



Daily Report

Monday, 12 October 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 12 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:40 P.M., 12 October 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Boilers: Fossil Fuels

Mohammad Yasin:

[\[99703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to reduce the use of fossil fuelled boilers; and if he will introduce targets to phase them out.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In order to meet our net zero commitment, we must transition away from fossil fuel heating systems. We are developing policies to support the deployment of low carbon heating supporting consumers financially to help them transition away from fossil fuel heating through initiatives such as the Renewable Heat Incentive. We are spending £2.8bn between 2018 and 2021 through the Renewable Heat Incentive, to support the deployment of low carbon technologies such as heat pumps.

We also recently launched the Green Homes Grant vouchers scheme meaning homeowners and residential landlords can receive up to £5000 towards the installation of an approved low carbon heating measure. In due course we shall be setting out our proposals for the decarbonisation of heat in the Heat and Building Strategy.

In addition, in the Future Homes Standards consultation, which closed 7 February, we proposed that new homes should have 75-80% fewer CO2 emissions than ones built to current building regulation standards. This will not be achievable using conventional gas boilers in new build properties. We will respond to this consultation in due course.

■ Carbon Emissions: Capital Investment

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[98953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to establish a banking agency to finance green investments as part of the Industrial Strategy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Within the decade, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister is determined for the UK to be at the forefront of the green industrial revolution as we accelerate our progress towards net zero emissions by 2050. That is why, this year alone, the government has set out billions in support for our low-carbon economy. As set out in the 2019 Green Finance Strategy, this needs to be combined with a focus on mobilising and accelerating flows of private finance into key clean growth sectors to provide good value for taxpayers, such as through providing long-term certainty and using public funds to leverage private capital.

■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Claudia Webbe:

[98782]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that garment manufacturers in Leicester work with trade unions to set employee terms and conditions.

Paul Scully:

We are deeply concerned by reports of illegal and unsafe working conditions for garment workers in Leicester.

Collective bargaining is largely a matter for individual employers, their employees and their trade unions. The Government encourages employers to engage with their workforce's representatives, whether these be union or non-union representatives.

The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and Leicester City Council, both members of the Taskforce that has been established in response to the allegations of labour abuse in Leicester, have engaged with the TUC on the issues in the garment trade. We are also working with industry through the Apparel and General Merchandise Public and Private Protocol, a partnership between enforcement bodies and industry partners – including the British Retail Consortium, UK Fashion and the Textile Association – aimed at tackling all forms of labour exploitation in the garment trade

■ Conditions of Employment

Claudia Webbe:

[98781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take on workers' rights following the conclusion of the Alison Levitt QC report into exploitation in Leicester's garment industry.

Paul Scully:

Exploiting vulnerable workers for commercial gain is despicable and we expect businesses to do all they can to tackle abuse and exploitation in their supply chains. The findings of this review are concerning and we expect Boohoo to continue to fully cooperate with law enforcement agencies in their ongoing investigations in Leicester.

In response to the allegations of labour market non-compliance in Leicester garment factories, a taskforce led by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority has been set up. The taskforce coordinates a multi-agency approach to enforcement activity, the gathering and sharing of intelligence and wider community engagement aimed at encouraging reporting and helping raise awareness of workers' rights. It includes: HMRC National Minimum Wage; Employment Agencies Standards Inspectorate; Leicestershire Police; National Crime Agency; Leicester City Council; Department for Work and Pensions and Immigration Enforcement. Where evidence of non-compliance is found, the enforcement bodies will take appropriate enforcement activity.

The Government is committed to improving enforcement of employment rights and following a consultation, we have announced our intention to create a single enforcement body. The single enforcement body will provide a clearer route for workers to raise a complaint and get support, enabling more coordinated enforcement action and the use of pooled intelligence to better target proactive enforcement.

■ **Electricity Interconnectors: Portsmouth**

Stephen Morgan:

[100526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives from Aquind Interconnector on running a route for cables through open country west of the A3 road area from Portsdown Hill to Hambledon Road, along the B2150.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The application for development consent for the proposed Aquind Interconnector has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and is currently being examined by them. Neither my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who has recused himself from any part in the decision-making process, nor his Ministers have had any discussions with representatives of Aquind Limited, the developer of the Aquind Interconnector, about route options for the proposed Interconnector.

Stephen Morgan:

[100527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the current proposed route of the Aquind Interconnector on the welfare of allotment holders in Portsmouth.

Stephen Morgan:

[100528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will meet the South Downs National Park Authority to discuss the environmental implications of the Aquind Interconnector.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Planning Inspectorate is currently examining the application for development consent for the proposed Aquind Interconnector. The Examining Authority will examine all relevant issues before submitting its report to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

As the decision to grant or refuse consent to an application for development consent is quasi-judicial, it would not be appropriate for my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who has recused himself from any part in the decision-making process, or his Ministers to comment further on any aspect of this live development consent application or to meet with any interested party to discuss it.

■ Fuel Poverty and Wind Power: Scotland

Jamie Stone: [\[99708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the £160 million allocated to developing offshore wind he plans to spend on the coasts of Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross; and whether he plans to tackle fuel poverty in the far north of Scotland with that funding.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

One hundred and sixty million pounds will be made available to upgrade ports and infrastructure in the offshore wind sector. This will enable the sector to support jobs directly and indirectly by 2030 in ports, factories and wider supply chains, manufacturing the next-generation of offshore wind turbines and delivering clean energy to the UK.

No locations are confirmed at this stage. We are inviting landowners or developers of potential large-scale coastal manufacturing hubs to contact the department, by responding the request for information published on 6th October 2020 on the Gov.uk website by 30th October.

The purpose of the new funding is to enable development of supply chains.

■ Galileo System

Owen Thompson: [\[99664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Written Question 96957, for what reasons the Government decided that the EU's offer on Galileo did not meet the UK's security and industrial requirements.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK and the EU discussed the Galileo programme during the Withdrawal Agreement negotiations. The EU's offer on Galileo did not meet the UK's security and industrial requirements.

The UK does not have a level of access to Galileo that would enable us to assure the system and use it for purposes such as defence and security. Our position remains unchanged and as such, the UK is not seeking to continue participation in Galileo.

The UK Space Agency is exploring alternative ways to deliver vital satellite navigation services to the UK through the new Space-Based Positioning Navigation and Timing Programme.

■ Green Deal Scheme

Marsha De Cordova: [\[99114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason households without access to the internet are excluded from the Green Deal scheme; and whether he is taking steps to ensure that that scheme is open to everyone.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Green Deal scheme closed in 2015. The Green Homes Grant voucher scheme launched on 30th September 2020 and the scheme administrator will offer alternative means to apply such as by telephone or post.

The scheme is open to all homeowners including park homes on a residential site (including Gypsy and Traveller sites) and residential landlords in private or social rented sectors (including local authorities and housing associations).

■ Green Deal Scheme: Misrepresentation**Marion Fellows:**[\[100448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many intention notices proposing a reduction of a Green Deal loan mis-sold by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd have been carried out without appeal in each of the last 12 months for which information is available.

Marion Fellows:[\[100449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many cases are awaiting a decision on whether to serve intention notices proposing a reduction of a Green Deal loan mis-sold by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd.

Marion Fellows:[\[100450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average waiting time is for his Department to decide whether to serve an intention notice proposing a reduction of a Green Deal loan mis-sold by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd on a case.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Green Deal Framework Regulations require that, before imposing any sanction, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State gives notice to affected parties of his intention to impose a sanction (an initial notice, referred to as an Intention Notice) and provides them with an opportunity to make representations before it is made final.

As of 8th October 2020, there were 117 appeals against mis-selling by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) for which no Intention Notice or final decision has been issued.

The average time between receipt of an appeal case by the Secretary of State and the Issue of an Intention Notice is 13 months.

The following table shows how many Intention Notices were issued by month proposing reduction or cancellation of Green Deal loans in response to appeals about mis-selling by HELMS, and the number of these cases for which no representations have been received.

MONTH	NUMBER OF INTENTION NOTICES SENT	NUMBER OF CASES FOR WHICH NO REPRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED
October 2019	15	9
November 2019	11	9
December 2019	17	9
January 2020	13	7
February 2020	22	10
March 2020	12	6
April 2020	3	0

Complainants can appeal final decisions (set out in final Sanction Notices) to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal. For one case recorded in the above table, the complainant did not submit representations but, following receipt of a final Sanction Notice, appealed to the Tribunal.

No Intention Notices have been issued since April. In April, two decisions were made by the First-tier Tribunal in response to appeals. Following this, the issuing of Intention Notices was paused to allow for full consideration of the First-tier Tribunal decisions in future Intention Notices.

During this period, 43 Sanction Notices have been issued in response to appeals about mis-selling by HELMS.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Thangam Debbonaire:

[99012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the announcement of 30 September 2020 on the Green Homes Scheme, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to increase the fines for non-compliance with energy efficiency requirements for landlords in the private rented sector.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department has recently launched a consultation on improving the energy efficiency performance of privately rented homes. As part of the consultation, we are proposing to raise the maximum financial penalty per property and per breach of the regulations from £5000 to £30000.

The consultation, published on GOV.UK at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-energy-performance-of-privately-rented-homes>, will run till the end of December 2020.

■ Heating

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[99143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the PUMP IT UP! campaign's recommendations on large-scale heat pump projects.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Pump It Up campaign recommends that Government commits to a re-think of the future support it makes available to large-scale heat pump projects.

A new allocation of Tarriff Guarantees has recently opened on the Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), supporting larger projects, including large scale ground source heat pumps >100kWth. The Non-Domestic RHI will close to new applicants on the 31st of March 2021 and we have consulted on a new scheme, the Clean Heat Grant, which with a proposed cap on the capacity of eligible appliances at 45kW will provide targeted support to consumers and small businesses for heat pumps and some limited biomass from April 2022. This is backed by £100 million of Exchequer funding as announced in the 2020 Budget, and will be open for two years.

The Government expects several large-scale heat pump projects to receive financial support through its other schemes, including the Green Heat Network Scheme, which BEIS will consult on later in the year, and our Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, which is open to large heat pumps providing process heat. Additionally, in the Summer Economic Update, we announced £1 billion funding over the next year to help public sector buildings through the installation of energy efficiency and low carbon heat measures, which will also support the deployment of large scale heat pumps.

■ Hydrogen

Andrew Griffith:

[99162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the UK's hydrogen strategy; and what steps he is taking to formalise cross-departmental working on the Government's hydrogen strategy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We have committed to publish a UK hydrogen strategy in early 2021 and development is well under way.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is Chair of the Climate Action Implementation Cabinet Committee (CAI) which covers issues relating to net zero. BEIS officials and I also continue to work across Government departments, bilaterally and through governance arrangements at official level. This includes the Climate National Strategy Implementation Group, reporting to the Cabinet Secretary involving Directors General across Whitehall, chaired by the DG Energy Transformation & Clean Growth and the Hydrogen

Advisory Council, co-chaired by myself as Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth, and Sinead Lynch, UK Country Chair of Shell launched in July 2020.

■ Insolvency

Lucy Powell:

[100404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the number of insolvencies of the decision not to extend the temporary provisions on wrongful trading in the Corporate Governance and Insolvency Act 2020.

Paul Scully:

The wrongful trading provisions were temporarily suspended in March at the height of the pandemic when many businesses across the country were required to close. The temporary suspension gave company directors the confidence to continue trading while considering their options, giving them time to access the financial support introduced by Government. It was further extended in May to 30 June, and then again to 30 September, during the passage of the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 in Parliament.

Since the suspension was first introduced businesses have received billions in loans, tax deferrals, Business Rate reliefs, and general and sector-specific grants to support them and help save jobs, and the Government's recently launched Winter Economy Plan has a further package of targeted measures to continue that support.

In addition, a range of temporary measures to protect businesses from insolvency have been further extended.

Lucy Powell:

[100405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on levels of company insolvency in each sector of the economy of the decision not to extend the provisions on wrongful trading in the Corporate Governance and Insolvency Act 2020.

Paul Scully:

The wrongful trading provisions are an important protection for creditors against insolvent trading but were suspended at the peak of lockdown to support directors to continue to trade whilst accessing the financial support put in place by Government.

Since the suspension was first introduced a range of measures have been brought in by the Government to provide support for business and save jobs across all sectors of the economy. In addition, a range of temporary measures to protect businesses in all sectors from insolvency have been further extended.

Lucy Powell:

[100406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the evidential basis was for not extending the wrongful trading measures in the Corporate Governance and Insolvency Act 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Government engaged with a number of stakeholders in considering the extension of all the temporary provisions in the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020. The further extension of measures to protect businesses from insolvency and the additional financial support introduced by Government will continue to protect jobs and help businesses through the months ahead.

■ Minimum Wage**Claudia Webbe:**[\[98791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to raise the minimum wage to (a) at least £10 an hour or (b) a real living wage as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to building an economy that works for everyone. Through the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and the National Living Wage (NLW) the Government protects the lowest paid within our society.

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) is an independent and expert body which makes annual recommendations on the appropriate rates for NMW and NLW and other low pay related issues. They will continue to recommend the path of the NLW going forward, aiming to increase the NLW to two-thirds of median earnings by 2024, provided economic conditions allow.

■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries**Mick Whitley:**[\[99739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential effect of the ending of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on levels of job losses in the automotive industry.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was welcomed and widely utilised by the automotive sector. Surveys carried out by the industry body, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, showed that during the lockdown earlier this year, the Job Retention Scheme was accessed by 60.6% of the automotive manufacturing workforce in April and by 34.2% of the workforce in May.

In order to support the retention of jobs, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the Job Retention Bonus in June. This will see businesses receive a one-off payment of £1,000 for every previously furloughed employee if they are still employed at the end of January next year.

As part of his Winter Economy Plan, the Chancellor announced the Job Support Scheme, which is designed to protect jobs in businesses who are facing lower demand over the winter months due to Covid-19. The Government will pay a third of hours not worked up to a cap (£697.92 per month), with the employer also contributing a third.

In order to protect jobs and UK businesses, we are expanding the Job Support Scheme for businesses legally required to temporarily close their premises as a direct result of Coronavirus restrictions. The Government will provide employers with a grant for employees that have been instructed to cease work, covering two-thirds of their usual wages and subject up to a maximum of £2,100 a month.

Employers using the Job Support Scheme will also be able to claim the Job Retention Bonus if they meet the eligibility criteria.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Jane Stevenson:

[99736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will provide financial support to pubs which experience financial losses as a consequence of the 10pm curfew.

Paul Scully:

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Winter Economy Plan outlines further measures to help businesses, including the Job Support Scheme, extending the VAT cut until 31 March 2021, the New Payment Scheme to allow deferred VAT payments to be spread through the year, extending the application period for government-backed loans and introducing 'Pay as You Grow' repayment options.

■ Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund

Claudia Webbe:

[98790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure that businesses in the hospitality supply chain are able to access the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

Paul Scully:

Under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF), businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) on 11 March, with a rateable value of less than £51,000, will have been eligible for cash grants of up to £25,000 per property.

Eligibility for the RHLGF was therefore contingent on businesses being in scope of the Expanded Retail Discount Scheme for Business Rates, as set out here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-rates-retail-discount-guidance>.

This eligibility definition was agreed by Ministers as a way of ensuring that Local Authorities could target businesses at pace and ensure that the process of disbursing funding could proceed quickly.

As per the Expanded Retail Discount guidance, properties that will benefit from the relief will be occupied hereditaments that are wholly or mainly being used:

1. as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues,
2. for assembly and leisure; or

3. as hotels, guest & boarding premises and self-catering accommodation.

In order to qualify for the relief, the hereditament should be wholly or mainly being used for the qualifying purposes as outlined in the guidance. The guidance is not intended to be exhaustive and authorities should determine for themselves whether particular properties not listed are broadly similar in nature to those included within the guidance and, if so, to consider them eligible for the relief.

In addition, on 1 May, the Government announced the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. This scheme was intended to support small businesses in some of the hardest hit sectors that were previously outside the scope of the Small Business and Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant Funds.

Local authorities were responsible for defining the precise eligibility for this Fund and may choose to make payments to businesses based on local economic need, subject to those businesses meeting the specific eligibility criteria. Guidance for Local Authorities was published 13 May:

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

Businesses which are not eligible for or have not received grant funding should be able to benefit from other measures in the Government's unprecedented package of support for business. For further information please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>

■ **Small Businesses: Bolton**

Lucy Powell:

[100407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7 October 2020 to Question 98704 on Business: Coronavirus, how much funding has been allocated to Bolton Council through the Local Restrictions Support Grant.

Paul Scully:

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) announced on 9 September provides support to businesses closed as part of localised restrictions to control Covid-19. Grants of up to £1,500 every three weeks will be available where businesses are required to close and funding will be issued upon confirmation of a three-week closure period.

We have worked closely with Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to best calculate the amount of funding required, using business rates data and local business information. The situation is evolving and we continue to monitor Bolton's LRSG allocation.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[100352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) notifying the European Commission that local authority grants to businesses impacted by local lockdown restrictions fall outside of any state aid provisions restricting businesses receiving full compensation and (b) directing local authorities that payments can be made to local businesses outside of such state aid restrictions.

Paul Scully:

The United Kingdom left the EU on 31 January 2020. Under the Withdrawal Agreement, EU State aid rules continue to apply during the transition period, subject to regulation by the EU Commission.

In administering the Local Restrictions Support Grant, the Government will provide to an eligible business up to £1,500 of funding for each three-week period that the business is required to close by local restrictions implemented by Government. Local authorities administering the schemes must be satisfied that all State Aid requirements have been fully met and complied with when making grant payments.

Although payments under this scheme and certain other Covid-19 related business grant schemes are treated as State aid and therefore count toward the total de minimis State Aid limit of €200,000, if firms have reached that threshold they may still be eligible for funding under the Covid-19 temporary State aid framework where the limit is €800,000.

■ Wind Power

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[99532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the potential effect on electricity prices of the Government's policy to expand offshore wind power by 2030; what assessment he has made of the effect of that policy on other low emission goals; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The effect on electricity prices of deploying 40GW of offshore wind by 2030 will depend on a number of factors including the relative costs between different technologies and how they evolve, particularly in offshore wind, the outcome of our upcoming Contract for Difference Auction rounds, network costs, how costs will be spread across different consumer groups, the roll out of flexible technologies like storage and the overall profile of electricity demand.

Offshore wind projects have low operating costs and so can supply electricity cheaply, putting downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices. Wholesale prices are one of many factors that influence consumer costs and the net impact will depend on how changes in these factors are passed on to consumers.

Accelerating the deployment of offshore wind will make a key contribution to our 2050 net zero target.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy made a Written Ministerial Statement about the announcement to increase our ambition to delivering 40GW of offshore wind by 2030 in the House on Tuesday 6 October.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Border Delivery Group: Northern Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[99536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 28 September 2020 to Question 92635, what the outcomes were of the Border and Protocol Delivery Group's meeting with airports and ports in September 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Border and Protocol Delivery Group holds regular meetings with representatives of Northern Ireland ports and airports. Recent meetings have covered a range of topics including the Trader Support Service, the Goods Vehicle Movement Service and infrastructure.

■ **Race Disparity Unit: Staff**

Helen Hayes: [\[100496\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people (a) work and (b) have worked in the Race Disparity Unit.

Helen Hayes: [\[100497\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's budget for the Race Disparity Unit was in (a) each year since its inception and (b) 2020; and what the forecast budget for that Unit is in future years.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to [PQ83740](#) on 10 September 2020.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Resignations**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[99152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel have left the armed forces from September 2015 to September 2020, by parliamentary constituency.

James Heappey:

The information requested is shown in the table below:

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Total	16,080	14,980	14,860	14,880	14,310
Unknown*	8,260	480	470	470	520
Aberavon	-	-	~	-	-
Aberdeen North	10	10	10	~	10
Aldershot	190	420	440	340	270
Aldridge- Brownhills	-	~	-	-	-
Alyn and Deeside	10	~	~	10	~
Angus	40	80	70	70	60
Arfon	~	~	-	~	-
Argyll and Bute	120	230	300	320	290
Ashford	~	~	~	~	~
Ashton-under- Lyne	10	10	10	10	~
Aylesbury	100	250	260	270	290
Ayr	~	~	~	~	-
Banbury	20	60	80	90	60
Banff and Buchan	-	10	-	~	~
Barnsley Central	~	10	~	~	~
Barrow and Furness	-	~	~	10	~
Bath	~	10	10	~	~
Batley and Spen	~	-	~	-	-
Battersea	~	~	~	~	-
Bedford	10	~	~	-	~
Belfast East	20	~	10	10	10

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Belfast North	-	~	~	~	-
Belfast South	10	10	~	10	10
Bermondsey and Old Southwark	~	10	~	~	~
Berwickshire	~	-	~	-	-
Berwick-upon- Tweed	20	30	30	40	40
Beverley and Holderness	20	40	70	80	40
Bexleyheath and Crayford	10	~	10	~	~
Birkenhead	10	~	~	~	10
Birmingham	50	60	70	70	80
Bishop Auckland	~	~	~	10	10
Blackburn	10	~	10	~	~
Blackpool South	~	-	~	-	-
Blaenau Gwent	~	~	-	~	~
Blyth Valley	10	~	~	10	10
Bolton South East	~	10	~	10	~
Bootle	~	~	~	~	~
Bournemouth East	~	~	-	~	-
Bournemouth West	~	-	-	~	~
Bracknell	20	60	50	50	70
Braintree	~	~	-	-	-
Brecon and Radnorshire	30	50	50	40	20

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Brent North	~	~	~	~	~
Brentwood and Ongar	10	~	~	~	~
Bridgend	~	~	~	~	~
Brighton	10	10	~	10	~
Bristol North West	10	10	10	10	10
Bristol South	~	10	10	~	10
Bristol West	20	20	30	30	30
Broxtowe	90	180	130	120	100
Burton	~	~	~	-	-
Bury North	~	~	~	~	~
Bury St Edmunds	120	240	240	260	290
Caithness	~	-	-	~	~
Camborne and Redruth	-	~	~	~	~
Cambridge	~	10	~	~	~
Cannock Chase	~	~	~	10	10
Canterbury	10	10	10	10	~
Cardiff Central	40	20	20	20	20
Cardiff North	~	10	~	~	~
Cardiff South and Penarth	-	-	-	~	-
Carlisle	~	~	~	~	-
Carmarthen West ~ and South Pembrokeshire	~	~	~	~	~
Central Ayrshire	10	10	10	~	10

