and so the Department does not hold data on their use. The Department is working to estimate the potential impact of these requests on leaseholders and sales, and is urging a pragmatic approach by lenders and valuers, especially for lower rise blocks.

**Gareth Johnson:**[\[97545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to assist owners of commonhold properties in accessing flammability assessments and EWS1 certificates.

**Christopher Pincher:**

It is the responsibility of the building owner, whether freeholder or common holder, to ensure their building is safe. This includes ensuring that there is an up-to-date fire risk assessment. To support the valuation process for high-rise residential blocks, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors designed the EWS1 process. This is not a regulatory requirement and not all lenders require it. My department is urging a more pragmatic approach, especially for lower rise blocks.

**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[99108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the equity of requiring residents in buildings with flammable cladding to pay for a fire watch by patrolling security staff.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department has been investigating what can be done to reduce the cost of Waking Watch. We will shortly publish data on Waking Watch costs so that there is

transparency on the range of costs and comparisons can be clearly made. In addition, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has published updated guidance for buildings where *Stay Put* has been suspended, emphasising that these are short term measures and encouraging greater use of more cost-effective measures such as alarm systems to replace or reduce dependency on Waking Watch wherever possible. The Government is providing £1.6 billion of public subsidy to ensure remediation of high rise buildings with unsafe cladding happens at pace and so residents and their homes are made safe for the long term, and interim measures, such as a Waking Watch, are no longer required.

### ■ Leasehold: Service Charges

**Gareth Johnson:**

[\[97546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to protect existing leaseholders from increasing service charges.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The law is clear that service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, they must be of a reasonable standard.

Leaseholders may make an application to the First-tier Tribunal to make a determination on the reasonableness of their service charges.

Where disputes arise or there is uncertainty over costs, leaseholders may benefit from seeking free initial advice via the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE), the specialist advisory body funded by the Department to provide assistance to leaseholders.

### ■ Multiple Occupation: Urban Areas

**Paula Barker:**

[\[97739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the long-term effects of large concentrations of HMOs in urban centres.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The department has not made an assessment of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in urban centres. However, we have given local authorities strong powers to regulate standards in HMOs.

These powers include HMO licensing, penalties of up to £30,000 for breaches of the law, rent repayment orders and, for the worst offenders, banning orders.

Local authorities also have additional powers through the planning system to regulate the change of use of properties into HMOs. Any change of use from a dwelling-house to a larger HMO housing of more than six people requires an application for planning permission.

Permitted development rights, which are set at a national level, allow a dwelling-house to change use to an HMO for up to six people who share facilities, without the

need for a planning application. This process enables the change of use without placing unnecessary burdens on landlords and local planning authorities and we have no current plans to change this.

However, where there is sufficient evidence that it is necessary to protect local amenities or the well-being of the area, local planning authorities may withdraw a permitted development right in a specific area using an Article 4 direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, after consultation with the local community.

## ■ Recreation Spaces: Planning

**Ben Everitt:**

[\[97749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the statement in the Planning for the Future white paper that the planning system needs to be better at unlocking growth and opportunity in all parts of the country, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate provision of green space.

**Christopher Pincher:**

In *Planning for the Future*, one key proposal is that future local plans would put all land into one of three categories: areas for growth, for renewal or for protection. That proposal makes clear that, under such a system, local authorities would use the plan-making process to earmark valued green space, which need not only be designated land such as Local Green Space or Green Belt, for protection.

We will expect local authorities to promote the provision and retention of green space, parks and other green infrastructure in their plan-making and decisions. Sound planning, in line with the policies in our National Planning Policy Framework, will continue to protect sites of biodiversity, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitat; recognise the character and beauty of the countryside; and take account of all the benefits from natural capital and ecosystems.

## ■ Sheltered Housing

**Damian Green:**

[\[97447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received on setting up a Housing with Care task force; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government welcomes the work of specialist older people's housing providers in building homes and meeting the needs of our aging population. We are already engaging with specialist providers as we take forwards our plan to build the homes our country needs, including our reform and modernisation of the planning system. Ministers and officials will continue to engage with this sector going forwards.

## ■ Social Rented Housing: Construction

**Thangam Debonnaire:** [\[99006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government's Affordable Homes programme and his Department's Guidance: Apply for affordable housing funding, published on 10 September 2020 and his Department's press release, Jenrick unveils huge £12 billion boost for affordable homes, published on 8 September 2020, whether grant levels for social rented homes in areas of high affordability challenge will be higher than grant levels for affordable rent in those areas.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Affordable Homes Programme is delivered through Homes England and the GLA in London. Each bid into the programme is evaluated on its own merits and based on the value for money of the scheme as a whole. The Government does not set grant rates for the programme, however we would expect grant rates to be lower in areas where it is cheaper to build and who face lower affordability challenges.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Trade Agreements

**Stephanie Peacock:** [\[907259\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with UK trade partners on maintaining International Labour Organisation standards in future trade agreements.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

While the detail of free trade agreements is reserved for formal negotiations, we have committed in our public mandates to protect our labour standards as the British people would expect. These include health and safety, minimum wages and action on modern slavery. We will continue to uphold Britain's high standards and remain an active member of the International Labour Organisation.

### ■ Trade Agreements: Environment Protection

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[907251\]](#)

What discussions she has had with UK trade partners on maintaining environmental protection standards in trade agreements.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government is committed to meeting its ambitious environmental objectives, as we demonstrated last year by becoming the first major country to enshrine our Net Zero commitment into legislation.

We're exploring environmental provisions in the design of our Free Trade Agreements to secure Britain's high environmental standards. Of course, the precise details of free trade agreements are a matter for the formal negotiations. We will lay the full treaty text before Parliament at the end of the negotiations to enable proper scrutiny.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[907256\]](#)

What discussions she has had with UK trade partners on maintaining environmental protection standards in trade agreements.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government is committed to meeting its ambitious environmental objectives, as we demonstrated last year by becoming the first major country to enshrine our Net Zero commitment into legislation.

We're exploring environmental provisions in the design of our Free Trade Agreements to secure Britain's high environmental standards. Of course, the precise details of free trade agreements are a matter for the formal negotiations. We will lay the full treaty text before Parliament at the end of the negotiations to enable proper scrutiny.

**■ Whisky: USA****John Nicolson:**[\[77681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she has taken to help end tariffs applied to Scotch Whisky exports to the US.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government continues to lobby the US and the EU for the settlement of the Airbus/Boeing disputes and the removal of tariffs. The UK has held multiple meetings and calls with the highest levels of the US administration, including with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer; US Secretary of the Treasury, Steve Mnuchin; US Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross; and US Ambassador Woody Johnson. In early August, Liz Truss visited the United States and successfully argued against any additional tariffs disproportionately impacting the UK. The UK is pushing both the EU and the US to settle these disputes.

**■ Women's Rights: Australasia****Jim Shannon:**[\[97576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will ensure future trade deals with (a) New Zealand and (b) Australia include protections on women's rights.

**Greg Hands:**

Trade is a powerful force for opening up opportunities. The Department for International Trade is seeking to work with our trading partners to increase women's ability to fully access the benefits of these agreements.

The inclusion of Women's Economic Empowerment provisions in trade agreements features in the Government's manifesto as part of our broader agenda for 'free and fair trade' as well as in our public negotiation objectives for the Australia and New Zealand agreements, published on 17<sup>th</sup> June. We have discussed these objectives with Australia and New Zealand in our negotiating rounds to date.

**JUSTICE****■ Lowdham Grange Prison: Coronavirus**

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the source of the outbreak of covid-19 at HMP Lowdham Grange.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) staff and (b) prisoners have tested positive for covid-19 at HMP Lowdham Grange in each of the last five weeks.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what infection control measures have been put in place to control the covid-19 outbreak at HMP Lowdham Grange.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the increase in covid-19 cases at HMP Lowdham Grange, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of isolation compartmentalisation capacity at that prison.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The safety of staff and prisoners remains paramount. We have introduced robust measures, based on public health advice, to limit the spread of Covid-19 in custody, and a multi-agency Outbreak Control Team is leading the response to the outbreak at HMP Lowdham Grange.

At present, the original source of the outbreak is not certain.

Data on positive test results for staff and prisoners at HMP Lowdham Grange, based on their own management information and that has not been verified centrally, was released locally by Serco on 6 October. This confirmed that there had been 116 positive infections, including 77 prisoners and 39 members of staff.

Verified data on the number of staff, including non-directly employed staff, and prisoners that have tested positive for Covid-19 in September and October is due to be published in November, as part of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) national Covid-19 statistics and workforce statistics on gov.uk.

The Director at HMP Lowdham Grange is being supported by HMPPS to implement the establishment outbreak control plan. The response is being managed through the formal structure of a multi-agency Outbreak Control Team, including public health communicable disease, epidemiology and health protection specialists, HMPPS, Serco, Public Health England and the National Health Service.

The team has reviewed the control measures, and HMP Lowdham Grange is currently operating a Stage 4 regime. This involves strong regime restrictions to support social distancing, and the suspension of social visits. The collection of medication, canteen, meals, taking showers and daily exercise are all being managed

appropriately by staff, and face coverings have been introduced for prisoners. There are also no transfers taking place into or out of the prison. Additional restrictions on the regime are currently in place to allow for the testing of all prisoners and the release of results.

All staff at HMP Lowdham Grange have been tested, as advised by the Outbreak Control Team. Any member of staff that develops symptoms of Covid-19, has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive or has symptoms associated with Covid-19 is sent home and advised to have a further test. The establishment continues to isolate prisoners displaying symptoms, as set out in the HMPPS compartmentalisation strategy.

### ■ **Prison Officers: Crimes of Violence**

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[98987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of violent incidents against prison officers in each prison in England in each of last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government publishes data about violence in prisons every quarter. The latest figures for assaults on staff can be found in table 8e of the *Safety in custody summary tables to March 2020*, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-march-2020>. They are broken by year, month and prison.

We will never tolerate violence against our hard-working staff, which is why we are spending £100 million to bolster prison security and clamp down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars. This money will fund tough airport-style security, body scanners and phone-blocking technology.

We are also giving officers tools like PAVA pepper spray and body-worn cameras to make their jobs safer.

Our Assaults on Emergency Workers Act increased the maximum penalty for those who attack prison officers to 12 months, and we recently announced we will double the penalty further to two years.

### ■ **Repossession Orders: Coronavirus**

**Thangam Debonnaire:**

[99005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to section 1.20 of his Department's Guidance for landlords and tenants, updated on 21 September 2020, when he plans to issue guidance to bailiffs to clarify that no enforcement of possession orders should proceed where local measures are in place to protect public health.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government is clear that evictions should not be carried out in areas that are subject to a local lockdown that includes a restriction on gatherings in homes. This position has been set out in HMCTS's operational guidance for County Court bailiffs

and the High Court Enforcement Officers' Association has confirmed to the Lord Chancellor that its members will also adhere to this approach.