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Ceredigion	-	~	~	-	~
Channel Islands	-	~	~	~	~
Charnwood	-	~	-	-	-
Chatham and Aylesford	-	~	~	-	~
Chelmsford	~	10	10	~	~
Chelsea and Fulham	~	~	10	10	~
Cheltenham	10	20	30	20	30
Chesterfield	~	~	~	~	~
Chichester	30	80	60	80	60
Chippenham	20	60	30	50	40
Chipping Barnet	~	~	~	~	~
Chorley	~	10	~	~	~
Christchurch	-	-	-	~	~
Cities of London and Westminster	70	160	200	160	160
City of Chester	40	80	60	70	60
City of Durham	~	~	~	~	~
Clwyd West	10	~	10	~	~
Colchester	120	230	260	260	200
Corby	~	-	~	~	-
Coventry North West	~	~	~	~	~
Coventry South	10	10	~	10	10
Crawley	~	~	~	~	10
Croydon Central	10	10	~	~	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Croydon North	~	~	~	~	~
Cumbernauld	~	~	~	~	~
Darlington	~	10	10	~	~
Derby North	~	10	10	~	~
Derby South	~	~	-	~	-
Devizes	510	1090	1040	1040	1000
Doncaster Central	10	10	10	10	10
Dudley North	~	~	~	~	~
Dumfries and Galloway	-	-	-	-	~
Dundee East	20	10	~	10	10
Dundee West	~	~	~	~	~
Dunfermline and West Fife	10	20	20	20	20
Ealing	~	~	~	~	-
Ealing Central and Acton	-	-	-	~	-
East Devon	160	260	350	310	580
East Hampshire	~	~	10	10	10
East Kilbride	~	~	~	~	~
East Surrey	-	-	-	~	-
East Yorkshire	~	~	~	-	-
Eastbourne	~	~	~	-	-
Edinburgh East	-	~	~	~	~
Edinburgh North and Leith	10	10	10	10	10
Edinburgh South	~	~	10	~	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Edinburgh South West	40	120	120	120	100
Edinburgh West	~	~	40	40	20
Ellesmere Port and Neston	~	~	-	~	~
Epsom and Ewell	~	~	~	~	~
Exeter	20	20	20	20	10
Fareham	~	10	10	10	10
Feltham and Heston	30	50	60	40	20
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	-	~	~	~	~
Filton and Bradley Stoke	60	100	100	90	100
Folkestone and Hythe	~	10	10	~	~
Forest of Dean	30	50	80	70	40
Foyle	~	~	~	~	~
Fylde	30	80	60	60	30
Gainsborough	10	20	30	20	20
Garston and Halewood	~	10	~	~	~
Gateshead	10	20	~	10	10
Gedling	~	~	~	~	~
Glasgow Central	90	100	100	90	70
Glasgow East	10	10	10	~	~
Glasgow North	10	10	10	10	10
Glasgow North West	10	~	~	10	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Glasgow South	~	10	~	~	~
Glasgow South West	10	10	10	10	10
Glenrothes	~	-	-	~	~
Gloucester	10	10	~	10	10
Gosport	70	160	200	180	150
Gower	~	~	~	~	-
Grantham and Stamford	20	20	20	30	30
Great Grimsby	10	~	~	~	10
Greenwich and Woolwich	50	70	90	90	110
Guildford	-	-	~	-	~
Hackney South and Shoreditch	10	10	10	10	10
Halton	-	~	-	~	~
Hammersmith	10	10	10	10	~
Hampstead and Kilburn	~	~	~	~	~
Harborough	~	~	~	~	~
Harrogate and Knaresborough	90	250	260	290	330
Hartlepool	~	~	~	-	~
Hendon	-	~	~	~	~
Henley	50	80	90	110	80
Hereford and South Herefordshire	~	~	-	~	-
Hertford and	~	~	-	-	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Stortford					
Hexham	30	60	70	50	40
Hitchin and Harpenden	~	-	~	-	-
Holborn and St Pancras	20	40	30	40	20
Hornsey and Wood Green	~	10	~	~	~
Huddersfield	~	10	~	~	~
Ilford South	10	~	~	~	~
Inverness	30	60	60	70	50
Ipswich	10	10	~	~	10
Isle of Wight	~	-	-	-	-
Islington South and Finsbury	10	10	10	10	10
Jarrow	10	-	10	~	-
Kenilworth and Southam	~	10	10	10	10
Kingston and Surbiton	~	~	~	~	~
Kingston upon Hull North	~	~	~	~	-
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	20	20	10	10	10
Knowsley	~	10	10	10	10
Lagan Valley	30	100	110	120	90
Lanark and Hamilton East	~	~	-	~	~
Lancaster and	~	~	10	10	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Fleetwood					
Leeds Central	20	20	20	30	10
Leeds North East	-	-	~	-	-
Leicester East	-	~	~	~	10
Leicester South	~	~	~	~	10
Lewisham East	~	10	20	10	10
Leyton and Wanstead	~	~	-	-	~
Lichfield	10	30	50	50	40
Lincoln	100	180	200	180	190
Linlithgow and East Falkirk	~	~	~	~	~
Liverpool	40	40	40	40	40
Livingston	10	~	~	10	10
Llanelli	-	~	-	-	-
Loughborough	~	-	10	~	~
Louth and Horncastle	40	150	130	140	140
Luton South	~	~	-	-	-
Maidenhead	-	~	-	-	-
Maidstone and The Weald	20	50	30	20	20
Manchester	20	20	20	20	20
Manchester Central	10	~	~	~	~
Mansfield	-	-	-	~	~
Meon Valley	10	30	30	30	30
Merthyr Tydfil	-	~	~	~	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
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and Rhymney

Mid Bedfordshire	40	80	80	90	70
Mid Dorset and North Poole	-	-	~	-	-
Mid Norfolk	10	40	30	30	50
Middlesbrough	10	~	10	~	10
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	~	~	~	~	~
Midlothian	30	70	60	60	40
Milton Keynes North	~	~	~	~	~
Milton Keynes South	~	10	10	10	~
Mitcham and Morden	~	~	~	~	~
Mole Valley	~	10	10	~	~
Monmouth	~	~	~	~	10
Moray	100	200	210	180	200
Motherwell and Wishaw	~	~	~	~	~
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	~	~	-	-	-
New Forest East	30	50	60	30	50
Newark	~	-	~	-	-
Newbury	20	20	30	30	30
Newcastle upon Tyne Central	10	20	20	20	20
Newcastle upon Tyne East	20	10	10	10	20

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Newcastle-under-Lyme	~	~	-	-	-
Newport West	10	10	10	10	10
Normanton	~	~	~	~	~
North Antrim	-	-	~	~	-
North Cornwall	~	~	10	~	~
North Devon	40	80	90	100	70
North Dorset	50	90	70	70	50
North Down	40	70	50	20	20
North Durham	~	-	-	~	~
North East Derbyshire	~	-	-	-	-
North East Fife	40	60	60	80	70
North East Hampshire	60	110	120	100	100
North East Somerset	10	10	20	10	10
North Herefordshire	40	80	80	110	80
North Norfolk	~	~	-	-	-
North Shropshire	40	90	80	90	70
North Thanet	~	10	10	~	10
North West Cambridgeshire	70	120	130	150	140
North West Durham	~	-	-	-	-
North West Hampshire	50	90	90	90	90
North West	10	10	20	20	10

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Norfolk					
North Wiltshire	80	180	180	190	140
Northampton South	~	10	~	10	~
Norwich North	~	~	10	~	~
Norwich South	-	-	-	~	-
Nottingham East	-	~	~	~	-
Nottingham North	10	10	10	10	10
Nottingham South	~	-	-	~	~
Orkney and Shetland	~	~	-	-	-
Oxford East	~	~	10	~	~
Paisley and Renfrewshire South	10	~	~	~	~
Penrith and The Border	~	10	10	10	~
Perth and North Perthshire	10	10	~	10	10
Peterborough	~	-	~	~	~
Plymouth	270	520	540	520	440
Pontypridd	~	~	~	~	~
Poole	30	60	60	60	60
Poplar and Limehouse	10	10	10	10	10
Portsmouth North	70	100	80	90	80
Portsmouth South	240	520	490	560	490

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Preseli Pembrokeshire	20	40	30	30	30
Preston	10	10	~	~	~
Pudsey	~	10	10	10	~
Putney	20	10	20	10	10
Reading East	-	-	~	-	-
Reading West	~	~	10	10	10
Redcar	-	-	-	~	-
Redditch	~	~	10	~	~
Reigate	~	-	-	-	~
Richmond (Yorks)	610	1240	1120	1060	1230
Rochester and Strood	20	40	40	50	30
Rochford and Southend East	~	-	-	-	-
Romsey and Southampton North	20	30	40	30	30
Rotherham	~	~	~	~	~
Rugby	20	60	50	60	20
Rushcliffe	-	-	~	~	10
Rutherglen and Hamilton West	~	-	-	~	-
Rutland and Melton	80	190	160	190	120
Saffron Walden	40	70	50	70	70
Salford and Eccles	10	10	~	10	10

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Salisbury	20	30	20	30	20
Scarborough and ~ Whitby		-	-	-	-
Scunthorpe	~	10	~	~	10
Sedgefield	10	10	10	~	~
Sefton Central	~	~	~	~	~
Sevenoaks	-	~	-	-	~
Sheffield	20	10	10	10	10
Sheffield Central	~	~	~	~	-
Shrewsbury and Atcham	30	50	10	~	~
Skipton and Ripon	40	80	110	120	100
Sleaford and North Hykeham	80	140	120	130	120
South Antrim	20	40	40	50	30
South Cambridgeshire	~	~	~	~	10
South Dorset	30	70	80	90	70
South Down	-	~	-	-	~
South East Cambridgeshire	-	~	~	~	~
South East Cornwall	90	180	170	210	240
South Northamptonshire	-	~	-	-	-
South Shields	10	~	~	~	~
South Swindon	10	10	10	~	20
South West	20	40	50	40	30

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Devon					
South West Hertfordshire	50	90	80	80	80
South West Norfolk	60	110	120	160	140
South West Surrey	~	~	~	~	~
South West Wiltshire	50	120	110	120	120
Southampton	30	20	20	10	20
St Austell and Newquay	10	10	30	20	20
St Helens South and Whiston	~	~	~	~	~
St Ives	60	110	130	100	110
Stafford	50	130	130	140	110
Stevenage	-	-	-	-	~
Stirling	30	50	30	10	10
Stockport	~	-	-	-	~
Stockton North	~	~	~	10	~
Stockton South	~	-	-	-	-
Stoke-on-Trent Central	~	~	~	~	~
Stoke-on-Trent North	~	-	-	-	-
Stoke-on-Trent South	10	10	~	~	~
Stourbridge	~	~	~	~	-
Strangford	~	~	~	~	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Streatham	~	10	10	10	~
Stretford and Urmston	10	-	~	-	~
Stroud	-	-	~	-	-
Suffolk Coastal	20	40	30	40	40
Sunderland Central	~	10	~	10	10
Surrey Heath	50	90	80	70	70
Sutton Coldfield	-	~	-	-	-
Swansea East	10	~	~	~	~
Swansea West	~	~	10	~	~
Taunton Deane	30	80	60	80	60
Telford	10	10	10	10	~
Tewkesbury	20	60	60	50	40
The Cotswolds	30	30	40	30	20
The Wrekin	50	80	130	150	120
Thirsk and Malton	40	60	60	60	60
Tooting	~	~	~	~	~
Torbay	~	~	~	~	~
Torfaen	~	~	~	~	10
Totnes	10	20	20	30	30
Truro and Falmouth	~	~	-	~	~
Tunbridge Wells	~	~	~	-	~
Twickenham	~	~	~	~	~
Tynemouth	~	10	~	~	~
Upper Bann	~	~	~	~	~

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Uxbridge and South Ruislip	30	70	70	80	70
Vale of Clwyd	~	-	-	-	-
Vale of Glamorgan	40	70	70	60	70
Vauxhall	~	-	~	10	~
Wakefield	10	10	~	20	~
Walsall South	~	~	~	~	~
Wantage	80	150	120	130	140
Warley	~	~	~	~	10
Warrington North	10	~	~	~	10
Waveney	-	-	-	~	-
Wells	-	-	-	~	-
West Bromwich East	~	~	~	~	~
West Dorset	~	10	~	~	-
West Dunbartonshire	~	10	-	~	~
West Ham	~	~	~	~	10
West Suffolk	-	-	-	~	-
Wigan	10	~	-	~	~
Winchester	70	160	130	150	210
Windsor	40	110	120	120	80
Witney	160	290	280	320	320
Woking	280	480	470	410	500
Wokingham	~	~	-	~	~
Wolverhampton North East	10	10	10	10	10

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	1 JULY 2015 - 30 JUNE 2016	1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017	1 JULY 2017 - 30 JUNE 2018	1 JULY 2018 - 30 JUNE 2019	1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020
Worcester	~	~	~	~	~
Workington	~	~	~	~	~
Wrexham	~	10	~	-	~
Wycombe	~	~	~	~	~
Wyre and Preston North	40	120	100	80	80
Wyre Forest	-	-	-	-	~
Yeovil	170	280	280	310	250
Ynys Mon	10	10	20	20	20
York Central	20	70	50	60	50
York Outer	20	20	20	20	20

* Unknown include personnel who did not have a recorded instance of Parliamentary Constituency prior to leaving the Armed Forces.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10, with numbers ending in '5' rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. In order to protect personal information governed by Data Protection Legislation, numbers less than 5 have been supplemented with a tilde (~).

■ AWACS: Procurement

John Spellar:

[\[100288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with Boeing on the E-7 Wedgetail programme.

Jeremy Quin:

In common with other projects of this size and complexity, officials are in regular contact with their opposite numbers in Boeing on a range of subjects relating to the E-7 programme.

Jack Lopresti:

[\[98942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an estimate of the saving to the public purse of reducing the proposed E-7 aircraft fleet from five aircraft to (a) four and (b) three aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

We regularly discuss equipment programmes with our partners, however, I am withholding the detail of any potential saving as it remains commercially sensitive and cannot be disclosed at this time.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships**Rosie Cooper:**[\[99564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on using the procurement for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Fleet Solid Support Ships to support regional economic growth.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) frequently holds discussions with Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) including on using Defence spending to support the Government's Levelling-up Agenda.

This Government is acutely aware of the significant contribution to the economy by the shipbuilding enterprise. The National Shipbuilding Strategy recognises the economic value that naval shipbuilding brings to the UK through design, build, and the supply chain. Economic assessments are made on all major MOD procurements, including the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Fleet Solid Support Ship, in line with HMT's guidelines on value for money.

■ International Military Services: Legal Costs**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[99688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the legal costs were for International Military Services in 2019-2020.

Jeremy Quin:

The costs incurred by IMS Ltd for external legal advice in the financial year 2019-20 amounted to £1,432,000.

■ Iran: International Military Services**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[99697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has taken steps to resolve the IMS debt to Iran through humanitarian supplies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jeremy Quin:

Her Majesty's Government acknowledges that there is a debt to be paid and continues to explore every avenue for the lawful discharge of that debt.

■ Military Bases: Coronavirus

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[98906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of ESS reducing contracted hours for cleaners at his Department's bases on levels of covid-19 transmission at those bases.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence maintains a contract with ESS which sets output requirements which are subject to regular assurance. It is the responsibility of ESS to determine the level of staffing required to meet the stipulated outputs.

In line with BEIS guidance on COVID secure ways of working, the Ministry of Defence's Heads of Establishment have been working closely with local contracting teams to establish a clear understanding of the local cleaning priorities.

In circumstances in which Heads of Establishment identify cleaning priorities that could be delivered by the contracted labour source but are additional to the current scope of the contract, there is a well-defined process for them to raise a change request for the extra cleaning resource required.

■ Ministry of Defence: Private Finance Initiative

Alan Brown:

[\[99036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what live PFI contracts his Department has; and for each of those contracts (a) what service is provided, (b) when the contract became live, (c) what the remaining term of the contract is and (d) what the annual repayments are.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence currently has 36 live Private Finance Initiative projects. Details are provided in the table below.

PROJECT	SERVICE	START DATE	EXPIRY DATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT (£ MILLION)
FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING UNITS	PROVISION OF FIREFIGHTING TRAINING FACILITIES.	APRIL 1999	JANUARY 2021	2.0
C vehicles	Procurement, maintenance, repair and management for earth moving plant	June 2005	May 2021	32.0

PROJECT	SERVICE	START DATE	EXPIRY DATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT (£ MILLION)
FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING UNITS	PROVISION OF FIREFIGHTING TRAINING FACILITIES.	APRIL 1999	JANUARY 2021	2.0
Defence Fixed Telecommunications Service	machinery and material handling equipment. Provision of telecommunication services across the MOD	July 1997	July 2023	110.0
Central Scotland Family Quarters (HQ)	Provision of serviced accommodation (Married Quarters).	August 1999	March 2022	2.6
Field Electrical Power Supplies	Provision of field generator sets.	June 2002	June 2022	19.6
Skynet 5	Provision of satellite communication services.	October 2003	August 2022	303
Provision of Marine Services	Provision of waterborne and associated support services.	December 2007	December 2022	82.2
Tidworth Water & Sewerage	Provision of water and sewerage services.	September 1998	March 2023	1.3
RAF Lyneham Sewerage	Provision of water and sewerage services.	July 1998	August 2023	0.6
Attack Helicopters	Provision of	July 1998	September 2023	7.6

PROJECT	SERVICE	START DATE	EXPIRY DATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT (£ MILLION)
FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING UNITS	PROVISION OF FIREFIGHTING TRAINING FACILITIES.	APRIL 1999	JANUARY 2021	2.0
Training - Apache Simulator Training	training services.			
RAF Fylingdales (Power)	Provision of power supply.	December 1998	March 2024	5.4
Heavy Equipment Transporters	Provision of a service to move heavy equipment.	December 2001	June 2024	16.6
Strategic Sealift Service	Provision of Roll On Roll Off ferries.	June 2002	December 2024	36
RAF Cosford and Shawbury Family Quarters	Provision of serviced accommodation (Married Quarters).	March 1999	June 2025	1.26
MOD-wide Water and Waste Water Project (Aquatrine) - Package A	Provision of water and wastewater services.	April 2003	April 2028	66.6
Wattisham Married Quarters	Provision of serviced accommodation (Married Quarters).	May 2001	May 2028	5.1
Yeovilton Family Quarters	Provision of serviced accommodation (Married Quarters).	July 1998	July 2028	1.1
Joint Services	Provision of	June 1998	Aug 2028	24.3

PROJECT	SERVICE	START DATE	EXPIRY DATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT (£ MILLION)
FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING UNITS	PROVISION OF FIREFIGHTING TRAINING FACILITIES.	APRIL 1999	JANUARY 2021	2.0
Command and Staff College	education, IT, housing, training support and mess accommodation.			
Bristol, Bath & Portsmouth Married Quarters	Provision of serviced accommodation (Married Quarters).	November 2001	September 2028	8.7
Devonport Support Services - ARMADA	Provision of Fleet Accommodation Centre and support services.	July 2004	March 2029	28.5
Army Foundation College	Provision of facilities and services including vocational education.	February 2000	December 2029	28.9
MOD-wide Water and Wastewater (Project Aquatrine) - Package B	Provision of water and wastewater services.	September 2004	March 2030	16.9
MOD-wide Water and Wastewater (Project Aquatrine) - Package C	Provision of water and wastewater services.	October 2004	March 2030	55.6
Main Building Refurbishment	Provision of office accommodation and supporting services.	May 2000	May 2030	85.7

PROJECT	SERVICE	START DATE	EXPIRY DATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT (£ MILLION)
FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING UNITS	PROVISION OF FIREFIGHTING TRAINING FACILITIES.	APRIL 1999	JANUARY 2021	2.0
Naval Communications	Provision of naval communications.	June 2000	December 2030	10.6
RAF Sentry E3D Aircrew	Provision of aircrew training services	July 2000	December 2030	2.3
Northwood Headquarters	Provision of serviced living & working accommodation and supporting services.	July 2006	October 2031	64.1
Portsmouth Housing 2	Provision of serviced accommodation (Married Quarters).	October 2005	June 2032	3.5
UKMFTS - Advanced Jet Trainer Ground Based Training Service (Phase 1&1B)	Provision of training Service.	June 2008	May 2033	13.0
Corsham	Provision of serviced living & working accommodation.	August 2008	July 2033	31.9
Defence Sixth Form College	Provision of serviced education facility and living accommodation including teaching and support	May 2003	August 2033	16.3

PROJECT	SERVICE	START DATE	EXPIRY DATE	AVERAGE ANNUAL PAYMENT (£ MILLION)
FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING UNITS	PROVISION OF FIREFIGHTING TRAINING FACILITIES.	APRIL 1999	JANUARY 2021	2.0
	services.			
Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (Voyager)	Provision of air to air refuelling and air transport service.	March 2008	March 2035	509.1
ASTUTE Class Training Service	The provision of training services.	November 2001	September 2037	25.8
Medium Support Helicopter Aircrew Training Facility	The provision of training services.	October 1997	October 2037	11.4
Colchester	Provision of serviced living and working accommodation including supporting services.	February 2004	February 2039	109.3
Allenby/Connaught	Provision of serviced, living and working accommodation including supporting services.	April 2006	April 2041	413.5

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Commonwealth Games 2022****Liam Byrne:**[\[98886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will (a) set out the budget for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games legacy programme and (b) list the contributing funding organisations.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government, along with Birmingham City Council and its partners, are investing £778 million to deliver the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. This investment is driving significant legacy opportunities including job creation, community and sports facilities and a timely boost to businesses. An additional £24 million investment from the government and the West Midlands Combined Authority to create a Trade, Tourism, and Investment Programme will ensure the city, region and the UK can take advantage of the economic opportunities hosting the Games provides. Many other partners and organisations are actively involved in and contributing to the work of the legacy programme, including Sport England, Spirit of 2012 and the Commonwealth Sports Foundation.

■ Culture and Sports: Coronavirus**Alison McGovern:**[\[100381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to roll out an effective covid-19 track and trace system for cultural and sporting events.

Nigel Huddleston:

Our performing arts and sport guidance makes clear the need for organisers of cultural and sporting events to adhere to government requirements around the NHS Test and Trace system.

Organisers of events should assist the NHS Test and Trace service by keeping a temporary record of spectators for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for their business, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks.

■ Events Industry and Music: Coronavirus**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[99779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support his Department is providing to the (a) events and (b) the music industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

We appreciate the important role that the events and music industries play in the UK's economy, and that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to these sectors.

The Chancellor has announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme come to end. From November, the Jobs Support Scheme will provide further support to returning workers, while the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme will aid the self-employed who are currently actively trading but are facing reduced demand.

We are also offering businesses who face a drop in demand for their services and possible cash flow issues generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans. We will give all businesses that borrowed under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme the option to repay their loan over a period of up to ten years. This will reduce their average monthly repayments on the loan by almost half. We also intend to allow CBILS lenders to extend the term of a loan up to ten years, providing additional flexibility for UK-based SMEs who may otherwise be unable to repay their loans.

In addition, the Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector which will benefit the live music sector by providing support to music venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating.

We continue to engage with the sector to discuss the on-going challenges facing the industry.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus**David Mundell:**[\[96813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations he has received from the Let Live Thrive Campaign for live events in the UK.

Caroline Dinenage:

We have not received any representations from the Let Live Thrive Campaign regarding live events in the UK.

The Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector which will benefit the live events sector by providing support to music venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating.

We continue to engage with the sector to discuss the on-going challenges facing the industry.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[99123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing the events and exhibitions sector to reopen with reduced capacity during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department, working with the events sector and Public Health England, has carried out three pilot business events to ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help the sector reopen when it is safe to do so. However, we needed to pause the planned 1st October reopening of larger conferences and events as part of our response to the recent rise in Covid-19 cases.

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.

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.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[99723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a specific job support scheme for the live events supply chain for the duration of the lockdown restrictions affecting that sector.

Caroline Dinanage:

We appreciate the important role that the events and music industries play in the UK's economy, and that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to these sectors.

We have not made any assessments around the development of a specific job support scheme for the live events supply chain. As you are aware, the Chancellor has announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme come to end. From November, the Jobs Support Scheme will provide further support to returning workers, while the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme will aid the self-employed who are currently actively trading but are facing reduced demand.

We are also offering businesses who face a drop in demand for their services and possible cash flow issues generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans. We will give all businesses that borrowed under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme the option to repay their loan over a period of up to ten years. This will reduce their average monthly repayments on the loan by almost half. We also intend to allow CBILS lenders to extend the term of a loan up to ten years, providing additional flexibility for UK-based SMEs who may otherwise be unable to repay their loans.

In addition, the Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector which will benefit the live music sector by providing support to music venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating.

We continue to engage with the sector to discuss the on-going challenges facing the industry.

■ Football

Alison McGovern:

[\[100378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Government has made of the economic benefits that football clubs can bring to the towns in which they are located throughout the UK.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the bedrock of our local communities. Many public studies demonstrate the significant economic benefit that football clubs bring to towns across the country. These include EY's Economic and Social Impact Assessment which estimates that the Premier League alone contributes £7.6bn to the UK's Gross Domestic Product.

That is why we have provided unprecedented support to businesses through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support, which many football clubs have benefited from. Sport England's Community Emergency Fund has also provided £210 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic.

We have been clear that we expect the game - where it can at the top tiers - to support itself. The Government is focusing its support on those in the sector most in need as a result of the decision not to readmit spectators to stadia from 1 October. We therefore provided the National League with assurances that financial support from the Government will be forthcoming so they could start their season on 3rd October.

■ Football: Coronavirus

Alison McGovern:

[\[100379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what international comparative assessment the Government made of permitting spectators back into football stadiums during the covid-19 pandemic when preparing UK Government guidance on that matter.