### ■ Youth Custody: Crimes of Violence and Self-harm

**Peter Kyle:** [\[99053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) assaults and (b) self-harm incidents have occurred in youth custodial settings since 23 March 2020.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The information requested will be published via Gov.uk in future youth justice statistics publications.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: Public Appointments

**Simon Hoare:** [\[99048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to section 73(4) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is representative of the community in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland are made on merit following an open and transparent process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). All stages of the process are overseen by an independent panel member. In order to reach potentially under-represented groups, the appointments for which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible are advertised widely online, in the local press in Northern Ireland and promoted through stakeholder networks. In addition, as part of the Northern Ireland Office's commitments under the Disability Confident Scheme, a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the job are invited to interview.

### ■ Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission: Public Appointments

**Simon Hoare:** [\[99049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to section 68(3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is representative of the community in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Appointments to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission are made on merit following an open and transparent process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). All stages of the process are overseen by an independent panel member. In order to reach potentially under-represented groups, the appointments for which the Secretary of State for Northern



Ireland is responsible are advertised widely online, in the local press in Northern Ireland and promoted through stakeholder networks. In addition, as part of the Northern Ireland Office's commitments under the Disability Confident Scheme, a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the job are invited to interview.

## ■ **Parades Commission: Public Appointments**

**Simon Hoare:**

[\[99050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to Schedule 1 to the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Parades Commission of Northern Ireland is representative of the community in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Appointments to the Parades Commission of Northern Ireland are made on merit following an open and transparent process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). All stages of the process are overseen by an independent panel member. In order to reach potentially under-represented groups, the appointments for which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible are advertised widely online, in the local press in Northern Ireland and promoted through stakeholder networks. In addition, as part of the Northern Ireland Office's commitments under the Disability Confident Scheme, a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the job are invited to interview.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ **Cycling**

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[98984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of cycling on (a) physical health, (b) mental health and (c) the environment.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Cycling and walking deliver a range of health, economic and environmental benefits. These are detailed in the Prime Minister's Plan for cycling and walking ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england)) published on 28 July which sets an ambition for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030. The plan includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over the next 5 years, which is the largest ever boost for cycling and walking, and which will deliver transformational change.

A more detailed consideration of the effects of cycling and walking informed the development of the Department's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Model, the technical reports and annexes of which were published on gov.uk on 7 February (

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-active-travel-investment-models> )

## ■ Ferries

**Sarah Olney:** [99069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding (a) has been allocated since July 2019 and (b) he plans to allocate from 5 October 2020 to 31 December 2020 to contingency ferries in the event that the UK does not reach an agreement on future trading relations with the EU.

**Rachel Maclean:**

For the period since July 2019 £13,769,940 has been spent on additional freight capacity. The Government is currently procuring additional freight capacity for the period from December 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 to June 2021. Once this process is concluded the value of the contracts will be placed in the public domain.

## ■ Railways: Concessions

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [99084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on young people of the decision not to refund or extend railcards for (a) 16-25 railcard holders and (b) 16-17 Saver card holders.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Railcards are sold and managed by the Rail Delivery Group on behalf of the rail industry. While no specific assessment has been made of the losses incurred by those aged 16 to 25 Railcard holders and 16 to 17 Saver Railcard holders, many customers can make back their initial investment with the savings resulting from a single journey, or a small number of rail journeys.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [99085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason railcard holders who were instructed to shield are unable to claim refunds or extensions to their railcard.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department recognises that Railcard holders have been unable to use their cards while travel restrictions were in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We took immediate action at the outbreak of the pandemic to support passengers and the rail industry by keeping the services people depend on running, protecting jobs, delivering refunds and removing charges for cancellations. However, many passengers are able to recover the cost of their railcard in a single trip. Having carefully considered the situation, we can confirm that railcards will remain non-refundable and will not be extended.

## ■ Roads: Construction

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[99070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's £27 billion road building programme on (a) overall road traffic volumes and (b) congestion on unimproved roads linked to roads funded under that programme.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Through the second Road Investment Strategy, the Government is investing £27.4 billion in the operation, maintenance, renewal and enhancement of England's Strategic Road Network (SRN) between 2020 and 2025. This investment focuses on both making journeys safer and more reliable, and minimising the SRN's effects on adjacent local communities and environments.

The impact of enhancements on future traffic flows in an area is considered on a scheme by scheme basis as options are assessed and developed, including through consultation with local highway authorities and other interested parties. World-leading traffic models that provide a consistent approach to traffic modelling of the SRN have been developed and used by Highways England to forecast how traffic flows and speeds change following infrastructure investment. They take account of the latest evidence on how increased road capacity impacts on traffic volumes and economic welfare (the concept of 'induced demand'). They include a representation of not just the SRN but also the local road network to model wider impacts, such as congestion.

We continue to build on our evidence base to ensure that we have the most robust methodology possible for assessing the induced effects of increasing road capacity.

## ■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[97690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on a green shipping fund ahead of COP 26.

**Robert Courts:**

Officials have undertaken extensive research, in consultation with the shipping sector and other Government Departments, on the level of investment required for the UK's domestic maritime sector to achieve net zero by 2050. This research had been published in support of the Clean Maritime Plan on GOV.UK.

## ■ Shipping: Finance

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[97689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the shipping sector and (b) Cabinet colleagues on a green shipping fund, in advance of COP26.

**Robert Courts:**

Officials have undertaken extensive research, in consultation with the shipping sector and other Government Departments, on the level of investment required for the UK's domestic maritime sector to achieve net zero by 2050. This research had been published in support of its Clean Maritime Plan on GOV.UK.

**Thameslink Railway Line: Maidstone****Damian Green:**[\[98860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timescale is for the introduction of improvements to the Thameslink service to Maidstone East.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Officials continue to work with the industry to resolve the issues which have so far prevented a regular service from being introduced and to provide passengers in Maidstone with a regular all-day service to the City at the earliest opportunity.