Alison McGovern:

[\[100380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to keep under assessment the potential merits of permitting spectators back into football stadiums during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

We are committed to getting spectators back into stadiums as soon as it is safe to do so. We will continue to work closely with a whole range of sports to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes the creation of a new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this, and which will consider international best practice. This will supplement the draft government guidance, and the SGSA supplementary guidance to their Green Guide, which has been internationally welcomed and is now also available in French and Spanish translations.

If transmission rates decrease then we will of course take the opportunity to look again at getting spectators back into stadiums and remain mindful of international efforts to do the same

Jane Stevenson:[\[99120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the scientific advice behind the decision to delay the reopening of football stadiums to fans.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

But as set out in our Roadmap, sports pilots and the full return of fans to stadia would only ever take place when it was safe to do so.

The sport pilot events demonstrated that many risks within these events can be mitigated with Covid secure guidance. However, confirmed Covid-19 cases are now on a sharply upward trajectory. On advice from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser in light of this, a decision was taken that it was not the time to make further easements by reopening stadia to fans.

Jane Stevenson:[\[99733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with local authorities on allowing supporters to return to football stadiums during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

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

In any return to spectators, the relevant authorities and partners would retain their established regulatory and advisory roles at a local level.

■ Football: Finance

Stephen Morgan:

[\[99099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of taking account of the outcomes of the fan-led review of governance when making decisions on the provision of financial support to football clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many with a great history. It is vital they are protected.

The Government is focusing its support on those in the sector most in need as a result of the decision not to readmit spectators to stadia from 1 October. We are working through the details and will set that support in due course.

In parallel, we also continue work on the fan-led review of football governance and are currently considering deciding the scope and structure of the review. Whilst any thorough review could not be concluded in advance of consideration of financial need as a result of a delay to the return of fans, I am clear that the governance and financing of football are intrinsically linked, and will have that in mind as both strands progress.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[99142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to support the live music industry during the next six months of covid-19 social restrictions.

Caroline Dinenage:

We appreciate the important role that the music industry plays in the UK's economy, and that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the sector.

The Chancellor has announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme come to end. From November, the Jobs Support Scheme will provide further support to returning workers, while the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme will aid the self-employed who are currently actively trading but are facing reduced demand.

We are also offering businesses who face a drop in demand for their services and possible cash flow issues generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans. We will give all businesses that borrowed under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme the option to repay their loan over a period of up to ten years. This will reduce their average monthly repayments on the loan by almost half. We also intend to allow CBILS lenders to extend the term of a loan up to ten years, providing additional flexibility for UK-based SMEs who may otherwise be unable to repay their loans.

In addition, the Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector which will benefit the live music sector by providing support to music venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating.

£3.36 million was shared among 136 venues across England who applied for the Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund, as part of this support package. This funding aimed to support those grassroots venues to survive the imminent risk of collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

We continue to engage with the sector to discuss the on-going challenges facing the industry.

■ Sports: West Midlands

Liam Byrne:

[98888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will set out the (a) specific initiatives and (b) associated funding for each initiative funded through the £10.7 million Sport England Birmingham and Solihull Local Delivery Pilot.

Nigel Huddleston:

Since 2017, Sport England's Birmingham and Solihull Local Delivery Pilot has been delivered through The Active Wellbeing Society, the region's Active Partnership, supporting over 600,000 older people, women, young families, BAME communities and children to enjoy the health, wellbeing, social and other benefits of being active.

Sport England is awarding £10,713,328 of National Lottery investment in the 'Active Communities' programme to promote being active across the region until 2024.

Initiatives promoted by this programme include:

- Developing a network of community activity champions;
- A Birmingham Wellbeing panel and 'The Crowd' online platform launching this autumn;
- Social prescribing schemes with healthcare professionals that use local community sports facilities;
- Community activities including Active Streets, Active Parks, the Big Run and Walk Project and Big Bikes Birmingham;
- Schools-based programmes to increase participation in sport and activity ;

- The Share Shacks programme, offering places where people can borrow equipment that helps communities to play sport and be active, supported by additional bike repair services and community cafes; and
- Tactical Urbanism schemes, including 'pop-up parks', redeveloping disused land for community use and supporting low-traffic neighbourhoods.

■ Youth Investment Fund

Stuart Anderson:

[\[99119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his timeframe is for making available funding from the Youth Investment Fund; and what categories of youth provision he plans to prioritise.

Mr John Whittingdale:

DCMS officials continue to assess how COVID-19 is impacting on young people and youth services. We will continue to engage with the youth sector as plans for the Youth Investment Fund develop, and expect to publish further details in due course.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices

Karin Smyth:

[\[100465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of intermediate level apprenticeship starts for young people under the age of 19 between May 2019 and May 2020; and what steps his Department is taking to increase support for apprentices under 19 at that level.

Karin Smyth:

[\[100466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's statistical data on apprenticeships and traineeships, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the change in the number of apprenticeships starts in all age groups at intermediate level between May 2019 and May 2020; and what steps his Department is taking to improve the take-up of apprenticeships at that level.

Gillian Keegan:

Apprenticeship starts across all levels and across all ages have reduced between May 2019 and May 2020, by 58% overall. Starts at Intermediate level have reduced by 73% on average but the reduction has been more pronounced amongst the 16-18 year-old group at 80%, compared to 75% for 19-24 year-olds and 68% for those over the age of 25. The reduction in starts at advanced and higher levels is 61% and 21% respectively.

Data from March 2020 onwards includes the period affected by COVID-19 and the nationwide lockdown, therefore, extra care must be taken in comparing and interpreting data from this period to earlier months as the COVID-19 outbreak has

affected provider behaviour in terms of the reporting of FE and apprenticeship learning during the affected period, and this could vary by provider.

This change in intermediate starts has largely occurred where apprenticeships were struggling to meet the minimum quality standards required by our reforms. We have replaced old-style frameworks, which apprentices and employers told us were not providing the skills they needed, with new employer-designed standards. All new apprentices now start on high-quality standards, following the withdrawal of frameworks in July.

Apprenticeship standards and frameworks are different products. It was previously possible to undertake a framework for the same job at different levels, but on standards there is just one level per occupation. The level of the standard refers to the level an apprentice reaches at the end of the apprenticeship once they are occupationally competent not at the beginning, and this is determined by employers.

Traineeships can help young people build the skills they need to undertake an apprenticeship or other job, and we are tripling the number of places in the 2020/21 academic year so that more young people have access to high-quality training.

Apprenticeships are more important than ever in helping people of all ages develop the skills they need and supporting our economic recovery. To encourage employers to offer new apprenticeship opportunities, to people of all ages and at all levels, we have introduced incentive payments. Employers are now able to claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25 between 1 August 2020 and 31 January 2021, and £1,500 for those 25 and over.

We are working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to enable Kickstart placements to turn into apprenticeships where that is the right thing for the employer and the individual. Employers offering apprenticeships to young people on the placements will be able to claim the new incentive.

We want to expand apprenticeship opportunities and are exploring with employers how we can make apprenticeships work better in certain sectors, for example those with more flexible and short-term models of employment. We also want to ensure we grow the number of small and medium-sized enterprises offering apprenticeships and are continuing to work with smaller employers to give them the confidence and support to take on new apprentices.

■ Apprentices: Finance

Karin Smyth:

[100467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's ring-fenced annual apprenticeship budget was for the 2019-20 academic year; how much of that budget was spent on training and assessment; and whether there was an underspend in that academic year.

Gillian Keegan:

The department's ring-fenced apprenticeship budget is set to fund apprenticeships in England only. This budget is used to fund training for new apprenticeship starts in levy and non-levy paying employers and to cover the ongoing costs of apprentices already in training.

It is also used to cover the cost of end-point assessment and any additional payments made to employers and providers. This means that employers of all sizes, across England, can provide apprenticeship opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

In the 2020-21 financial year, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England is almost £2.5 billion – double what was spent in 2010-11. Similarly, the ring-fenced apprenticeship budget for the 2019-20 financial year was almost £2.5 billion.

The total spend in the 2019-20 financial year, inclusive of spend on training and assessment, was £1.9 billion, leading to an underspend against the budget of approximately £600 million.

Details of actual spend against the apprenticeships budget are published in the Education and Skills Funding Agency's annual report and accounts.

■ Breakfast Clubs: Disadvantaged**Gill Furniss:****[99700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to provide free breakfasts for disadvantaged children during school holidays; and what contingency planning he is undertaking to provide that support in the event of school closures as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

During the COVID-19 outbreak while schools were largely shut, children from more than 1,800 schools taking part in the National School Breakfast Programme in disadvantaged areas were offered healthy breakfast support over the summer holidays, giving them nutritious meals to start their day.

Schools on the programme have flexibility in how they provide breakfast meals and can choose to support children in the way which works best for them. This may include parents collecting food parcels from open schools or breakfast food 'drop offs' to families where appropriate. This should be arranged alongside the school's wider support for children on free school meals (FSM), and schools must follow the government's advice on social distancing at all times.

In the event of local restrictions on education and childcare settings (including before-school clubs and after-school clubs) being required, the department will publish operational guidance for settings in the affected area to support them to implement contingency plans. We have also published guidance to help schools with secondary year groups plan for tier 2 local restrictions, outlining their responsibilities regarding FSM. This guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how->

[schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions#free-school-meals.](#)

■ Children in Care

Tulip Siddiq:

[98729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of (a) banning or (b) introducing a minimum standard of care quality required for the placement of children in care in unregulated care settings.

Vicky Ford:

Children in care and care leavers are some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society, so we must do all that we can to ensure that they have access to suitable, safe and secure accommodation that meets their needs and keeps them safe. While most children in care are placed in foster care or children's homes, independent and semi-independent provision (often referred to as unregulated) can offer a place to live with more independence, and when combined with the right level of high quality support, to meet the needs of the older children placed there, can play a vital role in the care system. However, too often we find that children are placed in this accommodation when it does not meet their needs or keep them safe. That is why we have consulted on an ambitious programme of reform to drive up quality and ensure that placements are appropriate. The consultation document is available here: https://consult.education.gov.uk/unregulated-provision/unregulated-provision-children-in-care/supporting_documents/Unregulated%20consultation%20FINAL%20link.pdf.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, made clear when he wrote to all local authorities last year that these settings are simply not appropriate for children under the age of 16, which is why we have consulted on banning the placement of under 16s in independent and semi-independent settings.

Through the consultation we made clear that, while many independent and semi-independent settings were good, and provided high quality accommodation to meet the needs of older children, this was too inconsistent. That is why we consulted on introducing mandatory national standards for this provision, and whether these should be overseen and enforced by local authorities or by Ofsted.

Our consultation on these issues received a strong response from the sector, and from the care-experienced young people we spoke to. We are now considering this input, with a view to publishing the government's response to the consultation, including next steps, in due course.

■ Education

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[907377]

What assessment he has made of the potential effect of the end of the transition period on (a) further and (b) higher education.

Michelle Donelan:

The department is considering all aspects of how exiting the EU might affect further and higher education. This includes consideration of participation in EU-funded programmes, future arrangements for migration and for access to student finance support. We are committed to ensuring the country is prepared for every eventuality.

My officials also regularly engage with sector stakeholders on a range of issues, including leaving the EU and the Transition Period.

■ **Education: Scotland****Patrick Grady:****[907378]**

What discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the effect of the United Kingdom Internal Market Bill on Scotland's education system.

Michelle Donelan:

I meet regularly with education ministers from all of the devolved administrations and value our dialogue on a range of matters. During the course of recent meetings we have discussed aspects of the UK Internal Market Bill that are relevant to education.

My officials continue to work closely with colleagues in the devolved administrations on a range of matters. They have also discussed the UK Internal Market Bill with their counterparts.

■ **Education: Standards****Abena Oppong-Asare:****[98780]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to close the educational attainment gap in the last five years.

Vicky Ford:

We understand that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds may face greater challenges to realise their potential at school. This is why, since 2011, we have given more than £18 billion in extra grant funding to schools through the pupil premium, so that they can provide their disadvantaged pupils with additional support. £12 billion of this has been invested in schools since 2015.

In 2011, we established the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) to research and share the most effective approaches to improving academic outcomes. Since 2011, the EEF has run and reported on hundreds of trials in thousands of English schools. It maintains a range of internationally recognised effective practice resources and, in 2019, published its Pupil Premium Guide to help school leaders make the most impact with their pupil premium. All EEF's website resources are free to English schools. The EEF's Pupil Premium Guide is available here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>.

Between 2011 and 2019, the disadvantage attainment gap narrowed by 13% at age 11 and by 9% at age 16 against a background of rising standards. By early 2020,

86% of schools were judged to be good or outstanding, compared with 68% in 2010. Our reforms, and the focus provided by the pupil premium, supported this improvement.

Recognising the impact of school closures on all pupils, particularly the disadvantaged, on 19 June, we announced a £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package. Alongside our £650 million universal catch-up premium that enables schools to prioritise support for specific groups of pupils according to their needs, we launched the National Tutoring Programme to provide targeted support worth up to £350 million for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils who are most at risk of falling further behind. Schools in the most deprived areas will be supported to provide intensive catch-up support to their pupils in small groups using academic mentors. This is in addition to our 2019 core funding commitment that will see an extra £14.4 billion provided to schools over the next 3 years.

■ Foster Care

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[100420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including foster carers in the list of critical workers.

Vicky Ford:

The department recognises that this is a very difficult time for foster families, who are caring for some of our most vulnerable children and play a vital role in caring for looked after children.

The government considers foster carers to be essential to the country's response in tackling the COVID-19 outbreak, and as such, foster carers have been prioritised for access to COVID-19 testing where they are symptomatic. They are also able to access personal protective equipment supplies, via their fostering service, where they need them.

In some areas, fostering services have started to find ways to deliver respite to give foster families a break via household bubbles. We recognise that the government's revised rules around social distancing and the experience of local lockdowns in some areas of the country may mean that respite is not available for all foster families. We would encourage respite carers to approach their agencies to see how they can be most useful and for fostering services to draw upon the experience and skills of respite carers when looking at how they can continue to best support children and their foster families.

The department remains committed to taking the necessary action to ensure that foster parents receive the respect and support that they need and deserve. We are considering options to help those services to boost their recruitment and maintain support for respite carers but have yet to publish plans. The role of foster parents is invaluable, especially now, and we want to drive forward change to empower them to care for our vulnerable children.

As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19 outbreak.

Our latest guidance for fostering services is available here:

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

■ Overseas Students: Hong Kong

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[99534]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the tuition fees that will apply to BNO citizens from Hong Kong in the event that they move to live in the UK.

Michelle Donelan:

I refer the hon. Member for East Londonderry to the answer I gave on 7 July 2020 to Question [68342](#).

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Sir David Evennett:

[98664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support schools that experience outbreaks of covid-19.

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 how schools should manage confirmed 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. We are continuing to improve the testing system to ensure teaching staff can get priority access when they have symptoms.

The Department is also supplying COVID-19 test kits directly to schools and further education (FE) colleges for both staff and students who develop the symptoms of COVID-19 and face significant barriers to accessing a test through existing routes. We have emailed all schools and FE colleges with details of how to access additional test kits via an online portal that opened on 16 September. Home testing kits will be supplied in boxes of 10, with one box provided per 1,000 students. A new order may be placed 21 days after the last order was dispatched.

When a test kit has been issued to a symptomatic staff member, who subsequently tests negative and is not a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 cases, the member of staff can return to work as soon as they feel well enough. Schools and FE

colleges were prioritised for the distribution of these test kits to support their full re-opening from the autumn term.

Schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended school has tested positive for COVID-19. There is a new dedicated advice line to help schools, colleges or early years settings to implement the most appropriate public health measures, once a case is confirmed. A team of advisors will inform education settings what action is needed in response to a positive case based on the latest public health advice, and work through a risk assessment.

For individual or groups of pupils who need to self-isolate, remote education plans should be in place. Where a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate, or local restrictions require pupils to remain at home, we expect schools to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education. On 1 October, the Department announced a package of remote education support designed to help schools and colleges build on and deliver their existing plans in the event that individuals or groups of pupils are unable to attend school because of COVID-19. Schools will be able to access a new central support hub, where resources and information on remote education will be housed. This support has been co-designed with schools and includes a range of school-led webinars and resources intended to share good practice.

The Department is also investing £1.5 million of additional funding to expand the EdTech Demonstrator programme – a peer support network offering advice, guidance and training to schools and colleges in effective use of technology, including how it can support remote education.

The Department has made £4.84 million available for Oak National Academy, both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20 and for the 2020-21 academic year, to provide free video lessons for reception up to year 11. It provides lessons across a broad range of subjects and includes specialist content for pupils with SEND. The support package can be accessed at:

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

Sir David Evennett:

[98665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many suspected covid-19 related school absences there were in (a) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency, (b) Bexley Borough, (c) London and (d) England in September 2020.

Nick Gibb:

Keeping close track of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools is a priority for the Government. Public Health England (PHE) leads in holding data on infection, incidence and COVID-19 cases overall. PHE have published data on COVID-19 incidents by institution, including educational institution. This data can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports> (page 16).

The Department is currently collecting data from schools on a daily basis, as well as gathering information from local areas and following up with individual settings to confirm that procedures for requiring pupils to isolate are well understood and that necessary decisions are made on the basis of public health advice.

The Department collects data on the number of schools that have indicated that they have either sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures, or have staff shortages due to COVID-19 related absences. The Department is currently looking at the quality of that data with a view to publishing it as part of the official statistics series. The series includes published data on school openings and attendance, which shows that at a national level approximately 93% of state funded schools were fully open on 1 October. Of all schools that responded to the survey, 7% said they were not fully open due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 on 1 October. Approximately 90% of all children on roll in all state funded schools were in attendance on 1 October. Equivalent estimates have not been made at more local levels, including Bexley, London and Bexleyheath and Crayford. More information is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[98676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) laptops, (b) tablets and (c) 4G wireless routers were provided to children attending (i) Hull City Council schools or (ii) Kingston upon Hull academy trust schools through the Government since schools closed on 20 March 2020 due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

In the summer term, the Department 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. This information can be viewed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912888/Devices_and_4G_wireless_routers_progress_data_as_of_27_August_2020.pdf.

This includes information about devices delivered to Kingston upon Hull and academy trusts within Kingston upon Hull.

The laptops and tablets were an injection of support to help local authorities and academy trusts provide access to education and social care during COVID-19 restrictions.

Where devices were distributed to a local authority for disadvantaged year 10 pupils, the local authority was responsible for allocating and delivering devices to local authority maintained schools.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[98778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to tackle the educational attainment gap following the closure of schools as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[98779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the effect of the plans he has implemented on the time it will take to close the current educational attainment gap of one month.

Vicky Ford:

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

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

The National Tutoring Programme sits alongside our £650 million universal catch-up premium funding for the current academic year, that will enable schools to prioritise support for specific groups of pupils according to their needs. We have also provided funding to support small group tuition for 16-19 year olds and the improvement of early language skills in reception classes. This £1 billion package is additional to the £14.4 billion 3 year investment in schools that we announced last year. Schools continue to receive the £2.4 billion pupil premium that allows school leaders to tailor the support they provide, based on the needs of their disadvantaged pupils, to accelerate their progress and improve their attainment.

This significant cash injection helps schools to take immediate action to address the learning lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We will continue to monitor the attainment gap closely, both at primary and secondary levels, as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson: [98673]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to ensure adequate supplies of covid-19 tests are available for students living in grouped university accommodation.

Dame Diana Johnson: [98674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to respond to covid-19 outbreaks in group university accommodation.

Dame Diana Johnson: [98675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many universities in England have reported covid-19 outbreaks on campus grounds.

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 institutions in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

Capacity for COVID-19 testing is the highest it has ever been and we are seeing significant demand. The department continues to work closely with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), and with sector representatives, to ensure that any students who display COVID-19 symptoms can have quick and easy access to testing.

The government has set a target of 500,000 tests a day by the end of October. Local testing sites will be most accessible to students and have the quickest test result turnaround. DHSC plan to increase the total number of sites to 150 by the end of October, and to 400 sites by the end of January 2021. Many of these new testing sites will be located near universities. In addition, there are 258 mobile testing units. Where there is a mobile testing unit in the vicinity of the university, students and staff will also be able book a test at one of these units. We are working closely with DHSC and NHS Test and Trace towards a position in which all universities have access to testing within 1.5 miles of their campus, where possible.

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 plan carefully to keep students and staff as safe as possible. We have updated our guidance for providers on reopening campuses, which provides advice on teaching, accommodation and student services. Our guidance takes account of the latest advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, which has been considering the risks of reopening higher education providers. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/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 outbreak response plans. These have been or are being agreed with local Directors of Public Health. The plans cover a range of scenarios and will ensure providers are prepared to respond quickly to a COVID-19 outbreak in their educational setting or wider community. The situation is constantly changing, but we are working with Public Health England to monitor those universities that have COVID-19 outbreaks and to make sure universities and Directors of Public Health are working together to respond appropriately to any outbreaks.

■ **Students: Finance**

Emma Hardy:

[\[100524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making financial support available to students wishing to complete a second undergraduate degree.

Michelle Donelan:

Students studying on a strategically important course are already able to access student support for a qualification at an equivalent or lower level to one they already hold.

For other students, those who already have a qualification that is equivalent to or at a higher level than the course they wish to study, will not qualify for maintenance or fee support. This ensures that finite public funds are focussed on those studying a higher education qualification for the first time.

■ **Teachers: Training**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[100429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve the provision of mental health training for (a) schoolteachers and (b) university lecturers.

Vicky Ford:

The government is committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children, young people and the school, college and university staff who support them.

School, college and university staff cannot act as mental health experts, and they should not try to diagnose conditions. However, it is important that they are able to identify possible mental health problems, so they are able to put appropriate support in place. It is up to schools and colleges to decide what training to offer their staff, but we have put in place a range of training for them to draw on.

Training has been particularly important to give schools confidence to deal with issues that will have arisen during the COVID-19 outbreak. To ensure that staff are equipped to support wellbeing as children and young people returned to schools and colleges, we made it a central part of our guidance both on remote education and on

the return to school. We supported this with a range of training and materials, including webinars which have been accessed by thousands of education staff. We have also accelerated training on how to teach about mental health as part of the new relationships, sex and health curriculum, so that all pupils can benefit from this long-term requirement.

To provide further support during the autumn and spring terms the department has worked with our partners, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Health Education England, Public Health England and key voluntary sector organisations, to launch Wellbeing for Education Return. This project, backed by £8 million, will train local experts to provide additional training, advice and resources to schools and colleges, to help support pupil and student wellbeing, resilience and recovery. It will give staff the confidence to support pupils and students, their parents, carers and their own colleagues, and know how and where to access appropriate specialist support where needed.

This specific support is building on our longer-term activity to help support teacher knowledge. As part of this, the government has successfully delivered on the 2017 commitment of my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, to make mental health awareness training available to all eligible secondary schools by March 2020. To help embed knowledge and practice in schools, we are now in the process of developing a bespoke senior mental health lead training programme. The training will equip senior mental health leads with the knowledge to introduce or develop their whole school and college approach to mental health, implement effective processes for ensuring pupils and students with mental health problems receive appropriate support and to promote positive mental health within the school or college so that it becomes a key part of how schools and colleges operate. The knowledge requirements and expected outcomes for the training closely align to Public Health England's 'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. A whole school and college approach', which is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf.

We also remain committed to our major joint green paper delivery programme with DHSC and NHS England, including introducing new mental health support teams linked to schools and colleges, and testing approaches to faster access to NHS specialist support.

We also recognise the importance of supporting staff with their own mental health and wellbeing. This is why we are funding a £95,000 pilot project with the Education Support Partnership, to focus on leaders' mental health, providing online peer-support and telephone supervision from experts to around 250 school leaders. This is in addition to funding of £45,000 we provided to Timewise, to provide practical support and resources on flexible working, in light of new arrangements for schools responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is up to higher education institutions to decide how to support their students and what training to offer to staff. The government strongly supports the University Mental

Health Charter, which aims to drive up standards in promoting student and staff mental health and wellbeing. We are also working closely with Universities UK on embedding the Step Change: Mentally Healthy Universities framework, calling on higher education leaders to adopt mental health as a strategic priority and take a whole-institution approach, embedding it across all policies, cultures, curricula and practice.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[907386\]](#)

What assessment he has made on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on universities.

Michelle Donelan:

We have worked across government and with the higher education (HE) sector to understand the impact of COVID-19.

In response, between April to September we have announced a suite of measures to mitigate the impact of the virus upon the HE sector and HE students and staff. This includes the HE stabilisation package, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's research stabilisation package, access to business support schemes, the capital fund and the HE restructuring regime.

We have prioritised the mental health and well-being of students, emphasising our strong support for the University Mental Health Charter and continued to work closely with Universities UK on embedding the Step Change: Mentally Healthy Universities framework. We confirmed universities and HE providers were able to use Office for Students (OfS) Student Premium funding towards student hardship funds and announced the OfS funded, Student Minds Led, Student Space which has been designed to work alongside existing mental health services.

Importantly, to support universities to reopen this autumn, to enable them to provide high quality education to students in a COVID-secure environment, we have provided advice and guidance on reopening and have worked to ensure universities have robust outbreak plans in place. We will shortly also be providing additional guidance on winter planning and end of term preparation.

Emma Hardy:

[\[99091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many universities are currently operating under tier (a) one, (b) two, (c) three and (d) four covid-19 restrictions; and how many students are represented in each of those tier restriction categories.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities agree their COVID-19 outbreak plans with their local Directors of Public Health, and those plans are shared with the department.

The situation is evolving constantly as students return to higher education. So far we know that 4 universities have moved to tier three, with these decisions being made in collaboration with local public health teams. Other universities are in either tier 1 or tier 2.

Universities: Electronic Publishing**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[99635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the (a) affordability and (b) availability of academic ebooks on the teaching content of university courses.

Michelle Donelan:

This is a difficult and uncertain time for students, but we are working with the higher education sector to make sure all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies, and ensure that students receive a high-quality academic experience and help students to achieve qualifications that they and employers value.

The Office for Students has made it clear that providers must continue to provide sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The government has 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 outbreak. Providers were able to use the funding, worth around £23 million per month for April to July this year and £256 million for this academic year, towards student hardship funds. Course costs, including academic books, will be considered as part of the assessment of the level of hardship support provided to a student.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Private Finance Initiative****Alan Brown:**[\[99031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what live PFI contracts his Department has; and for each of those contracts (a) what service is provided, (b) when the contract became live, (c) what the remaining term of the contract is and (d) what the annual repayments are.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra group Property has one commercial letting structured as a PFI contract: Eastbrook, Cambridge.

Responding in the order raised for the Eastbrook contract:

1. Full accommodation supply
2. Commenced 12/05/2003
3. Expires 22/04/2033
4. FY 2020 / 2021 repayment - £1,809,404.55

■ Environment Protection: British Overseas Territories

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[98667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on the design and implementation of the Darwin Plus programme.

Rebecca Pow:

The current round of applications for the Darwin Plus programme closed on 8 September 2020, with 52 applications received from across the overseas territories.

In March 2020 the Chancellor announced an increase in funding for Darwin Plus and work is on-going to replace or enhance the existing programme. We will use the 2019 Call for Evidence on “Safeguarding the Environment in the British Overseas Territories” to inform this redesign and we aim to launch the new scheme in early 2021.

Some changes have already been made by making Darwin Plus and any successor programme a non-Official Development Assistance (ODA) fund only with ODA territories now being eligible for funding from the main Darwin Initiative programme. Making this change will make both funds more efficient and streamlined.

■ Fishery Agreements: Norway

Emma Hardy:

[\[99094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when negotiations on the first annual agreement with Norway within the new fisheries framework to set total allowable catches, agree access arrangements to fish in each other's waters, and agree quota shares will begin.

Emma Hardy:

[\[99095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the negotiation of the first annual agreement with Norway within the new fisheries framework to set total allowable catches, agree access arrangements to fish in each other's waters, and agree quota shares will be concluded by 1 January 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK-Norway fisheries framework agreement provides a legal framework for annual negotiations between the UK and Norway. These negotiations will concern the exchange of quota between the parties and access to waters. There will be no setting of total allowable catches in this bilateral forum.

Separately, a number of North Sea stocks now fall to be jointly managed by the UK, Norway and the EU. Accordingly, separate trilateral discussions will be needed to establish trilateral governance arrangements for these stocks.

The UK's bilateral negotiations with Norway and trilateral negotiations with Norway and the EU will both take place later this year. Exact timings for these negotiations are still to be confirmed, but the UK aims to conclude them in enough time to provide certainty for industry ahead of the 2021 fishing year.

■ Fishing Catches

Luke Pollard:

[98765]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the fishing license condition issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessels affecting Cat A (91/99) and Cat A limited (94/99) issued on 27 September 2020 has been communicated to the EU.

Victoria Prentis:

As the fishing vessel licence condition, issued to non-sector under 10 metre vessel owners on 27 September 2020, impacted the domestic fleet only, this was not communicated to the EU.

■ Food: Coronavirus

Naz Shah:

[98998]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken ensure that people on the covid-19 shielded patient list who were not registered for free food parcels by 1 August 2020 can continue to have priority access to supermarket home deliveries.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has successfully secured the agreement of supermarkets to continue to provide support to the clinically extremely vulnerable.

Supermarkets continue to provide support to their vulnerable customers through offers such as priority access to delivery slots, in-store shopping assistance, and home delivery of food boxes which can be purchased over the phone for customers without internet access.

Additionally, there are a number of options available for individuals who identify as vulnerable and want help accessing food. Vulnerable individuals can contact their local authority, or one of Defra's charity partners (AgeUK, Scope or RNIB), to be referred for the Priority Food Delivery Scheme. Through this scheme, vulnerable individuals or their carers can shop online with priority access to Tesco or Iceland delivery slots.

Vulnerable individuals can also request help from an NHS volunteer responder in gaining access to food, prescriptions and other essential items by calling the phone line or visiting the Royal Voluntary Service website.

■ Food: Kirklees

Tracy Brabin:

[100508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the £551,350.34 provided to Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council via the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant due to end at the end of October 2020, what funding will be provided to ensure that Kirklees can continue to provide local crisis support to people in financial need.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has put in place a range of support for families. The Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant includes £63 million for local authorities to help those who are struggling financially due to the impact of COVID-19. Additionally, the Department for Work and Pensions has increased Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by over £1,000 a year for this financial year, benefiting over 4 million households, and increased Local Housing Allowance rates – putting an average of £600 into people's pockets.

We are providing local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, including over £4.8 billion in funding for spending pressures, comprising £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and over £1.1 billion for the Infection Control Fund. Kirklees Council has received £28.22 million in additional COVID-19 funding, on top of an increase in core spending power of £19.84 million (6.6%) this year.

The 2020 Spending Review is our opportunity to get the right funding for local government over the coming years, following the 4.4% real terms increase in Core Spending Power delivered in 2019, the largest year-on-year increase for a decade.

Food: Overseas Trade**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[100310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his ministerial colleagues on the documentation which food importers and exporters will need after the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The changes to requirements and certification for movements of animals, products of animal origin, plants and seeds at the end of the transition period is a matter of frequent discussion in Cabinet committees overseeing the Government's plans and preparations for the end of the transition period.

Freight: Agricultural Products**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[100309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will prioritise the movement of agricultural products for firms relying on just-in-time production between the UK and EU after the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain.

Defra is working closely with officials in the Department for Transport, the Borders and Protocol Delivery Group, and other Government departments on the transport of food products, including considering prioritising movements in the event of disruption.

Across Government we are introducing a number of measures which will ensure the quick and efficient transport of food products between the UK and EU. The Check an HGV is Ready to Cross the Border service (formerly referred to as the Smart Freight

service) and Kent Access Permit are designed to ensure smooth flow of freight, including food, to the EU from Kent.

In parallel to the Check an HGV service, Defra is developing contingency plans to prioritise certain goods for exports, which will be deployed if severe and sustained traffic disruption arises in Kent. We have consulted on proposals to allow for the prioritisation of a limited range of goods through Kent. This would include agricultural products based on strict criteria of perishability, animal welfare and economic impact to specific geographical areas of the UK.

The Government is also taking contingency measures to ensure the continued supply of Category 1 goods in the event of disruption to key freight flows at the end of the transition period. The Category 1 goods list includes critical food chain dependencies, such as chemicals and key additives used within the food supply chain. Should it be required, Government freight capacity will enable the prioritised import of certain inputs required for just-in-time production in the UK.

■ Freight: Food

Kerry McCarthy:

[100308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring the quick and efficient transport of food products between the UK and EU border after the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain.

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required, Government freight capacity will enable the prioritised import of certain inputs required for just-in-time production in the UK.

■ National Parks Review

Damian Hinds:

[\[98694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timescale is for responding to the Glover Landscapes Review published in September 2019.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to ensuring our Protected Landscapes flourish as havens for nature and are places that everyone can visit and enjoy.

The Glover Landscapes Review set out a compelling vision for more beautiful, more biodiverse and more accessible National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We welcome this ambition and consider it important that we actively engage with stakeholders to inform and develop our response.

We are working on our response to the Review, with a focus on those recommendations requiring collective action and new ways of working nationally. The Government will come forward with firm proposals for implementing the Glover Landscapes Review in due course.

■ Peat

Olivia Blake:

[\[99787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will set a date for publication of the England Peat Strategy.

Rebecca Pow:

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, we committed to publishing an England Peat Strategy to create and deliver a new ambitious framework for peat restoration in England. We intend to publish the strategy later this year.

■ Sanitary Protection: Plastics

Luke Pollard:

[\[98764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to extend the single use plastic ban to include plastic in sanitary products.

Rebecca Pow:

Plastic has an important role to play in many products due to its strength and sterility. We must therefore think carefully about how we solve the problems arising from plastic waste in order to avoid unintended consequences. We regularly meet with producers, including of sanitary products, to discuss the sustainability of their products, and will continue to do so to innovate and find sustainable and practical solutions to the impact of sanitary products on the environment.

We are seeking new powers in our landmark Environment Bill to drive the market towards more sustainable products, which for some products may be more

appropriate than a ban. This includes powers to introduce ecodesign requirements and to require retailers to charge for single-use plastic items. These measures alongside others within the Bill, form a package of powers that will help incentivise and shift the market towards more reusable alternatives.

■ **Slaughterhouses: CCTV**

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[99533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what measures are in place to ensure that all slaughterhouses (a) are compliant and (b) remain compliant with rules mandating the instillation and use of CCTV; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Mandatory Use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in Slaughterhouses (England) Regulations 2018 came into force on 4 May 2018. In order to allow slaughterhouses in England time to install a suitable CCTV system a six-month transition period was included so that enforcement powers came into force in November 2018. Guidance and support on implementation was provided to slaughterhouse operators during the transition period.

CCTV compliance is monitored and enforced in all approved slaughterhouses in England by Official Veterinarians of the Food Standards Agency. They also ensure that all animal welfare requirements are met and CCTV complements this.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **British Nationals Abroad: Detainees**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[99690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how his Department monitors and measures its performance in returning British citizens home who are arbitrarily detained overseas.

Nigel Adams:

HMG provides consular assistance in approximately 5,000 new cases of arrest or detention overseas each year. We can, and often do, intervene in cases where it is alleged that a British national detained overseas has not been treated in line with internationally accepted standards. This includes, but is not limited to, cases where it is alleged that detention is arbitrary. We monitor satisfaction with our service amongst the full range of British nationals we help, including detainees. We do not keep central statistics relating to cases where arbitrary detention has been alleged. Nor do we monitor whether British nationals released from foreign custody return to their homes, whether in the UK or overseas.

■ Catalonia: Sovereignty

Patrick Grady:

[\[99649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish a response to EDM 936, on the Disqualification of the President of Catalonia, tabled by the hon. Member for Arfon.

Wendy Morton:

This is a matter for Spain and the Spanish courts. Political leaders, like anyone else, have a duty to abide by the law.

■ Colombia: Human Rights

Jim Shannon:

[\[100389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the situation for human rights defenders in Colombia.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government remains concerned about the persistent level of violence towards human rights defenders in Colombia, and we have noted indications that this may have worsened during the COVID-19 lockdown.

We regularly raise this issue, as well as specific cases of concern with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. We have also called on the Colombian Government to prioritise tackling and preventing this violence. Most recently, our Permanent Representative to the UN expressed our deep concern at the UN Security Council on 14 July, and we will use our position as penholder to raise the issue with the international community at next week's Security Council meeting.

I emphasised that the UK views this issue as one of utmost importance during a phone call with Colombian Foreign Minister Claudia Blum on 2 June. Lord Ahmad, the Minister responsible for human rights, will reiterate these concerns when he makes a virtual visit to Colombia next week.

Colombia is a UK Government 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and as such, our Embassy in Bogota has provided significant programming to help those at risk, including support to the Attorney General's office to strengthen their capacity in investigating threats against, and murders of human rights defenders.

We will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia.

■ Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Lisa Nandy:

[\[100377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2020 to Question 88867 on Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, whether the UK abides by the spirit of Protocol V by adhering to Article 4 and making information on the use or abandonment during armed conflict of explosive ordnance which may have become explosive remnants of war

available to the party or parties in control of the affected area following the cessation or activities in such area.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to abide by the spirit of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and adheres to Article 4, which outlines the obligations for Parties to the Convention on the recording, retaining and transmission of information.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Claudia Webbe:

[\[98783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK Chargé d'Affaires to the UN's statement of 8 September 2020 at the Security Council briefing on resolution 2332, what diplomatic steps he is taking to support the UN Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire to help tackle the covid-19 pandemic.

Nigel Adams:

The UK strongly supports the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2532, and calls on all UN Member States to uphold their international commitments. We have made that support clear at the UN Security Council, and in joint statements with other UN member states as part of the Groups of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and Children and Armed Conflict on 30 March, and the Protection of Civilians on 27 May.

COVID-19 affects vulnerable countries in different ways. In our statement assessing the global ceasefire to help fight COVID-19 at the UN Security Council on 8 September, we pressed the need to look further ahead at evolving risks to instability and take action to prevent conflict. The UK Government believes problems with access to humanitarian aid and healthcare should be highlighted in such assessments. We also support horizon scanning, effective early warning mechanisms and UN analysis from the ground to enable us to respond in a more agile and timely manner to threats to international peace and security. We will continue to work within the UN Security Council and with international partners to promote initiatives which build on the global ceasefire and marshal support for UN efforts to take forward peace processes and mitigate risks of conflict escalation.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[98784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK Chargé d'Affaires to the UN's statement of 8 September 2020 at the Security Council briefing on resolution 2332, what steps the Government has taken to remove British troops from conflict zones around the globe.

Nigel Adams:

The UK strongly supports the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2532 and the ongoing role of necessary counter terrorism operations to protect civilian populations and prevent terror groups from using the COVID-19 pandemic to their advantage.

Our armed forces continue to keep us safe from threats that we face and, through their participation in peacekeeping operations and observer missions, continue to protect the most vulnerable.

Liz Twist:

[\[99713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on their Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is working closely with international partners to deliver a robust and coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the G7, G20 and other fora, and has been advocating for economic resilience and recovery to be at the heart of this approach. With India, the UK pressed for the G20 Action Plan that agreed a package of measures to mitigate the economic impact on the worst affected countries, including through debt relief. On 30 September, during the UN General Assembly, the Foreign Secretary co-hosted "Accelerating the End of the COVID-19 Pandemic" with the UN Secretary General, WHO Director General and Health Minister of South Africa. This event brought together world leaders, UN agencies, scientists, pharmaceutical companies and donors to pledge additional support and agree new ways of working together in the international fight against COVID. The Foreign Secretary also visited Vietnam and South Korea from 28 September to 1 October, where he discussed the UK's leading role in supporting global efforts to develop and equitably distribute COVID-19 vaccines. On 21 September, the Foreign Secretary and Canadian Minister Karina Gould co-chaired a meeting of the informal Development Ministers' Contact Group on COVID-19. The group includes members from the G7 and Five Eyes, plus Sweden and Norway.

■ Diplomatic Service: Standards

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[99691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Key Performance Indicators are for his Department's Consular Department.

Nigel Adams:

Consular Directorate's commitments are set out in a Customer Charter published in 'Support for British nationals abroad: A guide'. Consular Directorate's primary KPI is customer satisfaction. We monitor satisfaction with our service amongst a full range of British nationals we help through a combination of online and telephone interviews, conducted on our behalf by an independent research agency. Consular Directorate's customer satisfaction performance is published in the FCDO Annual Report.

■ Eritrea: Christianity**Mr Gregory Campbell:****[100304]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Eritrea on the ongoing treatment of 27 Christians released on bail after being detained without trial for several years.

James Duddridge:

We welcome the recent release of at least 60 Christians, as well as people from other faith groups. The UK Government, along with partners in the international community, takes every opportunity to voice our concern about arbitrary arrests and detentions in Eritrea, and have called for the release of those arrested and detained on the basis of religion. Over the past year, our Ambassador in Asmara has raised arbitrary detentions of members of the Christian community, as well as members of non-registered religious groups - most recently with the Minister of Information on 7 August. We will continue to seek opportunities to raise these cases in our engagements.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**Preet Kaur Gill:****[100510]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer to Written Question 95716, whether any Parliamentarians were consulted on the merger prior to the Prime Minister's 16 June statement.

Preet Kaur Gill:**[100511]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October to Question 95714, whether any of the 26 NGOs consulted on the merger prior to the Prime Minister's statement on the 16th of June.

James Duddridge:

As with any such change in the machinery of government, the announcement of the forthcoming creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was brought to Parliament first.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contracts**Layla Moran:****[100536]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of his Department's spending on management consultancy contracts (a) in the last year and (b) in each year since 2010.

Nigel Adams:

Information on legacy FCO and DFID consultancy spend for the last financial year and all previous years can be found in the departmental annual reports and accounts published on GOV.uk.

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

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[100512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October to Question 95714 on Non-Governmental Organisations, how many of the 50 calls with stakeholders he conducted; and whether he attended the round-table involving 16 civil society organisations chaired by Baroness Sugg on 19 August.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign Secretary agreed a substantial engagement plan to engage parliamentarians and others on the FCDO's creation led by the then joint FCO-DFID Ministerial team.

The Foreign Secretary discussed the merger with a range of stakeholders through wide-ranging formal and informal engagements, including with Heads of Multilateral Organisations and Joint Ministers with CEO-level leading voices in civil society and business. Baroness Sugg, as the Minister responsible, led our engagement with Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations, hosting a series of roundtables.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[100513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October to Question 95714 on Non-Governmental Organisations, what criteria his Department used to select the NGOs to discuss the merger with.

James Duddridge:

A substantial engagement plan was agreed by the Foreign Secretary, led by strong engagement from the then joint Ministers across the FCDO, to engage parliamentarians and others on the FCDO's creation. The Foreign Secretary had calls with Heads of Multilateral Organisations and Joint Ministers with CEO-level leading voices in civil society and business, as well as calls with major partners.

■ Gender: Equality

Chris Law: [\[99646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure gender equality remains a strategic priority of his Department.

Wendy Morton:

Advancing gender equality and women's rights are a core part of the UK Government's mission, and Global Britain's role as a force for good in the world. For example, between 2015 and 2020, we supported 8.1 million girls gain access to a decent education, and in 2019-20 alone we provided 25.4 million women and girls with modern methods of family planning, saving thousands of lives. The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to this agenda.

As the Foreign Secretary set out in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly on the 1 October, the UK is working with our international partners to ensure gender equality is a central element of the COVID-19 recovery. The FCDO will continue to champion 12 years of quality education for every girl in the world.

This October marks the 20th anniversary of UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, next year the UK will take up Presidency of the G7 and COP26, and the UK is already co-leading the new global Generation Equality Action Coalition on gender-based violence to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action on Gender Equality. All these represent moments for the UK to champion gender equality

Chris Law:

[\[99648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to adopt and implement the Department for International Development's Strategic Vision on Gender Equality as the gender strategy for his Department.

Wendy Morton:

As the Foreign Secretary said in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on the 1 October, we must use this moment as a catalyst for change, so that all women and girls have equal rights, so that they can fulfil their potential. Global Britain is proud to be a force for good in the world, holding up democracy and human rights as our guiding lights.

As part of the launch of the new FCDO, we will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches, but we do not see the core ambitions of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality changing. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment advancing the Women Peace and Security agenda, tackling and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) including conflict related sexual violence, are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy in 2018.

■ Humanitarian Aid

Chris Law:

[\[99647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the UK continues to uphold its Grand Bargain commitments (a) for donors to provide 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020 and (b) on localisation more widely.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a signatory to the Grand Bargain and the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles, which make explicit commitments on localisation, and the UK's Humanitarian Reform Policy recognises national and local organisations and communities as first responders to disasters. We also recognise the value local and

national actors have brought to COVID-19 response, playing a critical role in meeting humanitarian needs on the ground in the face of unprecedented challenges.

The UK continues to be one of the biggest humanitarian donors globally. We have been one of the largest donors to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (UNOCHA) Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF). The CBPF is one platform that channels funding to local and national actors and in 2019, they allocated a quarter of their resources to local and national partners.

More broadly, the UK continues to invest in initiatives to support localisation, including the creation of the Start Network, Humanitarian Learning Academy, and the Humanitarian to Humanitarian (H2H) Network, among others.

■ Independent Commission for Aid Impact

Sarah Champion:

[\[100409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the terms of reference are for the review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact; and when he plans to publish those terms.

Wendy Morton:

We will update Parliamentarians on the Terms of Reference for the review of ICAI in due course.

Sarah Champion:

[\[100410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact will be a tailored review conducted according to Cabinet Office guidelines.

Wendy Morton:

We will update Parliamentarians on the Terms of Reference for the review of ICAI in due course.

Sarah Champion:

[\[100411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, who the (a) senior FCDO officials and (b) independent external experts are leading the review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact; and how those individuals were chosen for those roles.

Wendy Morton:

We will update Parliamentarians on the Terms of Reference for the review of ICAI in due course.

Sarah Champion:

[\[100412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the review of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) will include (a) a call for evidence and (b) consultation with the (i) International Development Committee, (ii) hon. Members, (iii) peers, (iv) aid sector professionals, (v) other stakeholders and (vi) Government departments with experience of being reviewed by ICAI.

Wendy Morton:

We will update Parliamentarians on the Terms of Reference for the review of ICAI in due course.

■ **Israel: Palestinians****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[99122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent diplomatic steps he has taken on Israel's plans to annex parts of Palestine.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the announcement, on 13 August, of the suspension of Israel's plans to annex parts of the West Bank. The UK has consistently made clear our firm opposition to annexation, which would be contrary to international law, counterproductive to securing peace in the region, and a severe blow to the prospects of the two-state solution. We therefore profoundly hope that suspension of these plans can be used as a step towards dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians. There can be no substitute for direct talks in order to reach a two-state solution and a lasting peace. The Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the OPTs on 24-25 August and encouraged the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians to build on this momentum. We urge the Palestinian Authority to resume co-operation with Israel, which is in the interests of the Palestinian people. We also call on both parties to make constructive and open steps towards a return to dialogue.

■ **Italy: Coronavirus****Liz Twist:**[\[99712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Italian counterpart on that Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary last discussed the Italian Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic with Foreign Minister Di Maio on 25 June. Our embassy in Rome is in constant contact with Italian officials in order to monitor the situation and seek opportunities to share best practices, and senior UK scientific advisers and health officials have also been in regular contact with their Italian counterparts since the start of the pandemic. On 1-3 October, a delegation of British ministers including Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Alok Sharma, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Kemi Badenoch MP and FCDO Minister for the Pacific and Environment Lord Goldsmith, met with their counterparts in Italy at the Pontignano Conference. They discussed our respective governments' response to the pandemic and how the UK and Italy can continue to work together.

■ Members: Correspondence

Alyn Smith:

[\[100542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Stirling of 10 July 2020 on MENA civil society.

James Cleverly:

A response has now been sent.

Alyn Smith:

[\[100543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Stirling of 2 September 2020 on human rights in Saudi Arabia.

James Cleverly:

A response has now been sent.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[99692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Iranian authorities on their (a) compliance with Iranian law on (i) clemency and (ii) ankle tags in the case of Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and (b) failure to release Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe on 17 March 2020.