**Transport: Hydrogen****Patricia Gibson:**[\[99013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the role of hydrogen in the strategy to decarbonise transport.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Government is committed to tackling climate change and delivering our net zero commitment and Ministers regularly discuss this with Cabinet colleagues.

Last week we announced that Tees Valley will be the UK's first Hydrogen Transport Hub, bringing together industry, academia and government to accelerate UK's take up of green hydrogen. This aligns with wider plans to driver forward progress by funding 19 new hydrogen powered refuse trucks in Glasgow and starting trials for Britain's first hydrogen powered train. We are committed to exploring all the options for green hydrogen across freight, buses, trains, maritime and aviation and ensuring the UK can leads the world in its deployment and use in transport applications.

**Transport: Regulation****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[98898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the findings of his Future of Transport Regulatory Review consultation.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government is committed to the Future of Transport Regulatory Review which asks fundamental questions about how transport is regulated, to achieve a flexible, forward-looking regulatory framework that is fit for the future. We received detailed feedback to our recent Call for Evidence, despite the backdrop of a very challenging time for many organisations and individuals. We want to make progress as quickly as we can and aim to set out the next steps as soon as possible.

## ■ Transport: Sustainable Development

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[98245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage people to switch to more sustainable transport; and if he will introduce a scrappage scheme to remove the most polluting vehicles from use.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In February the Prime Minister announced £5 billion of funding for investment in local buses and cycling and walking infrastructure – £250 million of which was made available in 2020/21 for pop-up bike lanes, with protected space for cycling, wider pavements, safer junctions, and cycle and bus-only corridors – and we are accelerating the transition to zero emission vehicles, with around £2.5bn funding for plug-in vehicle grants and charging infrastructure.

The Government has no plans at this stage to introduce a vehicle scrappage scheme.

## TREASURY

### ■ Bank Services: Older People

**Patrick Grady:** [\[99001\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to ensure that older people are not disproportionately disadvantaged by (a) banks and (b) other financial organisations offering preferential interest rates to online-only customers.

**Patrick Grady:** [\[99003\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the proportionality of the effect on older people of banks offering preferential interest rates to online-only customers.

**John Glen:**

The pricing of financial products remains a commercial decision for firms, in which the Government does not seek to intervene.

UK banks' and building societies' treatment of their customers is governed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in its Principles for Businesses. This includes a general requirement for firms to provide a prompt, efficient and fair service to all their customers.

More broadly, protecting vulnerable customers, such as those with low digital skills, is a priority for the FCA. The FCA requires firms to identify particularly vulnerable customers, and to take these customers into consideration when designing products.

Further to this, the FCA recently concluded a guidance consultation for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers. While many firms have made significant progress on this, the Treasury and the FCA want to see the fair treatment of vulnerable consumers being taken seriously by all firms so that vulnerable consumers receive consistently fair treatment.

The Treasury continues to work with firms and the FCA to ensure that the needs of vulnerable customers are met.

#### ■ **Bounce Back Loan Scheme**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[99080\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the banking sector operating the coronavirus Bounce Back Loan on potential difficulties customers have experienced in accessing their accounts upon applying for that financial support.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[99081\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has received representations on banks closing customer accounts after applying for the coronavirus Bounce Back Loan scheme.

**John Glen:**

Treasury officials are in regular contact with the banking sector to solicit their feedback on BBLs, as well as all the other supporting measures implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As of 20th September, over 1.2 million facilities have been approved through BBLs representing a value of more than £38bn.

Decisions about what products are offered to specific businesses remain commercial decisions for banks and building societies, in which it would be inappropriate for the Government to intervene.

The Government believes that any dispute arising between banks and their customers is usually best resolved by the parties involved. If a customer wishes to pursue a complaint, their first recourse is through the bank's official customer complaints procedure. The Financial Conduct Authority requires banks to properly investigate all complaints and, through ongoing supervision, it continues to monitor the banks' complaint handling processes.

If a customer is not satisfied with their bank's response to their complaint, then they may wish to consider an approach to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). The FOS provides a free, independent dispute resolution service for bank customers, including eligible small businesses.

#### ■ **Bowling: VAT**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[98973\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 81908 on Bowling: Coronavirus, whether bowling alleys qualify for the temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

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

Hospitality for the purposes of this relief includes the supply of food and non-alcoholic beverages from restaurants, cafes and pubs for consumption on those premises. It also includes the supply of hot food and non-alcoholic hot beverages to take away. Where a bowling alley provides such hospitality, it will benefit from the reduced rate, although admission to a bowling alley itself is not eligible. Further information on this can be found in VAT Guidance: reduced rate for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catering-takeaway-food-and-vat-notice-7091>.

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

**■ Cider: Excise Duties****Wera Hobhouse:****[98264]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reducing the duty on cider with an alcohol content below 7 per cent.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the valuable contribution of the cider industry to the UK economy, and has in recent years provided considerable economic support. Since 2014, the Government has ended the cider duty escalator, and has frozen or cut cider duties at five of the last six Budgets. Cuts and freezes to alcohol duties since 2013 have cost the Treasury £6.2 billion in revenue.

**■ Clean Air Zones****Helen Hayes:****[97653]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will create a national Clean Air Fund to fund cities implementing Clean Air Zones.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

We are determined to tackle air pollution given its significant negative impact on public health, the economy and the environment. Air quality has improved significantly over recent decades and will continue to improve thanks to the action we have already taken.