James Cleverly:

The safety and security of British dual-national detainees in Iran is of paramount importance, and we call on Iran to uphold its commitments under international law to treat all detainees in line with international standards. It is positive that Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe remains on furlough, but we continue to urge the Iranian Government to make her release permanent so she can return to her family in the UK. Iran bringing these new charges against Mrs Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is unacceptable. We have been consistently clear that she must not be returned to prison. We continue to raise her case at the most senior levels, and discuss it at every opportunity with our Iranian counterparts. The Foreign Secretary spoke twice with Foreign Minister Zarif over the summer. We raised her case again with the Iranian Ambassador to London on 22 September. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently discusses all of our British dual-national detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

■ Overseas Aid: Poverty

Layla Moran:

[\[100531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 91717, how many (a) programmes and (b) civil servants there are supporting the work of his Department on tackling poverty overseas.

James Duddridge:

The FCDO is committed to tackling poverty and this is a key component of our mission. As at 1 September the FCDO employs over 7,500 Home Civil Servants and Diplomatic Service Staff, who are all working towards this goal.

Information on Official Development Assistance programmes managed by FCDO is published at <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk>

■ Yemen: Peace Negotiations**Claudia Webbe:****[98785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to support a ceasefire in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to support fully the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to secure the Yemeni parties' agreement to the UN proposals for a nationwide ceasefire, confidence-building measures and a resumption of the UN-led political process. The Foreign Secretary and Ministers engage frequently with international partners on Yemen. On 6 October, I spoke with Yemeni Foreign Minister Hadhrami about the peace process and developments in the South. On 17 September, the Foreign Secretary co-hosted a P5+ Ministerial meeting on Yemen calling on the international community to pressure Yemeni parties to agree to the UN peace proposals and to step up their funding to the humanitarian response. On 2 September, the Prime Minister discussed Yemen with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The UK continues to lobby all parties directly to engage constructively with the UN Special Envoy.

■ Zimbabwe: Human Rights**Navendu Mishra:****[99760]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps the Government has taken to advocate for human rights in Zimbabwe.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned by the human rights environment in Zimbabwe that includes the abduction, arrest and assault of civil society, trade union and opposition activists. Zimbabwe remains one of the UK's 30 human rights priority countries globally. I regularly engage with the Government of Zimbabwe to raise serious concerns about the political, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe. We have been clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law, safeguarding human rights, and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. When I wrote to Foreign Minister Moyo on 12 August, following a telephone call with him on 8 June, I raised specific human rights violations and made it clear that the UK has yet to see meaningful progress on human rights. Until this changes, further UK support for Zimbabwe would not be possible.

The UK Government published the Annual Human Rights Report for 2019 in July. This report includes a section outlining our considerable concern around the current human rights environment in Zimbabwe. It also outlines the extensive financial and technical support the UK gives to civil society organisations who help Zimbabwean citizens hold the state to account. We do not publicise our partners to avoid putting them at risk, in itself an indictment of the situation in Zimbabwe. We will continue call on the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law. This includes respecting the Zimbabwean Constitution which clearly prohibits enforced disappearances, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. The UK will also continue to work alongside the international community to support good governance, respect for human rights, and genuine political and economic reform in Zimbabwe, to help secure a better future for all Zimbabweans.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Children

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[96903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have attended accident and emergency departments in England for mental health issues in each month since March 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus

Sarah Owen:

[\[98771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 September to Question 88935 on Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending support bubble arrangements to grieving households of any size.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 October 2020]: We recognise how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their friends and family throughout the past few months. Support bubbles were introduced to assist the most isolated in society. They can be a source of extra support to some of those most impacted by the difficult effects of the social restrictions, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission low. This is why the policy has been targeted at single-adult households. However, there are other sources of support available for grieving households. For example, support groups of up to 15 people are still able to meet. In such scenarios, people should continue to adhere to social distancing when interacting with those not in their household or support bubble.

Guidance on meeting people from outside of their household has been published and can be accessed at the following link:

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

■ Children: Day Care

Ian Lavery:

[95642]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to allow grandparents to be included in a support bubble to help working parents.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We recognise how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their friends and family throughout the past few months. 'Support bubbles' are to assist the loneliest and most isolated in society. They were introduced to provide extra support to some of those most impacted by the difficult effects of the social restrictions, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission low. The policy has been targeted at single-adult households.

People should socially distance from those not in their household or support bubble in order to keep people around them safe, limit the risk of the transmission of the virus and limit chains of transmission. We recognise that it may not always be possible or practicable to maintain social distancing when providing care to a young child or infant. People should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing childcare and take other precautions such as washing hands and clothes regularly.

This guidance is continually under review. Guidance on meeting people from outside of your household has been published and can be accessed at the following link:

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

■ Clinical trials: Medical Equipment

Alec Shelbrooke:

[96851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) subject and (b) outcomes for each trial of a new medical device developed for the UK market since 1 January 2006.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is currently bound by the European Union Regulations, the Medical Devices and the In-Vitro Diagnostic Devices Regulations, and its transparency provisions and therefore cannot currently publish information relating to approved clinical investigations from 1 January 2006.

The Medicines and Medical Devices Bill currently going through parliament will give the MHRA the power to update and amend the legislative frameworks that governs human medicines, medical devices and veterinary medicines. These powers will also enable transparency to support patient safety work. Clinical investigations work will be part of these future considerations.

■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software

Helen Hayes:

[93648]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 77728, what monitoring his Department is undertaking of the 29 companies subcontracted by Serco to provide contact tracing services; and what discussions he is having with Serco on publishing the details of those sub-contracts.

Helen Hayes:

[93651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 77728 on Contact Tracing: Computer Software, what steps he is taking to assess the effectiveness of the 29 companies subcontracted by Serco to provide contact tracing services; and what discussions he is having with Serco on publishing the details of those sub-contracts.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 25 September 2020]: As the prime contractor Serco are responsible and accountable for the performance of their sub-contractors in terms of contributing to meeting the agreed service targets and quality standards in the primary contract they hold with the Department. This contract has been placed in line with Departmental terms and conditions which include clauses for contract management to ensure that supplier performance and the delivery of value for money can be properly assessed throughout the lifetime of the contract.

The types of agreements or other contractual arrangements put in place between Serco and its sub-contractors are a matter for those parties.

The primary contract between Serco and the Department is available at the following link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/c23fdfaf-d1f2-4d8c-a0cd-6b6f35793ccd>

■ Coronavirus: Babies

Catherine West:

[92848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment of the needs and rights of babies and young children aged 0-2 was made in decisions regarding local lockdown social interaction rules in (a) Leicestershire, (b) Greater Manchester and (c) the North East of England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

For each change in local restrictions, formal assessments are made through a Public Sector Equality Duty analysis, under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, and a National Health Service Act Duty and Family Test Assessment under the National Health Service Act 2006. These assessments respectively consider the potential equalities impacts on groups with protected characteristics as a result of restrictions and how proposed measures and changes in regulations impact on families. Both of

these assessments include consideration of the needs and rights of babies and young children.

■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

Mr David Davis:

[88246]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish all contracts agreed between his Department and (a) Serco, (b) Sitel Group and (c) all other commercial providers of track and trace functions.

Mr David Davis:

[88247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what performance targets are in place for commercial providers of track and trace functions; what penalties can be imposed for failure to meet those targets; and what penalties have already been imposed for failure to meet those targets.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 September 2020]: Contracts were awarded to Serco and Sitel to provide call handling services for the contact track and trace initiative. The contracts have been published and can be found at the following links:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/c23fdfaf-d1f2-4d8c-a0cd-6b6f35793ccd>

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/7645e3ef-ce16-4cae-8932-1eb6521a50cb>

Contractual penalties are often unenforceable under English law so they were not included in test and trace contracts with Serco or Sitel. Sitel and Serco are approved suppliers on the Crown Commercial Service contact centre framework and the contracts have standard performance and quality assurance processes in place. Some information on Key Performance Indicators and service levels has been redacted from these published contracts as it is considered to be commercially sensitive.

The contracts have break clauses in them, meaning if the company does not meet required service levels we may cancel the contract and reclaim our money.

Jon Trickett:

[91825]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Question 69448, for what reason the contract awarded to Serco for contact tracing training has not been published on Contracts Finder; and when that contract is planned to be published on Contracts Finder.

Helen Whately:

The contract awarded to Serco to provide call handling services for the contact track and trace initiative has been published and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/c23fdfaf-d1f2-4d8c-a0cd-6b6f35793ccd>

This includes requirements on staff training.

■ **Coronavirus: Death**

Sir Roger Gale:

[92666]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information the Government holds on the number of deaths from covid-19 occurring within twenty-eight days of receipt of a covid-19 negative test result.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 24 September 2020]: Public Health England (PHE) does not collect the data requested.

The PHE weekly COVID-19 surveillance report publishes mortality surveillance for England.

The most recent weekly COVID-19 surveillance report can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Mr Steve Baker:

[88301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of estimates published on the level of covid-19 in the community since the start of the outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 September 2020]: The Government estimates for the level of COVID-19 in the community arise as a consensus between a number of academic groups contributing to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies sub-group SPI-M. Key quantities, such as R, infection-fatality ratio, and incidence are derived from data-driven models, but cannot be assessed directly as they are not observable quantities.

Assessment is only indirectly possible, either through looking at the goodness of fit of the models to the observed data and through cross-checking with the community surveys such as the Office for National Statistics and the Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission study, or through the retrospective assessment of predictions.

Chi Onwurah:

[90129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 84231 on Coronavirus: Disease control, whether (a) the published R is an estimate and (b) his Department has taken steps to verify the value of R (i) published at a given date in the past and (ii) in the light of further evidence of transmission which becomes accessible over time.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: The reproduction number (R) is the average number of secondary infections produced by a single infected person. The Government Office for Science currently publishes the latest estimate of R for the United Kingdom and NHS England regions on a weekly basis.

R is an average value that can vary in different parts of the country, communities, and subsections of the population. It cannot be measured directly, and is an estimate based on data such as numbers of cases, hospitalisations and deaths. There is always uncertainty around its exact value.

R is estimated by a number of independent modelling groups based in universities and Public Health England. The modelling groups discuss their individual estimates at the Science Pandemic Influenza Modelling group (SPI-M) – a subgroup of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE). Attendees compare the different estimates and SPI-M collectively agrees a range which R is very likely to be within, which is then reviewed and endorsed by SAGE.

As part of this weekly review by SPI-M and SAGE, estimates of R are considered alongside other metrics, such as estimates of prevalence and incidence from the Office for National Statistics COVID-19 Infection Survey, or trends from Pillar 2 testing. These additional metrics, together with supplementary sources of information such as social contact surveys (which assess changes in contact patterns and behaviour) and mobility data, offer assurance of the R estimates.

As our understanding of the epidemic improves and new evidence emerges, SPI-M and SAGE updates its advice accordingly. For instance, individual modelling groups may adjust their models to incorporate new data streams or to reflect updated evidence on transmission dynamics; whilst relevant new studies are considered as part of the wider discussion and assurance process.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[98679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the viability of exempting children aged 12 and under from the rule of six, in line with the policy of the devolved Administrations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 October 2020]: We have set out a clear and consistent six-person limit for social contact for all ages to make sure the rules are easy for the public to understand and for the police and public health officials. Public health is a devolved matter, and the devolved administrations are responsible for deciding what measures they put in place that are most appropriate for their local circumstances. We are working with our colleagues in devolved administrations to identify where United Kingdom-wide alignment in approach is appropriate and possible, to help provide a clear and consistent message to the public.

The Government keeps social distancing restrictions under continual review and will make changes if the data and science support it.

■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[81551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of unconscious bias on the treatment of BAME covid-19 patients.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

■ Coronavirus: Health Services

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[95022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been referred to the Your COVID Recovery programme.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: Your COVID Recovery is a two-phase endeavour with phase 1 being available now and is an open, publicly available site containing general information on all aspects of recovering from COVID-19 including physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing, and signposting to other agencies. The only data collected on this are the numbers of interactions on the website.

Phase 2 will be launched this autumn and will be available to people who are assessed and referred by a health care professional. It is the intention that these people will be assessed once they have completed a tailored online programme.

■ Coronavirus: Laboratories

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[87553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of laboratory capacity to process covid-19 tests in (a) the Sheffield City Region and (b) England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: We have built the largest diagnostic testing industry in British history at pace. We are scaling up our testing capacity even further to 500,000 tests a day by the end of October, expanding our network of testing sites and adding new Lighthouse laboratories in Newport, Newcastle, Charnwood and Brant's Bridge to add to the existing national network. Capacity is the highest it has ever been and test sites in areas with higher prevalence will be prioritised and continue to provide higher volumes of testing.

■ Coronavirus: North East

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[93713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he received a proposal, as part of the response to the initial request of seven North East Councils for

further local restrictions due to the covid-19 outbreak, that included ensuring informal childcare arrangements could continue in that region.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government is committed to supporting families, including key workers, who rely on informal childcare so they can work. We listened to feedback from local authorities and Directors of Public Health, who supported the position that a specific exemption for informal childcare would particularly help working families in areas where interhousehold mixing was restricted.

Interhousehold mixing was banned in some areas under local restrictions, including parts of the North East. From Tuesday 22 September, care bubbles are able to form in areas of intervention, to allow families to share caring responsibilities with another household.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Dawn Butler:

[81620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many items of personal protective equipment were procured through his Department's contract with Trade Markets Direct.

Jo Churchill:

The contract awarded to Trade Markets Direct on 5 April for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) was cancelled on 22 May. No PPE was delivered under this contract.

Dawn Butler:

[81621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many items of personal protective equipment were procured through his Department's contract with Elite Creations UK.

Jo Churchill:

A contract was awarded to Elite Creations for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). Information on the PPE contracted for will be published on Contracts Finder in due course and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>

All the items of PPE have now been delivered.

Feryal Clark:

[82575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether contracts for procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) were awarded to (a) Ayanda Capital, (b) Uniserve Ltd of Essex, (c) P14 Medical Ltd, (d) PestFix, (e) Clandeboye Agencies Ltd, (f) Medicine Box Ltd of Sutton-in-Ashfield, (g) Initia Ventures Ltd, (h) Monarch Acoustics Ltd of Nottingham, (i) Luxe Lifestyle Ltd, (j) Aventis Solutions Ltd of Wilmslow, (k) Medco Solutions Ltd, (l) Toffeln Ltd and (m) MGP Advisory; what the value was of each such

contract; what quantities of materials were delivered through each such contract; and what the delivery dates were to the recipients of the PPE.

Jo Churchill:

Contracts for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been awarded to all the suppliers listed in the question. Contract Award Notices which contain the value of the contract have been published for all these contracts and can be found on Contracts Finder at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>

Information on the PPE contracted for under each contract will be published on Contracts Finder in due course. The PPE contracted for with all these suppliers is either in the process of delivery or has been delivered.

Grahame Morris:

[94389]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to introduce a national exemption card for people unable to wear a face-covering on public transport and enclosed spaces.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: Our guidance published online is clear that there are exemptions where people do not need to wear face coverings. We are also clear that people do not need to prove they are exempt and they should not be challenged about this.

If someone is more comfortable showing they are exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering, they are able to use some form of optional visual cue. Different options are available on GOV.UK (including printable templates and a template for mobile telephones), on charity and organisations websites, or could be hand-made.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Dr Luke Evans:

[82482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on the development of a robust and reliable antibody test for covid-19; and what the timetable is for that test to be rolled out to the general public.

Helen Whately:

We believe a national antibody testing programme may provide a critical role in the next phase of this pandemic. We are already offering antibody tests to National Health Service and care staff in England, with patients and social care residents eligible at their clinician's request. We are also using antibody tests to support research studies.

In order to better understand the role that an antibody test could play in our response to the pandemic, we need to improve our understanding of how the immune system responds to the virus that causes COVID-19. We do not currently know how long an antibody response to the virus lasts, nor whether having antibodies means a person

cannot transmit the virus to others. Our understanding of the virus will grow as new scientific evidence and studies emerge.

Mr Mark Harper: [84658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) existing and (b) planned covid-19 daily testing capacity separately for (i) antigen testing and (ii) antibody testing.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: The Government currently has no plans to publish testing capacity in this format. We publish daily testing capacity for combined pillar 1 to 4 testing and combined pillar 1 and 2 testing at the following link:

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

We also publish weekly statistics and the latest information regarding the Test and Trace service at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports>

Catherine West: [84718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase the number of walk-in covid-19 testing centres available to people without vehicle access in urban areas.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: We have provided a range of ways for people to be tested. For those without access to a car this has included satellite deliveries to centres at places like hospitals that have a particularly urgent or significant need, delivering test kits to people's homes and offering walk-up appointments at mobile testing units. As our capacity has increased, we are able to expand the range of options for people. We have also made changes to home testing to allow people to drop their tests at Royal Mail priority post boxes.

Local testing centres are being set up across the country. We have increased the number of local/walk-in test sites to over 100 with more opening each week. We are planning to open additional sites to bring the total number of testing sites to 500 by the end of October.

Helen Hayes: [85081]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the average distance people are required to travel when asked to undertake a covid-19 test.

Helen Hayes: [85082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been asked to travel more than (a) five, (b) 10 and (c) 20 miles to access covid-19 testing facilities.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: The Government has put in place the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. A breakdown of distances travelled to test sites is not published in the format requested. However, as of 9 September the median distance to travel to a test site is 5.8 miles and 90% of people travel 27.8 miles or less.

Testing is available for all groups in society, including vulnerable groups and people with disabilities, and for those who are who are not able to travel home testing kits are available every day.

Helen Hayes:[\[85084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate has he made of his Department's average daily capacity to provide covid-19 home testing kits; and what steps is he taking to increase that provision.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: A national COVID-19 home testing service is available so that those who are unable to leave home are able to access testing. Eligible people who have completed a self-referral may have the option, depending on available capacity, to book a home-test kit. Home-test capacity is increasing rapidly.

We have sent more than two million testing kits out to people requesting them, with the number of tests returned and the time it takes to process them published for England in our weekly Test and Trace statistics.

Daniel Zeichner:[\[90153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been turned away from regional covid-19 test centres since their establishment.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: This data is not held in the format requested.

John Spellar:[\[92626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many cases of acute respiratory infections which resulted in at least one positive test for covid-19 there were in the most recent week for which figures are available; and what proportion of those cases occurred in (a) care homes, (b) the workplace, (c) education settings and (d) pubs and food outlets.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 25 September 2020]: Public Health England publishes the number of acute respiratory infections reported each week in the national COVID-19 surveillance reports.

729 new incidents of acute respiratory infection were reported in week 37 (Week commencing 7 August 2020).

Of these, 313 incidents were from care homes where 228 had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; 110 incidents were from workplace settings where 92 had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; 193 incidents were from educational settings where 110 had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; 34 incidents were from food outlet/restaurant settings where 25 had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; four incidents were from prisons where three had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; 18 incidents were from hospitals where 13 had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; and 57 incidents were from other settings where 39 had at least one linked case that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

The most recent weekly COVID-19 surveillance report can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

James Murray: [95240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people who receive a positive result to a PCR test under (a) Pillar 1 and (b) Pillar 2 of the Government's covid-19 testing programme who are infectious with covid-19 at the time the tests are taken.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: Data on the number of PCR tests conducted and positive and negative results by pillars 1 and 2 are available at the following link:

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

We have made no assessment of the proportion of people who test positive who may be infectious at the time they are tested.

■ Coronavirus: South East

Stephen Morgan: [87634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for people living in (a) the South East and (bi) Portsmouth to receive their results for a home covid-19 test.

Helen Whately:

The Government does not publish data in the format requested.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Dr Julian Lewis: [85924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the delayed Answers on 20 August 2020 to Questions 59658 asked on 16 June and 74414 asked on 15 July, on the delay to answer substantively Question 49568 on Diabetes and Question 49569 on Coronavirus: Screening, both tabled on 20 May 2020, for what reason the

original two Questions have still not been substantively answered; and when he plans to provide those Answers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: I refer the Rt hon. Member to the responses to Question 49568, answered on 21 September, and Question 49569, answered on 14 September.

Damian Collins:

[\[98696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Named Day Question 88292, due for Answer on 15 September 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

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

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

■ Eating Disorders

Jim Shannon:

[\[97580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with an eating disorder in the last three years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The available information is shown in the following table covering England only.

YEAR	PRIMARY DIAGNOSES OF EATING DISORDERS IN SECONDARY ACUTE CARE SERVICES (FINISHED ADMISSION EPISODES ¹)		PRIMARY REASON OF EATING DISORDERS FOR REFERRAL TO SPECIALIST SECONDARY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (PATIENTS)
2017-18	3,064		18,216
2018-19	3,464		22,330
2019-20	3,449		28,310
Source:	Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) ² , NHS Digital		Mental Health Services Dataset (MHSDS) ³ , NHS Digital

Notes :

¹ A finished admission episode (FAE) is the first period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. FAEs are counted against the year or

month in which the admission episode finishes. Admissions do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the period.

² Changes to Hospital Episode Statistics figures over time need to be interpreted in the context of improvements in data quality and coverage, improvements in coverage of independent sector activity and changes in National Health Service practice.

³ There are data quality issues with the MHSDS and increases in numbers may be the result of improving coverage and data quality rather than a true reflection of service activity.

■ Endometriosis: In Vitro Fertilisation

Colleen Fletcher:

[92780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that women in England who have been diagnosed with endometriosis and are suffering fertility problems as a result have equality of access to IVF treatment on the NHS.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 24 September 2020]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for 'Endometriosis: diagnosis and management' contain recommendations about access to fertility treatment for women with suspected or confirmed endometriosis. These recommendations supersede recommendations previously set out in the NICE Guidelines for fertility services.

The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment, is a matter for local healthcare commissioners. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services that meet the needs of their whole population. In respect of National Health service fertility services for women with endometriosis, the Government expects CCGs to commission fertility services in line with relevant NICE guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

■ Facebook

Chris Elmore:

[78793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his recent meeting with Facebook's Vice-President for Global Affairs and Communications, what the outcomes of that meeting were; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's recent meeting with Facebook's Vice-President for Global Affairs and Communications included discussion on the actions that Facebook is taking to minimise the reach and influence of vaccine misinformation online and promote positive messages about vaccination.

Chris Elmore:

[\[78794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his recent meeting with Facebook's Vice-President for Global Affairs and Communications, whether Section 230 of the US Communications Decency Act 1996 was discussed at that meeting; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care held a wide-ranging discussion on the role that social media companies, including Facebook, can play to tackle the spread of vaccine misinformation online.

We continue to work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, media, social media and technology companies, including Facebook, to limit the impact and spread of misinformation and promote positive messages about vaccination.

■ General Practitioners: Epilepsy

Liz Twist:

[\[96996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) funding and (b) training his Department plans to provide to GPs on supporting women diagnosed with epilepsy and carrying out the Pregnancy Prevention Program.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

It is a Care Quality Commission regulatory requirement for general practitioners to follow the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) guidance on valproate prescribing. The MHRA advises that 'Valproate medicines must no longer be used in women or girls of childbearing potential unless a Pregnancy Prevention Programme is in place'.

In 2019/20 NHS England implemented a quality improvement module worth approximately £44 million nationally to encourage practices to improve their prescribing safety. This aimed to improve engagement with women of childbearing age being prescribed sodium valproate and pregnancy prevention for these patients.

The standard of medical training is the responsibility of the General Medical Council (GMC), which is an independent statutory body. The GMC has the general function of promoting high standards of education and co-ordinating all stages of education to ensure that medical students and newly qualified doctors are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for professional practice.

■ Health Services

Alex Norris:

[\[95205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date his Department plans to conduct stakeholder engagement on initial options for strengthening national and local health improvement and prevention arrangements.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: We plan to undertake this engagement later in the autumn.

■ **Hearing Impairment: Coronavirus**

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[94541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's press release of 5 September 2020 entitled Government delivers 250,000 clear face masks to support people with hearing loss, what plans he has to review the initial provision of clear masks; and what his timescale is for decisions on future supply of those masks.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[94542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to issue further guidance to health and social care providers on (a) ensuring the availability of and (b) determining the clinical requirement for clear face masks for (a) service users and (b) staff in all settings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: Clear face masks are currently being piloted and we are seeking feedback to help understand demand. This exercise will conclude soon. We will use the findings to inform our future procurement, but we already know that clear face masks are making a difference to the treatment of many individuals with hearing loss and other conditions.

It is critical that the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) meets equalities duties. As part of our efforts to collate PPE requirement data from across Government, departments have been asked to provide information on how potential inequalities have been considered; the demographics of both their workforce and the public their workforce face which has proved significant in the use of PPE; and incompatibilities or difficulties observed between any of the PPE used by their workforce. This will ensure the demand model reflects the different combination and size of equipment required to meet different user needs.

■ **Hologic: Coronavirus**

Deidre Brock:

[\[88344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department had a relationship with Hologic Ltd before the awarding of a contract to provide SARS-Cov-2 tests in April 2020.

Deidre Brock:

[\[88346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department had a relationship with Randox Laboratories Ltd before the awarding of a contract to provide covid-19 testing in March 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 September 2020]: The Department's procurement records show that the Department has had no contracts with Hologic Ltd and Randox Laboratories Ltd over the last five years prior to the awarding of SARS-Cov-2 test and COVID-19 testing contracts respectively.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[97568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department sought behavioural science guidance before implementing (a) the 10pm curfew on the hospitality industry and (b) the rule of six.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government receives a range of inputs in order to make all its decisions relating to COVID-19 restrictions - including monitoring the impact of restrictions in local areas via the Joint Biosecurity Centre and monitoring international experience.

We have also seen in Belgium that the package of measures introduced, including early closures in some regions, was effective in controlling transmission rates

The Government keeps all its COVID-19 restriction measures under review and will closely monitor the impact of this policy.

■ **Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination**

Craig Tracey:

[\[82190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of school children who have had HPV vaccinations delayed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

School-aged vaccinations, including human papillomavirus (HPV), were impacted by the closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. School-aged immunisation providers across the country are now working with NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioners with clinical advice from Public Health England to catch up those vaccinations that were previously paused.

Whilst we do not have an estimate of the number of school children whose HPV vaccination has been delayed due the COVID-19 outbreak, the priority now is to ensure that all those eligible are offered at least one dose of HPV vaccine, as per the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[88281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the covid-19 outbreak does not adversely affect HPV vaccination uptake rates across the UK.

Jo Churchill:

School-aged vaccinations, including human papillomavirus (HPV), were impacted by the closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. School-aged immunisation providers across the country are now working with NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioners with clinical advice from Public Health England to catch up those vaccinations that were previously paused. From July, over 90% of all school aged providers across England have re-established services and are currently delivering catch-up programmes to those that missed vaccinations.

The priority for all NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned school-aged immunisation providers is to ensure all those eligible are offered at least one dose of HPV vaccine by the end of the next academic year, based on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommendation.

Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review**Caroline Nokes:**[\[96855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps (a) have been and (b) are being taken to implement the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report entitled First Do No Harm, published on 8 July 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

All recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully. The Government will provide an update in due course.

Mental Health Services**Sir Charles Walker:**[\[96806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned publication date is of the 2020 Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Workforce Census; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: Health Education England has commissioned the NHS Benchmarking Network to complete a census of the Adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies workforce, as of 31 March 2020. The report is in the final stages of data collection and then will be finalised and, following approval, should be published within the current financial year (31 March 2021).

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[95058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the tiers system in CAMHS; and if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of alternative therapeutic approaches for children who have experienced trauma.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

'Future in Mind', published by the Department and NHS England in 2015, recommended that children and young people's mental health services move away from the concept of tiers, in which the system is defined by the services that provide the care, towards models that are defined by how they address patients' needs.

NHS England has worked with Health Education England to deliver the children and young people's improving access to psychological therapies programme. It trains new and existing staff working in children and young people's mental health services and includes evidence-based trauma informed practice.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has made recommendations on the psychological interventions for the prevention and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder in children and young people in its guideline on post-traumatic stress disorder.

Jonathan Gullis:[\[97734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on waiting lists for CAMHS.

Alexander Stafford:[\[97756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on waiting lists for CAMHS.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Whilst a national access and waiting time standard for children and young people's mental health services has not yet been defined, we recognise that there is the potential for an increase in demand for these services as a result of COVID-19. We are working with the Department for Education, the National Health Service, Public Health England and others to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19, including on children and young people.

Jonathan Gullis:[\[97735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that children and young people who need mental health support, including those who do not meet the thresholds for CAMHS are able to access timely support.

Alexander Stafford:[\[97755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that children and young people who (a) do and (b) do not meet the thresholds for access to CAMHS are able to access timely mental health support.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are introducing two waiting times for children and young people by the end of 2020/21: for 95% of children (up to 19 years old) with eating disorders to receive treatment within a week for urgent cases and four weeks for routine cases, and for 60% of patients of all ages experiencing a first episode of psychosis to receive treatment within two weeks of referral.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to an additional 345,000 children and young people in England accessing mental health support via National Health Service-funded mental health services and schools- and college-based mental health support teams each year by 2023/24

We are also piloting a four-week waiting time for children and young people's mental health services in 12 areas to inform the development of a new national access and waiting times standard.

Where a local NHS children and young people's specialist mental health service rejects a referral, the young person and/or their carers should be signposted to appropriate support elsewhere. On 8 September, the Government launched a mental wellbeing campaign for children and young people. This involves an extension of Public Health England's Every Mind Matters webpage and signposts to a range of support available to children and young people and their parents and carers.

Alexander Stafford:

[97757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the mental health and wellbeing of BAME children and young people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working closely with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) experts by experience, health professionals, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector partners and others to support rapid knowledge and information sharing to encourage timely access to National Health Service mental health services, and just as importantly, good BAME experiences within those services.

The Government has also provided £9.2 million of additional funding for mental health charities to support adults and children. This includes charities that offer support to BAME communities and charities like Young Minds.

The Government's £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme will support school staff to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be feeling.

Alexander Stafford:

[97758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the implementing the the Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision green paper published in July 2018.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made good progress on, and remain committed to, carrying out the Green Paper's core proposals.

In 2018 we announced the first 25 trailblazer sites delivering 59 mental health support teams (MHSTs). Rotherham is one of the first 25 trailblazer sites. The first MHSTs started to become operational in early 2020.

In July 2019, NHS England confirmed a further 57 areas, developing 123 new MHSTs; a further 104 teams have been commissioned and will begin training in 2020/21.

Twelve of the first 25 trailblazer sites, including Rotherham, are also testing four-week waiting times. They remain on track to deliver a recommendation in 2021/22 for the phased introduction of an access and waiting time standard for children and young people's mental health.

■ **Mental Health Services: West Yorkshire**

Alex Sobel:

[\[97713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to adults in West Yorkshire with mental health issues experienced while under local restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We recognise that during these uncertain and unusual times it is very normal to be experiencing distress or anxiety or to be feeling low.

We have released tailored guidance to help people manage the impact on their mental wellbeing. People can go to the 'Every Mind Matters' website and GOV.UK for advice and tailored, practical steps that they can take to support their wellbeing and manage their mental health during this pandemic.

National Health Service mental health services, including those in West Yorkshire, have remained open for business throughout this time, including delivering support digitally and over the phone where possible. For those with severe needs or in crisis, all NHS mental health providers, including those in West Yorkshire, have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines.

■ **MMR Vaccine**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[90084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the size of the stockpiles of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine that were available for prescription or purchase in the UK prior to 31 October 2019.

Jo Churchill:

At October 2019, the volume of measles, mumps and rubella vaccines held in stockpile by Public Health England (PHE) for the national immunisation programme in the United Kingdom was forecast as sufficient to maintain the programme for around five months. PHE receives deliveries of vaccine every month and maintains the stockpile permanently around this level.

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[92713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the outcome was of the MMR catch-up programme for 10 and 11-year olds, held through general practices.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 September 2020]: We do not have access to data on the outcome of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) catch-up programme for 10- and 11-year olds. This data is transferred from school-aged vaccination service providers into general practice IT systems, so information is held at individual practice level.

The MMR vaccination programme is a priority as the Government has committed to regaining the UK's measles elimination status. The catch-up programme for 10- and 11-year olds is part of the work supporting the Measles and Rubella Elimination Strategy.

■ NHS: Protective Clothing**Jonathan Ashworth:****[94430]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisation has overall responsibility for ensuring that (a) NHS hospitals and (b) other NHS care settings have sufficient personal protective equipment for the winter 2020-21 period.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 September 2020]: Everybody working on the front line deserves to have the equipment they need to do their job safely. A significant number of Government departments are working together to make sure that happens. Amid unprecedented global pressures on supply chains over 3.5 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been delivered to frontline workers thanks to the efforts of the Government, the National Health Service, industry and the armed forces to massively scale up distribution networks.

We have significantly strengthened and diversified our supply chains for PPE – looking to new suppliers abroad as well as boosting our domestic manufacturing capability. This has helped to build resilience into the future. We have moved from an emergency situation a few months ago to a stable position, which allows us to prepare for any second spike or a new wave in the autumn or winter.

■ Obesity: Health Services**Alex Norris:****[84726]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's report, Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives, published on 27 July 2020, what plans his Department has to support general practitioners to refer patients with severe and complex obesity to (a) Tier 3 weight management services and (b) Tier 4 weight management services.

Alex Norris:**[84727]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's report, Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives, published on 27 July 2020, what assessment his Department has made of the potential cost savings to the public purse of (a) specialist weight management clinics

provided by multidisciplinary teams and (b) bariatric surgery for patients with severe and complex obesity being routinely introduced; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' demonstrates an overarching campaign to reduce obesity, takes forward actions from previous chapters of the childhood obesity plan and sets our measures to get the nation fit and healthy, protect against COVID-19 and protect the National Health Service.

Through the strategy we are delivering a range of measures on weight management, including expanding weight management services, to help more people get the support they need and making conversations about weight in primary care the norm. Further details about these measures will be available later in the year and we will engage stakeholders throughout this process.

It is for clinical commissioning groups to commission complex obesity services for adults based on the needs of their local population, which includes all bariatric surgical procedures and the associated care.

■ Pharmacy: Finance

Jackie Doyle-Price:

[\[92642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the September 2020 report by EY on independent pharmacies, what assessment he has made of the implications for the primary care network of the rate of closure of independent community pharmacies staying at the rate indicated in that report over the next four years.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

[\[92643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department through the Chief Executive of NHS England plans to provide (a) £300m required to cover the annual shortfall in costs undertaken by Pharmacy on behalf on the NHS and (b) indexation of future funding to support family pharmacies; and if he will make a statement.

Jackie Doyle-Price:

[\[92645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chief Executive of NHS England on funding being made available in the next Comprehensive Spending Review to ensure the economic viability of independent pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

We are carefully considering the findings of the report on independent pharmacy in England and any implications for National Health Service arrangements under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. As part of the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review, funding for community pharmacy is being discussed, including with the Chief Executive Officer of the NHS in England.

■ Pregnancy: Alcoholic Drinks

Jim Shannon: [93589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on developing a UK-wide alcohol in pregnancy policy.

Jo Churchill:

Alcohol health policy is a devolved matter. Departmental officials meet regularly with their counterparts in the devolved administrations to share progress on action to address the harms from alcohol taken in each country.

■ Smoking

Dan Jarvis: [92773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress the Government has made on its ambition of a smokefree England in 2030.

Dan Jarvis: [92774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding the Government plans to provide to (a) regional and (b) local government in England to help deliver the Government's smokefree 2030 policy objective.

Dan Jarvis: [92775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a levy on tobacco industry profits to achieve the Government's objective for a smokefree England in 2030.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 September 2020]: Smoking rates are the lowest on record at 13.9% for England and we are not complacent. We laid out our ambition to make England smokefree by 2030 in our Prevention Green Paper, 'Advancing Our Health: Prevention in the 2020s' consultation last year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the response to this consultation has been put on hold. The response and plans for achieving our smokefree objectives will be published at a later date.

Decisions on the future funding of local government health improvement functions will be taken as part of the Spending Review.

The Department has not made an assessment of introducing a levy on tobacco industry profits. However, HM Treasury has previously carried out a consultation and published its response in September 2015. It is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464795/PU1814_Tobacco_Levy_final_v3.pdf

■ Sodium Valproate: Prescriptions

Caroline Nokes:

[\[96854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps are being taken to identify all women of childbearing age in receipt of prescriptions for sodium valproate.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In April 2018, the valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PPP) was implemented and the four Chief Medical Officers in the United Kingdom asked general practitioners to identify all relevant women and girls on valproate in their practice, check they are on effective contraception as appropriate, and refer them for specialist review annually. Specialist prescribers were asked to review treatment of women and girls on valproate and ensure that an annual risk acknowledgement form is signed by the patient and prescriber. Key stakeholders are working together to drive forward compliance with the PPP, better embed the PPP into routine clinical care and ensure women with epilepsy and bipolar disorder receive the healthcare they require.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is also working on developing a registry, the main aims of which would be to identify girls and women of childbearing potential prescribed valproate, monitor compliance with the current regulatory requirements, and to identify and monitor outcomes in any children born to women on valproate.

Caroline Nokes:

[\[96856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women aged 15 to 45 years in the Romsey and Southampton North constituency are being treated with sodium valproate for epilepsy.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This specific data is not held centrally.

■ Stem Cells: Donors

Bob Blackman:

[\[91625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to encourage higher donor registration among mixed ethnicity donors to the UK stem cell and bone marrow register.

Helen Whately:

Since 2011 the Department has provided over £26.8 million in financial support to NHS Blood and Transplant and Anthony Nolan to enable the establishment of a unified United Kingdom Stem Cell Registry and improve access to, and outcomes of, stem cell donation.

This includes improving equity of access to unrelated donor stem cell transplantation for all ethnicities, including those with mixed ethnicities, through targeted recruitment to the UK Stem Cell Registry. Anthony Nolan have established a taskforce dedicated to engaging with supporters from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those with

mixed ethnicities, which will co-create content and recruitment campaigns that serve and resonate with target audiences. Additionally, they are working closely with partners – such as the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust and the Rik Basra Leukaemia Campaign - to focus recruitment in ethnically diverse areas of the UK, and to target recruitment on currently under-represented groups.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Liz Twist: [\[96992\]](#)

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

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: The Department of Health and Social Care has been working closely with the Department for Education to make sure students are safe at university. We understand that many students are keen to go home for Christmas and we are working together to ensure that they will have plenty of notice to make plans to do so, as announced by the Secretary of State for Education on Tuesday 29 September 2020.

We do not want to single out students for tougher restrictions than other members of society, as we all have our part to play in controlling this virus.

■ Vaccination

Helen Hayes: [\[82203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the proposed vaccine strategy.

Paul Girvan: [\[82305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the Government's vaccine strategy.

Dan Carden: [\[82322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the proposed vaccine strategy.

Ruth Jones: [\[82382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the proposed vaccine strategy.

Jim Shannon: [\[83814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the Government's vaccine strategy.

Jo Churchill:

Publication of England's draft Vaccine Strategy has been delayed as we have rightly been focusing on responding to the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic.

We will keep the Vaccine Strategy under review in light of the ongoing pandemic response. Our current ambition is to update and refresh the strategy in 2021 to reflect the changing landscape and investment in vaccine development through the Vaccines Taskforce.

■ **Vaccination: Disinformation**

Chris Elmore:

[78795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle misinformation on vaccines online, and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: We take the issue of vaccine misinformation extremely seriously and are working across Government to tackle this.

We continue to work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, media, social media and technology companies to limit misinformation and promote positive messages about vaccination.

The Department works closely with Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to promote vaccinations and raise awareness of their benefits and the diseases they prevent.

■ **Veterans: Coronavirus**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[98161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many veterans have died from covid-19 since March 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The number of veterans who have died from COVID-19 since March 2020 is not collected centrally. The overall number of COVID-19 deaths can be found on the Government COVID-19 webpage at the following link:

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

■ **Veterans: Hearing Impairment**

Grahame Morris:

[98938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward proposals to renew funding from the public purse for the Veterans Hearing Fund.

Grahame Morris:

[98939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the renewal of Government funding for the Veterans Hearing Fund.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 October 2020]: The Government does not currently have any plans to renew the funding for the Veterans Hearing Fund.

The Fund, which was financed by Libor fines, has now closed. It was established to provide additional hearing support to veterans with noise-induced hearing loss and was exclusively for items not supplied by statutory services.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Coronavirus

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[98710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been evicted from their homes in England in areas where covid-19 local lockdown measures have been in place.

Chris Philp:

We have commenced the cessation of support for both positive cases (who move on to be supported in Local Authority accommodation) and negative cases (failed Asylum seekers).

A Notice to Quit is served on all discontinued cases by the provider and steps taken to remove people from the accommodation following the end of grace period.

Due to the sequencing of both cessations themselves and the additional local restrictions being put in place the number who have received a Notice to Quit where Covid 19 measures are in place is not available in a recordable format.

■ Asylum: Employment

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[100398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government's review on the restrictions on asylum seekers' right to work, initiated in December 2018, will provide an assessment of (a) the potential benefits to people's wellbeing while they are in the asylum system and (b) their integration prospects upon receipt of a positive asylum decision.

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 seeker right to work is a complex issue. This is under review; it is crucial we take the time to get this right and we are listening carefully to the arguments and

considering the evidence put forward on the issue. The Home Office will be happy to discuss the content of the review once it has been completed.

■ Asylum: Hotels

Stuart C McDonald:

[89730]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hotels are being used by her Department for asylum accommodation; how many people are resident in those hotels; and what the average length of stay is in hotel asylum accommodation.

Chris Philp:

The number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

This includes the numbers of those accommodated under Section 98, Section 95 and Section 4.

The average length of stay is not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thangam Debbonaire:

[99009]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) safeguarding and (b) other training her Department makes available to (i) provider staff and (ii) hotel staff working in hotels which house asylum seekers.

Chris Philp:

The Government demands the highest standards from contractors and their accommodation and monitor them closely to ensure this is maintained.

Details of the providers training programme that all staff including volunteers and subcontractor agents who are likely to have direct contact or have access to Service users details are set out in the contracts with the accommodation providers; specifically the "Statement of Requirements", which can be found at: <http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1112/AASC - Schedule 2 - Statement of Requirements.pdf>

■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Claudia Webbe: [98789]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Office, what plans she has to commission a full, judge-led public inquiry into exploitation in Leicester's Garment Industry.

Victoria Atkins:

We are deeply concerned by the appalling reports of illegal and unsafe working conditions for garment workers in Leicester. The Government will not tolerate the exploitation of vulnerable workers for commercial gain and is committed to taking action against those who seek to do so.

In light of these very serious recent allegations, The Home Secretary announced in the House on 13 July that a multi-agency Taskforce, led by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) has been set up in Leicester to enable the relevant enforcement bodies to work together at pace, to take appropriate action against unscrupulous employers and individuals who exploit workers .

If evidence of wrongdoing and illegal exploitation comes to light, perpetrators should face the full force of the law.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Scott Mann: [96131]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will meet the hon. Member for North Cornwall and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall to discuss the future allocation of funding for summer street marshalling schemes similar to that which was in place in Bude during summer 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

Devon and Cornwall Police will receive total funding of up to £338.4 million in 2020-21, an increase of up to £23.2 million compared to 2019-20.

Decisions on how to use this funding, including the scheme referenced here, are taken locally. I am in regular contact with all PCCs, and look forward to future discussions with the Hon Member and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[99711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many fines have been issued for failing to self isolate when returning from overseas.

Kit Malthouse:

On 30 September, the National Police Chiefs' Council published its monthly data related to police use of Covid-19 enforcement notices issued under all emergency health protections. The data covers up to 21 September and shows that 38 fines had been issued to individuals who have contravened the International Travel regulations by failing to self-isolate after arriving in England from a country on the UK government list. These were issued across 14 forces.

■ Crime: Coronavirus

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[98745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been arrested for breaking covid-19 restrictions.

Kit Malthouse:

The number of arrests in relation to breaches of Covid-19 restrictions are not distinguished from broader statistics covering arrests for breach of the peace and other public order offences.

The number of fixed penalty notices issued for breaches of the Covid-19 regulations are published monthly by ACRO with the most recent release being made on Tuesday 29 September.

They show that for the period between 27 March - 27 September 2020, a total of 19,045 fixed penalty notices have been issued by police forces in England (16,373) and Wales (2,672).

■ Immigrants: Finance

Neil Coyle:

[\[99628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many requests for reconsideration of No Recourse to Public Funds status for reasons of destitution were received by her Department in each of the last 10 months.

Neil Coyle:

[\[99629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the average time taken for her Department to decide applications to lift No Recourse to Public Funds conditions.

Chris Philp:

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application. This application can be made if a migrant is 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.

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.

The published data provides information on the number of requests received on a quarterly basis rather than each month

The published data also shows the average time taken to decide a Change of Conditions request, for each quarter.

■ Police: Coronavirus

Steve McCabe:

[99515]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what powers police officers have relating to right of entry to private property in order to enforce covid-19 rules in the event that there are grounds to believe that those rules are being broken.

Kit Malthouse:

The police are satisfied that they have the necessary powers of enforcement in place.

Although there is no specific power of entry for the police under the coronavirus rules, there are circumstances where other powers of entry may apply. For example if a serious crime is taking place inside a property or the police need to enter to arrest someone.

The police will continue to engage, explain and encourage compliance and will also issue fixed penalty notices for breaches of Covid regulations.

■ Property: Corruption

Anneliese Dodds:

[99100]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the value was of property in the UK that has been investigated as suspected proceeds of corruption from 2016 to 2020.

James Brokenshire:

The National Crime Agency's International Corruption Unit (ICU) investigates bribery of foreign public officials by individuals or companies from the UK, and money laundering by corrupt foreign officials and their associates.

The ICU and other UK law enforcement agencies investigating the proceeds of corruption do not specifically collate information on the value of property investigated. However, since its inception in 2015, the ICU has restrained or detained £742m worth

of assets linked to corruption globally, in addition to confiscating £7 million worth of assets and returning assets totalling £199 million.

■ Road Traffic Offences: Speed Limits

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[99531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has issued to police authorities on the holding of speed awareness courses during the covid-19 outbreak; where live classroom courses are not available, what alternatives exist for people with no internet provision or access to a webcam and microphone; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

The management of speed awareness courses is an operational matter for individual police forces and course providers who decide on the format and content of courses. Course providers do provide clear joining instructions for each person attending an online course. If individuals have poor IT skills or IT access providers can work with them via their call centres, to assist course completion on a case by case basis. The police are working with providers to develop alternative delivery methods for special characteristic groups for example a booklet with follow-up consultation.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[83850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many passengers (a) have entered the UK from countries on which the UK has imposed quarantine restrictions since those restrictions were imposed, (b) have registered their addresses and contact details for quarantine purposes and (c) have been subject to spot checks to ensure that quarantine requirements are being fulfilled.

Chris Philp:

Border Force does not collect the data on country of origin format unless there is an issue with non-compliance, therefore, we do not hold that level of data.

Border Force continue to operate a spot checking regime to support compliance with the PLF, and will balance the needs of this against a range of other factors, including the public health risk of queuing passengers in a confined space.

■ Visas: English Language

Neil Coyle:

[\[100424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how her Department is making decisions on visa applications for people required to undertake English language tests as part of their application process where language test centres are closed due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has implemented a number of measures for visa applicants, including for those who are unable to take an English language tests due to the impact of Covid-19.

Details of all published concessions are available at -

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

Some specific concessions are in place on English language testing, for example, those applying to enter the UK or remain on the basis of family or private life can apply for an exemption if the test centre was closed or if they were unable to travel to a test centre due to Covid-19.

For students, Higher Education Providers (HEP) can self-assess the English ability of those studying at degree level or above and due to Covid-19, this provision has been temporarily extended to allow HEPs to self-assess the English ability of students undertaking pre-sessional courses.

The majority of Secure English Language Testing (SELT) centres have reopened in England and in a number of overseas locations outside of the UK, where local restrictions have eased.

■ Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund**Rachael Maskell:****[99043]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September to Question 88909 on Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund, how much her Department contributed to the Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund; and how much of that Fund has been (a) allocated and (b) disbursed.

Victoria Atkins:

Protecting and supporting vulnerable children during the pandemic is a priority for this Government, and we continue to work closely with the charitable sector who deliver vital services to children and families around the country.