The Government has committed £880m to support Local Authorities deliver their Air Quality plans. Alongside this, the Government has also recently announced a £2 billion package to create a new era for cycling and walking – the largest ever boost for cyclists and pedestrians – which includes £225 million to help local authorities create pop-up cycle lanes and reallocate road space.

**■ Devolution: Finance****Alan Brown:** [\[99024\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish an eighth edition of the Statement of funding policy: funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly.

**Steve Barclay:**

The eighth edition of the Statement of Funding Policy will be published alongside the Comprehensive Spending Review, which will conclude in the Autumn.

**■ Duty Free Allowances: Scotland****Owen Thompson:** [\[99047\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) conduct and (b) publish an economic impact assessment of the Government's plans for duty-free and tax-free goods to airports announced in September 2020 on Scottish destinations for tourist shopping.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

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

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

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

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

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



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

### ■ Economic Crime Strategic Board: Public Appointments

**Dan Carden:** [\[99096\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to appoint a person independent of the private sector and Government to sit on the Economic Crime Strategic Board (ECSB); and if he will review the composition of the ECSB to ensure it is representative of (a) non-government organisations, (b) academia, (c) victims' groups and (d) civil society.

**Dan Carden:** [\[99097\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the transparency of the appointment process to the Economic Crime Strategic Board (ECSB); and whether a register of interests of ECSB members is publicly available.

**John Glen:**

The Economic Crime Strategic Board (ECSB) is co-chaired by the Chancellor and the Home Secretary and its membership comprises senior representatives from the organisations most critical to tackling economic crime. This includes senior officials, heads of law enforcement and representatives from the private sector (including from the legal and accountancy, insurance, estate agency and financial sectors).

The agendas and minutes for the ECSB meetings as well as the list of attendees are publicly available and can be found on [gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/crime-prevention](http://gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law/crime-prevention).

The Government has worked with Civil Society Organisations to form the independently run Civil Society Organisations Steering Group, which has met twice since its inception in March 2020. This body provides a mechanism for civil society organisations to comment on the delivery of the Economic Crime Plan and the work of the ECSB and to proactively raise issues which it thinks the board should consider. The ECSB receives the minutes from the latest meeting.

### ■ Financial Ombudsman Service: Parliamentary Scrutiny

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[97453\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps democratically elected representatives are able to take to hold the financial ombudsmen to account.

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[97454\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department takes to ensure that appointed financial ombudsmen operate with (a) fairness, (b) due diligence and (c) impartiality.

**John Glen:**

The freedom of the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) to operate is strictly governed by the framework of duties set out in legislation by Parliament. The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 required the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to establish the FOS as an independent body which can resolve disputes quickly and with minimum formality. The FOS must make determinations on complaints by reference to what is (in the opinion of the ombudsman) fair and reasonable in all the circumstances of the case. The FOS and the FCA maintain arrangements for the investigation of complaints, and their decisions can also be subject to judicial review.

The Government believes that it is vitally important that the FOS should be accountable for its performance and the quality of its work. The FCA's appointment of the Chair of the FOS is subject to approval by the Treasury, on behalf of the Government. The FOS is also required to send a copy of its annual accounts to the Comptroller and Auditor General, whose report must then be laid before Parliament by the Treasury.

To ensure transparency, the FOS must also publish reports of determinations (unless, in the ombudsman's opinion it would be inappropriate). This ensures that the public, including Parliament, have a full and balanced picture of the decisions the FOS reaches.

**■ Free Zones****Mr Simon Clarke:**[\[907220\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of free ports to support the UK's global trade after the end of the transition period.

**Steve Barclay:**

The government plans to establish Freeports across the UK. These 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 Freeports consultation response, published on Wednesday 7 October, sets out in more detail how Freeports will unleash the potential of ports across the country.

**Peter Gibson:**[\[907223\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of free ports on the level of international trade.

**Steve Barclay:**

The government plans to establish Freeports across the UK. These 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 Freeports consultation response, published on Wednesday 7 October, sets out in more detail how Freeports will unleash the potential of ports across the country.

## ■ National Savings: Interest Rates

**Martyn Day:** [\[98723\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of enabling National Savings and Investments to reverse the recent reductions to its savings rates.

**John Glen:**

NS&I must balance the interests of savers, taxpayers and the broader financial services sector.

After 6 months of offering often market-leading rates, NS&I has announced interest rate reductions that will realign it with the rest of the retail savings market.

NS&I's Net Financing target for 2020-21 was revised from £6 billion to £35 billion to reflect the Government's funding requirements during the Covid-19 pandemic. NS&I raised £14.5 billion in Net Financing from April to June. Demand for NS&I products has remained at similarly high levels since then, making rate reductions necessary.

With gilt yields currently at very low levels, government financing raised through NS&I is much more expensive than that raised through gilt issuance. It is important that HM Treasury takes into account taxpayer value considerations when making financing decisions.

## ■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus

**Tom Tugendhat:** [\[97639\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to extend the Expanded Retail Discount scheme into the 2021-22 financial year.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

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

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

## ■ Public Expenditure: Scotland

**Alan Brown:** [\[99025\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding has been allocated to Scotland as a result of the programmes listed as 100 per cent comparable for the purposes of Barnett consequential in Table C.16 of the Statement of funding policy:

funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly, seventh edition, published November 2015.

**Steve Barclay:**

A breakdown of all the funding provided to the devolved administrations since the 2015 Spending Review can be found in the Block Grant Transparency publication from July 2020 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/block-grant-transparency-july-2020>).