In June of this year, the Home Office and the Department for Education launched the £7.6m joint Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief (VCNCSR) Fund to provide financial hardship relief for national Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations that support vulnerable children across England and Wales.

Following a competitive assessment process, the full fund was allocated in August to three charities: Action for Children, The Children's Society and Barnardo's. £6.5m of the funding has already been dispersed, with the remainder to follow by the end of October.

Together with other government departments, we are continuing to work closely with beneficiaries of the funding and other charities, to understand emerging issues and

pressures in delivering services for vulnerable children and young people during this time.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Buildings: Insulation

Dame Margaret Hodge:

[\[100277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Government will publish the findings of the review into the ban on combustible materials.

Christopher Pincher:

On 20 January 2020 we launched a public consultation including proposals to expand the scope of the in-effect ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls. This also included proposals with regards to laminated glass as well as other exemptions. The consultation closed on the 25 May 2020. We continue to analyse the responses and will publish the Government response to the consultation in due course.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Tracy Brabin:

[\[100509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure homelessness does not increase as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme comes to an end.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has introduced the Job Support Scheme as part of a wider package to protect incomes and has injected over £9 billion into the welfare system, which will support people with housing costs.

This includes increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents. £180 million of Discretionary Housing Payments are available for those who require additional support, and local authorities continue to provide their statutory homelessness duties.

Legislation has also been introduced requiring landlords to give tenants 6 months' notice before they can progress eviction cases to court, except in the most serious circumstances. Where cases do reach court, new rules require landlords to inform judges if tenants have been impacted by coronavirus and to re-activate cases from before 3 August.

■ Domestic Violence: Housing

Mohammad Yasin:

[99074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Minister for Women and Equalities on steps the Government is taking to protect domestic violence victims who face barriers to accessing housing as a result of rent arrears accrued.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State meets regularly with all his ministerial colleagues.

We have taken steps to improve access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse.

Statutory guidance issued in 2012 encourages local authorities to give additional preference (high priority) to people who require urgent rehousing as a result of domestic abuse, while guidance issued in 2013 advises authorities to make appropriate exceptions to any local connection test for people moving into an area to escape violence.

In November 2018 the government issued new statutory guidance for local authorities to improve access to social housing by victims of domestic abuse who are in a refuge or other form of safe temporary accommodation:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/753667/Improving_access_to_social_housing_for_victims_of_domestic_abuse.pdf

The guidance makes clear that local authorities are expected not to apply residency tests for those victims who have fled to another district, sets out how they can give appropriate priority to victims, and encourages them to use their existing powers to support victims to remain safely in their homes if they choose to do so.

Through the Domestic Abuse Bill we are protecting the security of tenure of social tenants with a lifetime tenancy who have to flee their home to escape domestic abuse.

■ Flats: Insulation

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[100301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will hold urgent discussions with representatives of financial institutions on their requirement for an EWS1 form in order to approve mortgage applications relating to low-level flats.

Christopher Pincher:

The External Wall System form (EWS1) and process was introduced by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors 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 use for lower risk properties. The EWS1 process should only be used where there is clear need, and

where no reasonable assurances or regulatory evidence exists to support valuations. Ministers and officials continue to engage with lenders on this issue.

■ **Floods: Expenditure**

Stephanie Peacock: [\[99705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 96982, whether his Department has rejected any claims to the Bellwin scheme.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[99706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 96982, with how many local authorities his Department is working to finalise their application under the Bellwin scheme.

Luke Hall:

No Bellwin claims submitted in the last 12 months have been rejected in full. Before payment is made claims are assessed against the scheme terms.

■ **High Rise Flats: Insulation**

Dame Margaret Hodge: [\[100278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he will publish the findings of the audit of high-rise residential buildings.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department publishes data on the number of high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings in England with Aluminum Composite Material cladding systems unlikely to meet building regulations. The latest data is available [here](#). The Department has commenced a data collection exercise which will enable us to build a picture of external wall systems in use on high rise residential buildings. The exercise will collect data on residential buildings 18 metres and over covering private and social buildings, student accommodation and hotels. We will publish appropriate summary information from the data collection in our monthly Building Safety Programme data release when ready.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[99576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to provide additional fire safety advice, in addition 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 (NFCC). 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:

<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>.

■ Housing: Domestic Abuse

Alex Davies-Jones:

[100563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department has published on domestic abuse victims' rights to stay in their home; and what recent discussions he has with the specialist domestic abuse sector on developing cost-effective housing pathways for domestic abuse victims.

Kelly Tolhurst:

In November 2018 the Government issued new statutory guidance for local authorities to improve access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse who are in a refuge or other form of safe temporary accommodation:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/753667/Improving_access_to_social_housing_for_victims_of_domestic_abuse.pdf

The guidance also sets out how local authorities can use their existing powers to support victims to remain safely in their homes if they choose to do so. In addition, in August 2020 Government updated guidance for victims of domestic abuse which includes details of trusted sources of advice, including on housing matters:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>

My officials regularly engage with the domestic abuse sector on a number of issues relating to housing.

■ Housing: Insulation

Sarah Olney:

[98741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is adequate capacity of specialist fire safety skills in the housing sector to ensure the continuation at pace of the remediation of dangerous cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

From the outset of the programme the Department has engaged industry to ensure sufficient capacity exists to meet demand and to have arrangements in place to address any blockages in the supply chain. This included establishing the Industry Response Group.

The Department is aware of challenges with the capacity of professional fire expertise and associated public indemnity insurance constraints. With industry, the Department has several joint workstreams actively seeking to address this.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[98757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to ensure combustible and flammable cladding has been removed from residential buildings.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[99109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to ensure combustible and flammable cladding has been removed from residential buildings in Battersea constituency.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[99110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to ensure combustible and flammable cladding has been removed from residential buildings across the UK.

Christopher Pincher:

In England, the Government is providing £1.6 billion to speed up the removal of unsafe cladding and make homes safer, more quickly. We have also appointed construction experts who are reviewing remediation timescales and identifying what can be done to increase pace, along with providing direct expert support to projects.

Where building owners have failed to act, despite government support, the Government has supported enforcement action by Fire and Rescue Services and local authorities. We are also holding case conferences to discuss specific buildings of greatest concern with the relevant local authorities to agree action plans.

Housing and building safety are devolved matters, and the progress of remediation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is a matter for their respective devolved administrations.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[98758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has an estimated timeframe of when all combustible and flammable cladding will be removed from residential buildings.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[99111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an estimate of the timeframe within which all combustible and flammable cladding will be removed from residential buildings in Battersea.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been clear in its expectation that all owners of high rise residential buildings with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding complete remedial works by the end of 2021 or face further action. For other types of unsafe cladding, the Government is making £1 billion available to fund the removal of unsafe non-ACM cladding in 2020/21

In addition, the application guidance clearly states that applicants must be in a position to evidence that remediation works will commence onsite prior to 31 March 2021 and, once funding is granted, must subsequently ensure that remedial works are delivered at pace

The Department published registration statistics for the Building Safety Fund on 30 September and is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications.

■ Local Government Finance

Helen Hayes: [\[97650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Government plans to publish 2021-22 funding, grants and council tax principles for councils.

Luke Hall:

Decisions about 2021-22 funding, grants and council tax principles are part of the Spending Review. In line with the recommendations of the Hudson Review, we will aim to publish the provisional settlement on or around the 5 December, and the final settlement no later than 31 January. The final dates will depend on the timing of the Spending Review.

■ Nature Reserves and Recreation Spaces: Derelict Land

Stuart Anderson: [\[98767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department is conducting any reviews or site surveys to investigate whether any brownfield sites could be transformed into nature reserves or green areas.

Christopher Pincher:

Each brownfield site has its own characteristics: some brownfield will be important to nature conservation or as green infrastructure. My department does not provide site-specific advice, but our National Planning Policy Framework expects every local authority to identify, protect and enhance wildlife habitat and ecological networks, and seek opportunities to secure accessible green spaces that will benefit the community. There is no presumption that all brownfield sites should be built on. It is the local authority which is best placed to determine what purposes a particular site should serve, after consulting local people and, where appropriate, expert bodies such as Natural England or the Wildlife Trusts.

■ Next Steps Accommodation Programme

Neil Coyle: [\[99625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to release the £13.5 million in Next Steps Accommodation funding that has been allocated to enable local authorities to tackle new or emerging challenges.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We are in the process of considering the next steps for this funding as part of our preparation for the winter period. We will announce more information in due course.

■ Recreation Spaces**Dan Carden:**[\[100525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including parks and green spaces within the statutory services that councils must provide; and what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the adequacy of funding to local authorities for the provision and upkeep of parks and green spaces.

Luke Hall:

The Government recognises the value of parks and green spaces in providing vibrant and inclusive locations for communities to socialise, volunteer, work, and exercise. We are committed to safeguarding the future of our green spaces.

We recognise the pressures councils and our communities are continuing to face as a result of Covid-19, which is why we are providing local authorities with £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants.

Along with the measures brought forward to safeguard local government income drops, this additional funding demonstrates Government's continued commitment to make sure councils have the resources they need and is sufficient for them to respond to these pressures based on what they have told us.

In total, over £28 billion has been committed to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities across government. This comprehensive package of support includes direct financial support and cashflow measures for councils, bus and tram services, support for the homeless and both grants and rates reliefs for businesses, as well as several other grants.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arab States: Israel****Caroline Ansell:**[\[99063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her (a) Emirati, (b) Bahraini and (c) Israeli counterparts on helping those countries expand their commercial ties following the normalisation agreement between those countries.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has strong bilateral trading relationships in the Middle East. In the year ending March 2020, bilateral trade stood at £43.7 billion with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and £5.1 billion with Israel.

The United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement was one of the first agreements to be signed by my Department, and we are now exploring opportunities to deepen this further.

In the Gulf, we have launched a Joint Trade and Investment Review with the GCC that will help broaden our trade relationships and realise opportunities in sectors such as education, healthcare, and food and drink.

■ **Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**

Emily Thornberry: [\[100908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 13 November 2018 air-strike on a bus in Hodeidah was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[100909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 21 October 2019 air-strike on a vehicle in Kitaf was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[100910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 30 August 2018 air-strike on fishing boats in Hajjah was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[100911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 22 August 2019 air-strike on a farm in Bani Hasan was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[100912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 23 July 2018 air-strike on a water supply system in Nashur was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[100913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 12 December 2016 air-strike on a house in Midi was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[99546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 26 October 2015 air-strike on houses in Thabwa was among the 310 incidents assessed as credible (a) to which her Department's International Humanitarian Law analysis was applied and (b) which was determined to be one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

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

Chris Law:

[\[99644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total value was of arms exports from the UK to Saudi Arabia in 2019.

Chris Law:

[\[99645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total value of arms exports from the UK to Saudi Arabia was in the last ten years.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Defence and security export statistics by region – rather than individual countries – are published on GOV.UK annually

However, HM Government publishes Official Statistics about export licences granted and refused each quarter. The publicly available data on GOV.UK currently includes details of licences up to 31st March 2020; data for the period 1st April 2020 to 30th June 2020 will be published on 13th October 2020.

Licensing data does not provide an accurate export value as value needs only to be declared for Standard Individual Export Licences (SIELs). Nonetheless, export values declared in SIELs for military exports granted to Saudi Arabia in 2019 were £638,236,675; and in the last 10 years were £9,262,769,732. Licences granted are not necessarily a measure of exports shipped in a given period though – as they are valid for between two and five years – and some such licences expire before they are

used so, in these circumstances, exporters must submit a further application, which can result in double counting.

■ **Shipping: Coronavirus**

Martyn Day: [\[99676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of a Bounce Back plan for the maritime sector.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade is working closely with the Department of Transport to support the UK maritime sector as it seeks to recover from COVID-19. We do not plan to launch a Bounce Back plan.

■ **Trade Competitiveness: China and Russia**

Gareth Thomas: [\[96753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential level of unfair competition from (a) Russian and (b) Chinese state-owned companies in (i) UK and (ii) overseas markets; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

We will back British businesses against unfair competition through our new, independent, trade remedies regime – and we will continue to work with both British businesses and our international partners to raise concerns about foreign state-owned enterprises where they unfairly distort the market.

JUSTICE

■ **Crimes against the Person: Migrant Workers**

Claudia Webbe: [\[98788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to enable overseas workers who are victims of corporate harm in the UK to access the UK courts.

Chris Philp:

In cross-border cases, there are well established rules and procedures that determine whether a court in the UK has jurisdiction to determine a case.

This will include considering factors such as where the defendant in the case is based, or whether they can be served a claim in the UK. The court may also consider whether the alleged damage or loss was sustained within the UK or resulted from an act committed within the UK.

Subject to certain limited exceptions, Article 4.1 of the Recast Brussels Regulation confers a right on any claimant (regardless of their domicile) to sue a UK domiciled defendant in a UK court.

The Government has no plans to legislate to amend the current position in law.

From 11pm on 31st December 2020 the UK will no longer be party to the Recast Brussels Regulation. Transitional provisions will apply in cases where proceedings have been instituted before that date (so that the Brussels rules will still apply in those cases).

For cases where the Brussels Regulation does not apply, and where proceedings are instituted after the end of the Transition Period, the domestic private international law rules – in a case like the one mentioned, those of England and Wales - will apply to determine where such cases will be heard. Each of the three jurisdictions in the UK have their own rules. Under the rules in England and Wales, the primary factor determining where a case may be heard relates to where the claimant needs to serve the claim against the defendant. If the defendant is present within England and Wales (even temporarily) such that service can take place, then the court in England and Wales is able to take jurisdiction (although the defendant may seek to dispute that). If service in England and Wales is not possible, the claimant will need to obtain permission from the court to serve proceedings overseas (subject to certain limited exceptions).

The UK has applied to rejoin the Lugano Convention 2007. This has similar jurisdiction rules to the Brussels recast Regulation. If the UK's application is accepted, then broadly speaking, in any case where Lugano applied jurisdiction would once again primarily turn on the domicile of the defendant.

■ Prison Sentences

Shabana Mahmood:

[100342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners are serving sentences of imprisonment for public protection in each prison in (a) England and (b) Wales for the most recent period for which information is available.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of prisoners serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) in each prison in (a) England and (b) Wales as at 30 June 2020 is set out in Table 1. The figures are a subset of those published in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

A prisoner serving an IPP sentence will be released only when the independent Parole Board concludes that the risk s/he presents to the public is capable of being safely managed in the community on licence.

IPP prisoners continue to have a high chance of a positive outcome from Parole Board hearings. In 2019/20 72% of Parole Board hearings resulted in either a recommendation for a transfer to an open prison or release. As of 30 June 2020, the number of unreleased IPP prisoners who have completed their minimum tariff was 1,856. This is down from 2,136 on 30 June 2019.

Table 1: Prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection sentences in England, as at 30 June 2020

ESTABLISHMENT	N
Total	1905
Altcourse	7
Askham Grange	4
Ashfield	25
Belmarsh	8
Buckley Hall	26
Bedford	5
Bristol	6
Birmingham	8
Bullingdon	15
Bure	29
Brixton	12
Bronzefield	4
Chelmsford	6
Coldingley	*
Channings Wood	10
Dartmoor	12
Dovegate	33
Drake Hall	*
Doncaster	6
Downview	*
Erlestoke	20
Standford Hill (Sheppey cluster)	18
East Sutton Park	*
Eastwood Park	*
Exeter	3

ESTABLISHMENT	N
Elmley (Sheppey cluster)	17
Forest Bank	7
Ford	9
Foston Hall	3
Frankland	42
Full Sutton	19
Featherstone	11
Garth	50
Guys Marsh	6
Grendon/Spring Hill	40
Gartree	41
Hollesley Bay	8
Hatfield	5
Hewell	9
Holme House	23
Hull	46
Humber	18
High Down	9
Highpoint (North and South)	37
Haverigg	34
Isle of Wight	39
Kirkham	10
Kirklevington Grange	6
Leicester	6
Leeds	4
Lancaster Farms	8

ESTABLISHMENT	N
Lowdham Grange	25
Lindholme	20
Lincoln	8
Long Lartin	18
Low Newton	4
Liverpool	9
Littlehey	75
Lewes	3
Leyhill	146
Moorland	8
Manchester	23
Mount	20
New Hall	*
Northumberland	29
Nottingham	10
North Sea Camp	87
Norwich	8
Onley	13
Oakwood	22
Peterborough (Male)	5
Portland	*
Peterborough (Female)	*
Preston	5
Pentonville	10
Rochester	3
Rye Hill	25

ESTABLISHMENT	N
Ranby	9
Risley	24
Send	7
Stafford	25
Stoke Heath	11
Stocken	16
Swaleside (Sheppey cluster)	41
Swinfen Hall	3
Sudbury	9
Thorn Cross	9
Thameside	*
The Verne	12
Winchester	4
Wakefield	46
Wealstun	12
Woodhill	17
Warren Hill	51
Wayland	43
Wymott	65
Whitemoor	26
Wormwood Scrubs	*
Whatton	117
Wandsworth	*

Table 2: Prisoners serving Imprisonment for Public Protection sentences in Wales, as at 30 June 20

Establishment	N
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ESTABLISHMENT	N
Total	64
Berwyn	31
Cardiff	3
Parc	14
Swansea	*
Usk	12
Prescoed	*

DATA SOURCES AND QUALITY

The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Note

An asterisk (*) has been used to suppress values of two or less. This is to prevent the disclosure of individual information. Further disclosure control may be completed where this alone is not sufficient.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[100343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the ten longest lengths of time have been that a prisoner has served longer than their original tariff as a result of serving sentences of imprisonment for public protection; and what the ethnicity was of each of those prisoners.

Lucy Frazer:

As at 30 June 2020, the ten longest lengths of time post tariff and before first release which a prisoner on a sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) has served are set out in the table below. The same table shows the recorded ethnicity of each of the ten prisoners.

Our primary responsibility is to protect the public. A prisoner serving an IPP sentence will be released only when the independent Parole Board concludes that the risk to the public is capable of being safely managed in the community on licence. A prisoner serving an IPP sentence is statutorily entitled to a review of his/her detention by the independent Parole Board at least once every two years.

Ten Longest Lengths of Time Post Tariff and before First Release for IPP prisoners
(As of 30 June 2020)

DAYS POST TARIFF	ETHNICITY
5223	White
5092	White
5087	White
4961	White
4911	White
4889	Black / Black British
4849	White
4824	White
4806	White
4802	Asian / Asian British

Notes:

The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

■ **Prisoners' Release: Mobile Phones**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[99573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the practice of providing mobile phones to prison leavers who do not have access to a phone of their own has ended in any prison in (a) England and (b) Wales.

Lucy Frazer:

Basic mobile phones have been purchased by the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic while probation is operating under an Exceptional Delivery Models (EDMs). This is in order to maintain contact with offenders in the community who do not have access to a phone of their own, while they adhere to social distancing measures. The phones are only capable of voice communication and text communication and do not have internet access.

CRCs have been advised that phones should continue to be issued to any offender leaving prison without one. As social distancing measures are relaxed, and in instances where face to face reporting is accessible for service users, the provision of phones will not be required.

■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

Colleen Fletcher: [100427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of violence in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

Data showing the trends for and levels of violence in prisons is published in the quarterly in the government's Safety in Custody statistics publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>

The most recent data shows a decrease in assault incidents in the 12 months to March 2020, which are down 8% from the previous year. This included a 5% decrease in assaults on staff and a 7% reduction in serious assault from the previous 12 months. Assaults have now fallen for the last three published quarters.

Despite the progress made, the level of violence in prisons remains too high and we continue to work hard to address this. We are giving staff the tools and training to help them reduce violence including embedding the Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan to support those at risk of violence, the roll-out of PAVA incapacitant spray and implementing key work across the prison estate. We are also increasing staffing numbers, and investing in £100 million in tough security measures to keep the illicit items which fuel violence out of prisons.

■ Prisons: Mobile Phones

Grahame Morris: [100350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to increase the use of in-cell technology in prisons for (a) education, (b) rehabilitation, (c) communication and (d) other purposes.

Grahame Morris: [100351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to increase the use of in-cell technology in prisons for education since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

The department's technology priority since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak has been focused on enabling communication between prisoners and their families and friends.

Since the beginning of March, this has resulted in the deployment of over 1000 secure mobile phones to complement existing in-cell telephones and wing phones.

We have deployed nearly 250 tablets for compassionate calls across all public prisons in England and Wales and most significantly we have deployed video calls across 105 sites to enable an interim alternative whilst face-to-face meetings were suspended. There are still 7 sites which are yet to have fully operational video visits, these are being worked on by our teams as a priority. Over 27,000 video calls have been made so far.

As announced in June, £20m was secured to increase technology infrastructure across the estate. This work is enabling additional video-conferencing facilities and the extension of in-cell technology across sites with existing network infrastructure.

This complements existing work to install technology across the entire youth estate, which will support education and rehabilitation by providing secure access to appropriate content on laptops via our Content Hub. The Content Hub provides access to education materials such as maths exercises, books supporting people learning to read, and specific vocational learning materials (including customer service skills, food safety awareness, and Khan Academy materials to support people learning to be electricians).

During the COVID-19 crisis, additional education services have been added to the Content Hub, including mindfulness tools, in-cell exercises, and audio books to support the residents during longer periods in cells. National Prison Radio shows have also been used to keep residents calm and to reduce frustration.

The use of secure technology to enable the safe delivery of education in-cell is a key part of our strategy to improve rehabilitation, get more prisoners ready for jobs on release and reduce reoffending. We continue to consider the recommendations of the Farmer Review when prioritising future deployment of technology.

■ **Solicitors: Legal Aid Scheme**

Karl Turner: [R] [\[99598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors hold a civil legal aid contract as of 1 October 2020.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[99599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors held a criminal legal aid contract on October 2020.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[99600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many solicitors are undertaking legal aid work in criminal law as of 1 October 2020.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[99601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many solicitors are undertaking legal aid work in civil law as of 1 October 2020.

Alex Chalk:

Please note for the figures provided that some firms may have more than one office. There are currently 1,136 firms who hold a Criminal Legal Aid Contract. There are currently 1,471 firms who hold a Civil Legal Aid Contract. This data is correct as at 7 October 2020.

The Legal Aid Agency tracks the number of contracted providers, not the number of individual practitioners who work in either criminal or civil law.

The Legal Aid Agency frequently reviews market capacity to make sure there is adequate provision around the country and moves quickly to ensure provision where gaps may appear.

Earlier this year we announced an independent review to look at the sustainability of the legal aid market and have introduced changes to inject up £51m per year.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Abortion: Northern Ireland

Stella Creasy:

[\[100382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2020 to Question 46639, what assessment he has made of the effect on the provision of abortion services in Northern Ireland under Section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019 of the cessation of the recently introduced early medical abortion service.

Mr Robin Walker:

As the honourable Member is aware, the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No.2) Regulations 2020 we made have been in place since 31 March 2020. Since then, we have been dealing with the response to Covid-19 right across the UK. I very much welcome the services that have been operating on the ground in Northern Ireland through existing sexual and reproductive health clinics across the health and social care trusts.

I hope that these services can continue, and those that have ceased can resume, in parallel to longer-term services being commissioned as soon as possible, together with appropriate support and guidance in place so that access is available locally in all cases set out in the regulations, and that both women and clinicians are well supported. The Government and Department are continuing to engage on this issue with the Executive and the Northern Ireland Minister of Health in particular and his department.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Colum Eastwood:

[\[99783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with Northern Ireland's business community in areas of localised covid-19 lockdown on the provision of additional financial support to businesses and employees in those areas.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government remains committed to supporting businesses in Northern Ireland, and across the UK, as they continue to deal with the impact of Covid-19.

We continue to regularly engage with business representatives and businesses on a range of issues, including the response to Covid-19. We will continue to work closely with the Executive to support businesses, jobs and the economy in Northern Ireland.

The Government has provided some of the most generous support packages in the world to support the economy through the pandemic. This includes UK-wide measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Job Support Scheme and the Job Support Scheme. On 9 October, the Chancellor announced that the Job Support Scheme will be extended so that firms in areas affected by local restrictions will be able to pay staff up to two thirds of employee wages, to a maximum of £2,100 a month, should they legally be required to close. We will continue to support businesses in Northern Ireland and across the UK to build back better.