In addition to the £6bn of resource funding in relation to Covid-19 allocated at Main Estimates 2020-21, and therefore included in the Block Grant Transparency publication, the UK government has guaranteed the devolved administrations will receive at least an additional £6.7bn this year.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme**

**Tracy Brabin:**

[99068]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in receipt of support from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme live in (a) areas of intervention and (b) areas of enhanced support or concern.

**Jesse Norman:**

The information requested is not available.

HMRC have published tables showing the geographical distribution of the numbers of individuals claiming the first SEISS grant by 31 July 2020 and the second SEISS grant by 31 August 2020. The tables include claims by parliamentary constituency and local authority: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-august-2020> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-september-2020>.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Yorkshire and the Humber**

**Tracy Brabin:**

[99066]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people are receiving funding from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme in Yorkshire and the Humber.

**Tracy Brabin:**

[99067]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of successful applications to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme are from people in Yorkshire and the Humber.

**Jesse Norman:**

By 31 July 2020, 187,000 individuals from Yorkshire and the Humber had claimed the first SEISS grant. This is seven per cent of all claims made for the first SEISS grant.

By 31 August 2020, 147,000 individuals from Yorkshire and the Humber had claimed the second SEISS grant. This is seven per cent of all claims made for the second SEISS grant.

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

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**James Wild:** [\[99136\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many individuals settled disguised remuneration tax liability by the 30 September 2020 deadline; and how many individuals were in the settlement process for disguised remuneration tax liability at the time the publication of Sir Amyas Morse's Loan Charge review.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC are currently compiling, analysing and assuring the relevant settlement data up to 30 September 2020.

At the time of the independent review of the Loan Charge, about 12,000 employers and individuals still had the opportunity to keep clear of the Loan Charge by concluding settlement, having provided all the relevant information to HMRC by 5 April 2019.

## ■ Taxation: Treaties

**Dan Carden:** [\[99098\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 96180 on Taxation, whether the publication of aggregate statistics received by HMRC from countries participating in information exchange on financial accounts is prohibited by treaty.

**Jesse Norman:**

Statistical information in respect of information received from an identifiable jurisdiction is subject to treaty confidentiality provisions.

## WALES

### ■ Regional Planning and Development: North Wales and North West

**Dr James Davies:** [\[98254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps he is taking to engage with (a) the devolved Administrations and (b) local authorities on regional support for the functional economy of North Wales and Mersey Dee.

**Simon Hart:**

The UK Government regularly meets with the Welsh Government and local authorities to discuss support for regional economies in Wales. I wrote to Cllr Mark Pritchard, Chair of the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) on 28 September 2020, and met with him on 6 October 2020, to offer our support for the work that the MDA is doing to bring key partners together to support manufacturing in the region.

We continue to work in collaboration with both the Welsh Government and regional partners to ensure that the UK Government's £120m funding commitment for the North Wales Growth Deal is delivered as soon as possible.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ **Bereavement Support Payment: Cohabitation**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[98960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps she has taken to implement the ruling of the Supreme Court of 30 August 2018, [2018] UKSC 48, on extending bereavement support payments to unmarried couples.

**Mims Davies:**

We intend to take forward a Remedial Order to extend eligibility for Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Support Payment to cohabitants with children. We are working on the detail of, and implementation plans for, these changes. We intend to lay the Order before the House in due course.

### ■ **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Asbestosis and Diffuse Pleural Thickening**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[99767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to resume assessments for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefits for (a) asbestosis and (b) diffuse pleural thickening as done for other disability benefits.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Our priority throughout this health emergency continues to be to protect the public and staff, while ensuring people get the benefits they are entitled to quickly and safely. Face-to-face assessments remain suspended while we review what activity we can gradually start reintroducing in line with the latest public health advice. We will confirm next steps as soon as possible.

In the meantime, for claimants with the most serious or terminal conditions, claims continue to be processed and decisions made as normal. We are actively considering how to deal with those cases not currently being processed.

### ■ **Pension Credit**

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[99017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of automatically registering all eligible pensioners for pension credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

It is a long-established policy of all governments, that provision of income-related benefits is contingent on a person making a valid claim. Like other means-tested benefits, Pension Credit eligibility and award amounts are determined by a person's financial and personal circumstances and it is the responsibility of the person making

a claim to provide the correct and accurate information required to establish entitlement.

Pension Credit is intended to target help at the poorest pensioner households. It would not therefore be practical to automatically register everyone of State Pension age for Pension Credit when the majority of them will simply not qualify. There may also be pensioners, who might qualify for Pension Credit, who do not wish to claim it.

In 2010 the Department ran an innovative pilot scheme to try to boost take-up of Pension Credit. The trial involved automatically paying Pension Credit to some 2,000 people who the Department had identified as possibly having entitlement to Pension Credit without them having to make an actual claim first. At the end of the trial the group were invited to go on and make a claim. The level of take-up was surprisingly low and disappointing, with less than 9% of those involved going on to take up their entitlement. It was therefore not considered a viable and cost effective mechanism to take forward. A copy of the evaluation of the pilot is available at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/214583/rrep796.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214583/rrep796.pdf).

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [99018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of eligible pensioners in each parliamentary constituency are (a) in receipt of and (b) have made claims for pension credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

Information on the number of Pension Credit claimants in each parliamentary constituency as of February 2020 is published and available at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>.

The information requested on the proportion of pensioners eligible to Pension Credit who are in receipt of the benefit is only available at the Great Britain level. The latest data for 2017/18 is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2017-to-2018>.

The DWP publishes annual take-up statistics for income-related benefits, including Pension Credit. These are estimates based on data collected through the Family Resource Survey as well as DWP administrative data. However, the sample sizes available from the survey data are not large enough to enable reliable take-up statistics to be produced at sub-national level e.g. for parliamentary constituencies.

We do not hold the information requested on the number and proportion of claims made by eligible pensioners for pension credit in each parliamentary constituency.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment: Coronavirus

**Justin Madders:**

[97603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) paper-based and (b) telephone personal independence payment assessments have taken place in each month since April 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department made a number of changes to health and disability benefits to safeguard the health of claimants and staff and to prioritise new claims and continuity of awards. These changes included the suspension of all face-to-face assessments and the introduction of telephone-based assessments where suitable, in addition to pre-existing paper-based assessments.

In each month from April to August 2020 there has been the following number of (a) paper based, and (b) telephone Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments.

PIP TOTAL	APR-20	MAY-20	JUN-20	JUL-20	AUG-20
Paper Based Assessments	13,970	9,460	7,760	7,420	7,500
Telephone Assessments	38,090	42,830	47,000	52,440	48,370

All volumes have been rounded to the nearest 10.

All of the above data is derived from contractual management information produced by the Assessment Providers.

Please note: the above data is derived from unpublished management information which is collected for internal departmental use only and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics Publication standards.

**Alex Davies-Jones:****[99157]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average clearance time frame was for her Department to process a new personal independence payment claim in the period from March 2020 to August 2020; and what that average time taken was in that same period in 2019; and if she will make a statement.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The latest available data on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) clearance times covers claims cleared up to the end of July 2020. Therefore, the average clearance times are calculated from March 2020 to July 2020, and March 2019 to July 2019 respectively for comparison.

The median end to end clearance time for PIP New Claims in Great Britain for Normal Rules claimants was 21 weeks for claims cleared from March 2020 to July 2020, and was 15 weeks for claims cleared from March 2019 to July 2019.

[In Wales, the median end to end clearance time for PIP New Claims for Normal Rules claimants was 14 weeks for claims cleared from March 2020 – July 2020 and was 16 weeks for claims cleared from March 2019 – July 2019.]



Changes in the average end to end clearance time across from March 2020 to July 2020 reflect disruption due to COVID-19, including the development, testing and successful rollout of a new telephony assessment model to enable claims to be progressed robustly in the absence of face-to-face assessments to ensure we were not putting vulnerable people and our staff at risk.

### Notes

#### Source: PIP ADS

- PIP data includes normal rules claimants only and is for new claims only.
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number of weeks.
- The status of claims as 'normal rules' and 'new claim/reassessment' is shown as at the point of clearance.
- The figures quoted are the median clearance time of claims which are cleared in the given time period.
- The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases (e.g. cases where the person has been hard to reach due to being in prison, hospital, failed to attend the assessment on numerous occasions etc.)
- The 'Registration to DWP decision (end to end)' clearance time is measured as the median time between the date of registration of the claim and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria or failure to return the Part 2 form within the time limit).
- Great Britain only.
- The median clearance times for March 2019 – July 2019 and March 2020 – July 2020 are unpublished data. It should be used with caution and it may be subject to future revision.
- From late March 2020 onwards, disruption due to COVID-19 affected volumes of clearances for all activities - Assessment Providers switched to paper based and telephony assessments rather than face to face assessments, and in the first few weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic efforts were made to clear residual claims in the system from before emergency measures were put in place, giving rise to an initial spike in clearance volumes. During the quarter ending July 2020, the effects of the disruption due to COVID-19 have reduced in some areas though they continue in many parts of the process.

**■ Personal Independence Payment: Wales****Alex Davies-Jones:****[99156]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people claimed personal independence payments on the basis of a degenerative neurological condition in (a) Wales and (b) Pontypridd constituency in each year since 2010.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The information you requested is not held by the Department. In the application process, claimants' main disabling condition is only recorded for collation by the Department at assessment. It is not recorded at the point of application. The Department does not therefore hold data on the number of applicants to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) with particular conditions. Only those who have a disability assessment determination decision will have a main disabling condition recorded for them.

We do collect data on the main disability condition for those who have had a PIP clearance. The latest available data on PIP registrations and clearances split by geographical area (including region and parliamentary constituency), main disability, and by type of clearance (i.e. whether the claim was awarded, disallowed or withdrawn) for both new claims and reassessed claims, can be found at <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to use Stat-Xplore can be found here:

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

**■ Poverty: Coronavirus****Neil Gray:****[98976]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of (a) absolute and (b) relative poverty.

**Will Quince:**

We understand that this is a difficult time for people on low incomes and we've taken significant action to support those affected by Coronavirus, including through income protection schemes, mortgage holidays and additional support for renters. For those most in need we've injected more than £9 billion into the welfare system, which includes an increase to Universal Credit of up to £1,040 this financial year.

Distributional analysis published by HMT in July 2020 shows the Impact of Covid-19 on working household incomes. This publication shows that the lowest income decile of working households has seen no fall in income due to Government measures that have been put in place. This is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impact-of-covid-19-on-working-household-incomes-distributional-analysis-as-of-may-2020>

**■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses****James Wild:****[99135]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish the conclusions of her Department's review of the special rules for terminally ill welfare claimants.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to Parliamentary Question [87602](#) on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**■ Unemployment: Sutton Coldfield****Mr Andrew Mitchell:****[93528]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to offer tailored support to help unemployed people back into work in Sutton Coldfield constituency.

**Mims Davies:**

We are providing £1.2 billion to enhance work search support service in Great Britain which includes doubling the number of frontline Work Coaches in Jobcentre Plus before the end of the financial year. We are also increasing the flexible support fund which includes extending the Rapid Response Service, tripling the number of Sector-based Work Academy Placements in England, and expanding the work and health programme to deliver Job Entry: Targeted Support. Further, the Job finding support service will provide tailored one-to-one job finding support to the recently unemployed.

The Department is working closely with other government departments, external organisations and local partners to support people into work. The Kickstart scheme was recently announced to help young people aged 16-24 find 6-month work places and in Sutton Coldfield there are 9 Small and Medium Employers have expressed an interest in taking part in the Kickstart Scheme. We urge all those wishing to get involved to visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

**■ Unemployment: Worcestershire****Sajid Javid:****[97536]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department is providing to 18 to 25 years olds who are unemployed in Worcestershire.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government is committed to getting people back into work and through our Plan for Jobs we will help young people across the country into work.

We recently opened applications for our ambitious £2 billion Kickstart Scheme. It puts young people at the heart of our economic recovery by supporting young people at risk of long term unemployment into six month placements across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

We have also introduced a new youth offer for 18-24 year olds in the Universal Credit Intensive Work Search group. This includes a structured 13-week programme, youth hubs and youth employability coaches.

Together with Worcester County Council, Worcester Jobcentre Plus will be creating a youth hub that will provide a holistic approach and tailored support for each customer. The hub will focus on 16-24 year olds to address long-term unemployment.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[96766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress she has made on improving Universal Credit Support Delivered Locally and wider partnership support in support of vulnerable people, as outlined as a priority in the Universal Credit Programme Board paper 5 (UCPB180517).

**Will Quince:**

Universal Credit Support has been improved with the introduction of a strengthened offer which includes help with digital access and budgeting, and support with other activities, such as identity verification, to improve payment timeliness.

With COVID-19 there has been an increase in demand for Help to Claim. The latest validated management information shows that Citizens Advice (England and Wales) and Citizens Advice Scotland have supported over 250,000 people through the Help to Claim period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Over 8 in 10 people who received support rated Help to Claim as “easy” or “very easy” to use, and 9 in 10 people would recommend it. This is funded within the renewed 39m package for 20/21.

## ■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[97714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many times the universal credit service has been unavailable since 23 March 2020; and for what reasons that service was unavailable on each of those occasions.

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[97715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the capacity of the universal credit service to cope with demand for new online claims in the period since 23 March 2020; and what steps her Department is taking to minimise periods of unavailability of that service.

**Will Quince:**

There have been over 3 million Universal Credit claims made since mid-March; six times the volume that the Department would typically receive. Despite that surge, the system is standing up to the challenge and demonstrating that resilience and scalability are integral parts its design, whilst maintaining high levels of payment timeliness.

There have been no unplanned outages of the Universal Credit online service since March 2020.

**Jonathan Reynolds:** [\[98964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many children have parents who have been subject to the five-week wait for universal credit after transitioning from legacy benefits since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

All new UC claimants are able to request a new claim advance during the first assessment period, of up to 100% of their estimated monthly award. Advances can be repaid over the following year, allowing new claimants to receive 13 payments during the year instead of 12. We are extending the maximum repayment period to two years from October 2021 to reduce the impact of taking an advance even further.

There is financial support available for individuals transitioning to UC from specific legacy benefits. As of 22 July 2020, a two-week run on of Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance has been available for all claimants whose claim to UC ends entitlement to these benefits to provide additional support for claimants moving to UC.

This is in addition to the Transition to UC Housing Payment, a two-week extension of Housing Benefit.

**Neil Gray:** [\[98977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on levels of (a) absolute and (b) relative poverty of removing the temporary uplift to universal credit.

**Neil Gray:** [\[98978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on levels of (a) relative and (b) absolute poverty of turning advance loans into grants when an applicant qualifies for universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

Estimating the potential impact of individual policies on future levels of poverty is not possible as it would require making judgements about what will happen to every person's income in the future and then also isolating potential changes in income due to the effect of specific policies on certain individuals. It is not possible to do this accurately as there is so much uncertainty involved in projecting incomes.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Update to GB-EU Border Operating Model

**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove):** [\[HCWS498\]](#)

Today, the Government will publish an updated Border Operating Model, to provide further clarity and certainty for businesses. The Model (the first version of which was published on 13 July) has been updated to reflect feedback from stakeholders and to include additional detail on policies and processes. We would like to thank the Devolved Administrations for their engagement with this.

This detail will help businesses which trade with the EU to understand the new arrangements and take action. We are encouraging businesses to go to [gov.uk/transition](https://gov.uk/transition) to use the transition checker which will help them understand not just new border requirements but all of the steps they need to take to be ready for the end of the transition.

A copy of the updated Border Operating Model has been deposited in the Library of both Houses.

**Attachments:**

1. Border Operating Model [BordersOpModel\_updated.pdf]

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (1 June 2020 to 31 August 2020)

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** [\[HCWS497\]](#)

Section 19(1) of the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 (the Act) requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on the exercise of her TPIM powers under the Act during that period.

The level of information provided will always be subject to slight variations based on operational advice.

TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2020)	5
Number of new TPIM notices served (during this period)	0
TPIM notices in respect of British citizens (as of 31 August 2020)	5

---

TPIM NOTICES IN FORCE (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2020)	5
TPIM notices extended (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revoked (during the reporting period)	0
TPIM notices revived (during the reporting period)	0
Variations made to measures specified in TPIM notices (during the reporting period)	0
Applications to vary measures specified in TPIM notices refused (during the reporting period)	0
The number of subjects relocated under TPIM legislation (during this the reporting period)	3

The TPIM Review Group (TRG) keeps every TPIM notice under regular and formal review. Third quarter TRG meetings took place on 8, 23 and 25 September 2020.