In addition to these measures, the Government has provided £2.4bn in additional funding to the Northern Ireland Executive as part of our response to Covid-19. This additional funding is being used by the Executive to help support businesses as they deal with the impact of this crisis.

■ Radio Telefis Eireann: Broadcasting Programmes

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[99535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will hold discussions with the Foreign Affairs Minister and the Justice Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive on the funding of a documentary called The Unquiet Graves broadcast on RTE Irish State Television which was broadcast in September 2020.

Mr Robin Walker:

Funding decisions are made at arms length from the Government and the Government does not comment on individual cases.

SCOTLAND

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

Martyn Day:

[\[99675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions his Department has had with HM Treasury on allocating funding to the Scottish maritime industry to support decarbonisation.

David Duguid:

The UK Government is working actively with the maritime sector to support decarbonisation at both international and domestic level. My office works closely with the Department for Transport which leads on this work, and which is focussing on supporting the decarbonisation of the industry throughout the whole of the UK. Officials from my office and DfT are meeting regularly with their counterparts in HMT.

Domestically, the UK Government has published research exploring the opportunities and challenges arising from decarbonisation and this will provide the sector with greater clarity on what is required to achieve decarbonisation. In support of this, the

Department for Transport has provided £1.5m of grants through Maritime Research and Innovation UK, supporting clean maritime innovation throughout the UK.

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

TRANSPORT

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Anne Marie Morris:

[99615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how covid-19 restrictions are enforced on public buses; and what penalties his Department has imposed on bus operators for non-compliance with those restrictions.

Rachel Maclean:

While the Government expects everyone to comply with face covering and social distancing rules, the regulations made under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 include powers to enforce the requirement to wear a face covering (unless an individual has a valid exemption). In addition, some operators are likely to introduce additional enforcement measures to reflect their specific circumstances where appropriate.

The Police (including British Transport Police, BTP) and Transport for London (TfL) authorised personnel have the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) of £200 to anyone refusing to comply with the Face Covering Regulations.

Transport operators have the power to deny access to a service if someone is not complying with the Face Covering Regulations or to direct someone to leave a service or transport hub if they do not wear a face covering when asked to and do not have a valid exemption.

The Department for Transport has published [Safer Transport Guidance for Operators](#), which should be followed by all transport operators.

■ Bus Services: Disadvantaged and Rural Areas

Karin Smyth:

[100460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the National Audit Office report, Improving local bus services in England outside London, published on 2 October 2020, HC 577, what assessment he has made of the effect of the loss of supported bus services on (a) rural and (b) disadvantaged communities.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to levelling up the country to provide equal opportunity for all and recognises the vital importance bus services have in supporting the economy and bringing society together across rural and disadvantaged areas.

The National Bus Strategy we are developing will focus on the needs of passengers, and set out how national and local government and the private sector will come together to meet the needs of local communities. We aim to publish this strategy by the end of the year.

We also committed last year in the Future of Mobility Urban Strategy to setting out our thinking on the future of rural mobility in due course.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Inland Waterways**

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[98990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) encouraging the use of canal towpaths and (b) the proposals of the Canal & River Trust for towpath improvement schemes to help increase levels of walking and cycling.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 28 July the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking, with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. This includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel, which will significantly increase the funding available for cycling and walking infrastructure in England, including on canal towpaths. Further details of funding for the different commitments in the Plan will be determined as part of the Spending Review process, and the Department will continue to discuss funding options with stakeholders including the Canals and Rivers Trust.

■ **Department for Transport: Pay**

Philip Davies:

[\[100331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the biggest pay rise given to someone in his Department was in (a) percentage and (b) cash terms in the last 12 months.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Between the period of 01/10/2019 - 30/09/2020 the biggest pay rise given to someone in the Department was (a) 6.9% in percentage terms and (b) £7,064 in cash terms. The mean average award for all staff for the same period was 2%.

■ **Department for Transport: Private Finance Initiative**

Alan Brown:

[\[99033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what live PFI contracts his Department has; and for each of those contracts (a) what service is provided, (b) when the contract became live, (c) what the remaining term of the contract is and (d) what the annual repayments are.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport has an operational PFI Portfolio of 56 Projects. The largest sub-sector of the portfolio is in street lighting, with 31 projects. The majority,

41 of our 56 PFI projects, are contracted by Local Authorities. The DfT's PFI Portfolio has a total Capital Value of £6.97bn. The PFI portfolio carries a total public sector whole-life Unitary Charge liability of £33.7bn. The whole-life direct liability to DfT is £29.5bn as PFI credits for local authority projects are topped up locally to meet the unitary charge payments. For detailed data on when contracts became live, their remaining term and the annual repayments, please refer to background note below.

This information is also published annually by the IPA, for DfT and all other central government departments. This can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-finance-initiative-and-private-finance-2-projects-2018-summary-data

■ Driving Tests

Navendu Mishra:

[99757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to address the backlog of driving test applications.

Rachel Maclean:

In March 2020, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) suspended most of its services in line with Government guidance, whilst maintaining access for critical workers to support the national emergency response.

The DVSA is restoring its testing services with new procedures in place to keep people safe and help stop the spread of coronavirus. As the DVSA has been unable to provide its normal level of service for the past six months, demand for practical driving tests are higher than usual.

The DVSA has now made over 375,000 slots available to the end of January 2021. From 19 October, driving examiners will be increasing the number of tests they conduct from five to six per day; this should help reduce waiting times.

The DVSA's Deployment team has now returned to its usual way of working by adding new test slots to the booking system at the start of every week.

■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

Navendu Mishra:

[99758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will discuss with the Driver and Vehicle Standard Agency the reopening of waiting rooms for driving instructors during driving tests.

Rachel Maclean:

In March 2020, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) suspended most of its services in line with Government guidance, whilst maintaining access for critical workers to support the national emergency response.

The DVSA's priority is to restore its testing services with new protective measures and procedures in place to keep people safe and stop the spread of COVID-19. This includes restricting access and movement around driving test centres and closing

waiting rooms to driving instructors and candidates. Some waiting rooms are being used as temporary offices to accommodate driving examiners to ensure social distancing measures are adhered to. This is not a step the DVSA has taken lightly but is an important part of helping keep everyone safe as we fight the virus.

The DVSA is working closely with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) to identify actions it could take that would allow some waiting areas to be opened up while balancing the need to keep everyone COVID safe.

The DVSA understands this can be difficult for driving instructors and trainers waiting at test centres that are not near to alternative facilities, which is why the DVSA is keeping the situation under review.

■ Driving Tests: Standards

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[98945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people waiting for a practical driving test in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

In March 2020, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) suspended most of its services in line with Government guidance, whilst maintaining access for critical workers to support the national emergency response.

The DVSA is restoring its testing services with new procedures in place to keep people safe and help stop the spread of coronavirus.

As the DVSA has been unable to provide its normal level of service for the past six months, demand for practical driving tests are higher than usual.

As of 6 October 2020, 344,806 candidates in the UK have a practical car test booked and are waiting to sit the test.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[98946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of average time it takes to obtain a practical driving test in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

In March 2020, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) suspended most of its services in line with Government guidance, whilst maintaining access for critical workers to support the national emergency response.

The DVSA is restoring its testing services with new procedures in place to keep people safe and help stop the spread of coronavirus.

As the DVSA has been unable to provide its normal level of service for the past six months, demand for practical driving tests are higher than usual.

Currently, the average waiting time for a practical driving test in the UK is:

- Car – 10 weeks
- Vocational – 7 weeks

- Motorcycle – 7 weeks

■ Namibia: Coronavirus

Damian Green:

[\[100271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to introduce an air bridge to Namibia; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

Namibia is not currently on the list of countries exempt from self-isolation requirements. The Government takes a range of factors into account when deciding which countries to add or remove from the Travel Corridor list. These include an estimate of the proportion of the population that is currently infectious in each country, virus incidence rates, trends and rates of change, transmission status and international epidemic intelligence, information on a country's testing capacity, testing regime and test positivity rate, an assessment of the quality of the data available, the effectiveness of measures being deployed by a country and the volume of travel between the UK and that country. The Government keeps the list of travel corridors under constant review. We will make further exemptions when we are sure that we can do so safely and responsibly.

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions

Caroline Lucas:

[\[98685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what policies within the transport sector he plans to introduce to ensure emissions are reduced in line with the fifth carbon budget.

Rachel Maclean:

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan, due to be published later this year, is the biggest piece of work we have ever done to tackle greenhouse gas emissions from transport. The holistic and cross-modal approach will set out a credible and ambitious pathway to help deliver transport's contribution to carbon budgets and meet net zero by 2050.

TREASURY

■ Banks and Post Offices: Closures

Jamie Stone:

[\[99709\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received from residents in (a) Wick and (b) other towns in cases where a bank branch has been proposed for closure at the same time as the proposed closure of the last post office in that area; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

Though I understand the disappointment felt in a community when a bank branch closes, these are ultimately commercial decisions in which the government does not seek to intervene.

We know that the retail financial landscape is changing, as more consumers and businesses opt for the convenience, security, and speed of digital payments and digital banking. Banking service providers need to balance customer interests, market competition, and other commercial factors when considering their strategy.

However, the government also firmly believes that the impact of branch closures should be understood, considered, and mitigated where possible so that all customers, wherever they live, continue to have access to over-the-counter banking services if they wish to use them. That is why the government supports the industry's Access to Banking Standard which helps customers to understand the options they have locally to continue to access banking services, including specialist assistance for customers who need more help.

Alternative options include the Post Office, which allows 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers to carry out their everyday banking at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK. Over 90% of the national population live within one mile of their nearest post office branch, and over 99% within three miles. Almost 99% of the rural population also lives within 3 miles of their nearest post office branch. While there is no programme of post office closures, some unexpected closures can occur, often for reasons beyond the control of the Post Office. When this happens, the Post Office works hard to find alternative service providers so that services can be restored.

In September 2020, the FCA published guidance setting out their expectation of firms when they are deciding whether and how to reduce their physical branches or the number of free to use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of a planned closure on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs, and other relevant branch services and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This will ensure the implementation of closure decisions is done in a way that treats customers fairly.

■ Bowling: VAT**Carolyn Harris:**[\[98721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether ten pin bowling alleys are eligible to benefit from the reduced rate of VAT which the Government has applied to attractions and accommodation and hospitality from 15 July 2020.

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 takeaway. 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.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe:

[98795]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of preventing businesses that are registered in tax havens from accessing covid-19 related financial support.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's unprecedented package of support has been targeted at the businesses and individuals who most need assistance. Those businesses that most need support sometimes include foreign companies who employ people and have property in the UK.

The Government continues to be at the forefront of global action to tackle tax avoidance, with a series of robust measures in place to tackle profit shifting arrangements.

Since 2010, the Government has introduced over 100 new measures to tackle tax non-compliance, and HMRC's compliance activities have protected over £200 billion that would have otherwise gone unpaid. That is the right way to challenge avoidance; not by denying support to British workers, who pay their taxes and would otherwise lose their jobs.

Claudia Webbe:

[98796]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of preventing businesses that engage in high levels of executive pay from accessing covid-19 related financial support.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's current support measures are well-targeted at the businesses and individuals who most need support, bearing in mind the need to act very quickly to deliver the unprecedented packages of economic support. The Government expects everyone to act responsibly and in the spirit of the package, and only to claim and use support as intended. In certain cases where firms participate in the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF), it has been appropriate to require businesses to

commit to restraint on the payment of dividends and other capital distributions, and on senior pay.

Colum Eastwood:

[99782]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide additional financial support to the Northern Ireland Executive to assist local businesses affected by local lockdowns in Northern Ireland as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

On 24 July we made an unprecedented upfront guarantee to the Northern Ireland Executive. We guaranteed that they will receive at least £2.2bn in additional Resource DEL funding for this year. This gives the Northern Ireland Executive the certainty to plan and deliver their coronavirus response this year. The guaranteed funding helps to ensure people, businesses and public services in the Northern Ireland Executive are supported throughout the pandemic

On 9 October we uplifted this guarantee to £2.4bn, thereby providing an additional £200m to the Executive

This is in addition to the UK-wide measures that the people and businesses in Northern Ireland will benefit from, such as the Job Retention Scheme, Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Wallasey**

Ms Angela Eagle:

[100298]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in Wallasey have been furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in each month since the introduction of that scheme.

Jesse Norman:

It is not possible to answer directly the question as data on the number of people furloughed whose jobs have been supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is not available. However, data is available for the number of employments furloughed with the support of the CJRS (a person may have multiple employments). Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) published statistics about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on 21 August 2020, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-august-2020>.

These statistics are the latest available to include figures for the number of jobs furloughed in local areas, and include the total number of jobs furloughed at any time in the Wallasey constituency. They also include figures for the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral. The number of jobs furloughed by Parliamentary constituency is not available for each month. The production of the figures depends on the matching of employment level CJRS data to other data held by HMRC. For records where this has been possible, the release reports that a cumulative total of 11,200 jobs had been furloughed under CJRS for employees living in Wallasey. This figure is based

on claims received to 31 July and covers all jobs supported by the CJRS up to the end of June (when the scheme closed to claims for employments not already furloughed).

The next release of these statistics will provide data on the number of jobs furloughed by Parliamentary constituency at 31 August. This is due to be published on 22 October. More information on this release can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-october-2020>.

■ Duty Free Allowances

Owen Thompson:

[99665]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on tax revenues of his plans for duty-free and tax-free goods at airports announced on 11 September 2020.

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.

■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[98768\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he plans to make available for previously furloughed employees in the night-time industry and other sectors which are not yet safe to re-open according to covid-19 regulations.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the steps necessary to combat COVID-19 are having on businesses and workers in the night-time economy across the UK. On 9 October, it was announced that where the Government has had to go further and close business premises in some areas, the Job Support Scheme is being expanded to protect jobs and UK businesses. The scheme will cover businesses that are legally required to close their premises as a direct result of coronavirus restrictions set by one or more of the four governments in the UK. The Government will provide employers with a grant for employees unable to work, covering two thirds of their usual wages, subject to a cap. Support will be available to eligible businesses from 1 November.

The Government has built flexibility into the Job Support Scheme to provide emergency short-term support for jobs and businesses, which forms part of the Government's wider package of measures to support businesses adjusting to the impact of coronavirus. The Government will continue to work with businesses and representative groups to ensure that support provided is right for the night-time industry and other affected sectors.

■ **Employment: North West**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[99762\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how he plans to implement the measures relating to supporting jobs announced in the Summer Economic Updates in Stockport constituency and the North West region.

Steve Barclay:

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

Recognising that young people are particularly at risk, the government has also launched a new £2bn Kickstart Scheme, creating hundreds of thousands of new, fully

subsidised jobs for young people across Great Britain, as well as a guaranteed foundation of support to all 18-24 year olds on Universal Credit in the Intensive Worksearch group, through its new youth offer.

The support is available across Great Britain, including the Stockport constituency and the North West region. As of August 2020, approximately 330,000 people are receiving worksearch support through Universal Credit and Jobseeker's Allowance in the North West. The support includes measures, such as the Flexible Support Fund, that will be delivered at a local level through DWP's extensive network of over 600 Job Centre Plus branches. This means the additional discretionary support work coaches have to remove barriers to work will be allocated based on local needs. The Rapid Response Service can also be rapidly mobilised anywhere in the country and is based on understanding of local labour market.

■ Food: Wholesale Trade

Bob Blackman: [\[98698\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Federation of Wholesale Distributors survey which found that wholesalers have seen between a 40 per cent and 70 per cent reduction in sales volume for 2020 compared with 2019.

Bob Blackman: [\[98699\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of a Federation of Wholesale Distributors survey that without business rates relief in the next month 65 per cent of food and drink wholesalers surveyed will be either very likely, likely or somewhat likely to make redundancies.

Bob Blackman: [\[98701\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of a recent Federation of Wholesale Distributor's survey which found that (a) 90 per cent of food and drink wholesalers surveyed are highly likely to make redundancies by the end of the year because of a 50 per cent to 70 per cent reduction in sales, (b) millions of pounds worth of stock not sold due to a loss in customers is close-to or has passed its best before date and (c) almost 60 per cent of wholesalers, which supply to critical public sector infrastructure such as schools, care homes and hospitals are at risk of collapse by the end of the year without urgent financial support; and if he will make a statement.

Carolyn Harris: [\[98719\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent local covid-19 lockdowns on the financial viability of the food and drink wholesale sector.

Steve Barclay:

The Government has provided unprecedented levels of support for workers and businesses to protect, as much as possible, against the current economic emergency. Food and drink wholesalers are eligible for a number of these support schemes, with the most relevant likely to include:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help keep millions of people in employment;
- £10,000 cash grants for all business properties in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief and Rural Rates Relief;
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme for small businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000, with no interest payments or fees for the first 12 months.

Food and drink wholesalers have also benefited from the recent Eat Out to Help Out Scheme which provided over 100 million half price meals during August and helped to protect the livelihoods of the 1.8 million people working in the hospitality sector.

Bob Blackman:[\[98700\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to extend business rates relief to food and drink wholesalers in response to a Federation of Wholesale Distributors survey which found that 58 per cent of respondents who supply public services such as schools, hospitals and care homes said that these contracts were at real risk of collapse without further Government support.

Carolyn Harris:[\[98720\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend business rates relief to food and drink wholesalers to help prevent (a) site closures and (b) job losses in that sector.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to eligible businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure. Business rates are devolved in Wales, and so are a matter for the Welsh Government.

A range of other measures to support all business, including wholesalers, have also been made available. On 8 July the Chancellor set out a package of measures to support jobs across the UK, including a Job Retention Bonus to help firms keep furloughed workers. On 24 September the Chancellor went further and announced the Job Support Scheme to provide further support for jobs.

■ Fuels: Tax Evasion**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[100303\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October 2020 to Question 98157, what the change in the number of prosecutions has been for fuel fraud in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

Kemi Badenoch:

Prosecution is an important tool in tackling fuel fraud and is used where it is most effective. However, HMRC cannot prosecute every oils crime, and neither is it in the public interest to do so. HMRC reports cases to the Public Prosecution Service where there is sufficient evidence and it is considered proportionate across the range of fuel crime they detect.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF NI PROSECUTIONS
15/16	32
16/17	8
17/18	0
18/19	6
19/20	6

■ Job Support Scheme: Pre-school Education

Karin Smyth:[\[100459\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the job support scheme announced on 24 September 2020 will support early years' providers.

Steve Barclay:

The Job Support Scheme will support businesses facing lower demand over the winter due to Covid-19, keeping their employees attached to the workforce.

The Job Support Scheme can be claimed by all employers with a UK bank account who use a PAYE, regardless of whether they made a previous claim under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The government will confirm specific details around eligibility for the Job Support Scheme in guidance, which will be published in due course.

■ Landlords: Taxation

Charlotte Nichols:[\[98292\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to increase the level of tax compliance among buy-to-let landlords; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to reducing non-compliance in the tax system among all taxpayers, including landlords.

Since 2013-14 HMRC have been running a public campaign focused on those who let properties, to encourage voluntary disclosure of undeclared rental income. To date, the Let Property campaign has prompted approximately 55,000 additional

disclosures and raised an estimated £226 million in additional compliance yield for the Exchequer.

Furthermore, and as announced in July, from April 2023 landlords with business or property income over £10,000 per year which are liable for Income Tax will need to keep digital records and use software to update HMRC quarterly through Making Tax Digital.

Keeping paper records and assembling tax records long after transactions take place leads to errors and undermines tax compliance. Making Tax Digital reduces the scope for these avoidable mistakes. It will also make it easier for landlords to get their tax right, saving time and enabling them to see, close to real time, the health of their finances.

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe:

[\[98793\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of Public Works Loan Board debt on the ability of local authorities to fund essential services during the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The government has worked closely with local authorities to understand the financial consequences of the covid-19 outbreak, which includes ongoing costs for pre-existing commitments such as repayment of debt. The government has provided councils with over £3.7 billion of grant funding to help them respond to pressure across all their services, a further £1.1 billion to support social care, and over £300 million to support test and trace. The government has also launched an unprecedented new scheme to reimburse councils for lost income during the pandemic.

This additional support addresses the pressures caused by the pandemic and ensures that local authorities can continue to fund essential services. The cost of managing the repayment of PWLB debt is low and, as most PWLB debt is fixed-rate, has not changed because of the pandemic.

■ Local Government: Debts

Claudia Webbe:

[\[98794\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of cancelling the local authority debt held by the Public Works Loan Board.

John Glen:

A decision to write off PWLB debt would not offer good value for money. The PWLB exists to offer affordable loans to local authorities pursuing local capital projects that have been identified by the elected council as being beneficial to local residents. It is an established principle of the local government finance system that the costs of these local projects are met by their beneficiaries.

If the government were to write off PWLB debt, this cost would move from the local authority that initiated the borrowing to the taxpayer at large. This would have uneven benefits, as it would give a windfall gain to the authorities that had chosen to borrow the most. This would not be fair on local authorities that had chosen to borrow less, or on the taxpayer at large who would have to take on liabilities for projects over which they had no say.

■ **Maternity Pay: Coronavirus**

Patrick Grady: [\[99650\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of a period of statutory maternity pay being used to calculate a reduced furlough pay entitlement for returning mothers on variable pay; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

Employees on variable pay who have been on Statutory Maternity Pay or other forms of Parental Leave are eligible to apply for furlough pay under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Eligible employees will be entitled to 80% of the higher rate of two calculations: either the wages earned in the corresponding calendar period in the tax year 2019 to 2020, or the average wages payable in the tax year 2019 to 2020.

These measures have been put in place to cover a wide range of contractual and working arrangements and are designed to mitigate situations where individuals have low pay in a certain month for any reason.

■ **Minimum Wage: Convictions**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[100302\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employers have been convicted of offences related to under-payment of the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage in the last two years.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC enforce the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) in line with the law and policy set out by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Breaches of NMW legislation are normally a civil (non-criminal) matter which attract penalties of up to 200% of the identified wage arrears and public naming.

Prosecutions can be lengthy and cause delays in recovering arrears for workers and do not necessarily guarantee payment. HMRC therefore balance recovering NMW arrears for workers as quickly as possible with the robust enforcement of NMW when deciding whether to pursue prosecution. Prosecution is reserved for the most serious NMW offences involving obstruction, falsifying of documents or wilful failure to pay workers the minimum wage, and such cases are referred to the CPS who decide whether to prosecute.

In the last two years (2018/19 – 2019/20), HMRC have completed nearly 6,400 NMW investigations, identifying over £45 million in arrears for nearly 485,000 workers, issuing over £35.5 million in penalties, and resulting in one conviction.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries**

Mick Whitley:

[\[99737\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to introduce sector-specific financial support for the automotive industry.

Mick Whitley:

[\[99738\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefits to local economies of introducing sector-specific financial support for the automotive industry.

Kemi Badenoch:

Government has announced unprecedented support for businesses which have benefited all sectors in every part of our United Kingdom. There has been widespread use of the Government's support schemes in the automotive sector, including the Job Retention Scheme and tax deferrals. To support viable UK employers who face lower demand due to COVID-19, and to keep their employees attached to the workforce, the government will be introducing a new Job Support Scheme from 1 November 2020.

Government and industry have committed around £800 million since 2013 through the Advanced Propulsion Centre, to research, develop and commercialise the next generation of low carbon technologies and to keep the UK at the cutting edge of low carbon automotive innovations.

The government will continue to engage with businesses and representative groups with the aim of ensuring that support provided is right for the automotive sector and for the economy as a whole.

■ **Public Sector Debt**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[99537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the level of public sector net debt as a share of GDP, on 1 September 2020.

Steve Barclay:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes regular data on the public sector finances including for end-month Public Sector Net Debt. Public sector net debt was 101.9% of gross domestic product (GDP) at 31st August 2020. The next ONS Public sector finances release is expected on the 21st of October 2020.

Our fiscal response has been the right thing to do to support jobs, livelihoods and the economy, and will ensure stronger public finances over the longer term. Although this will lead to a rise in borrowing and debt in the near-term, with borrowing costs now close to record lows, this is affordable and sustainable. Over time and as the

economy recovers, the government will take the necessary steps to ensure the long-term health of the public finances.

■ Public Sector: Property

Bob Blackman: [\[99594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to update the Green Book to issue local authorities and other public sector bodies with guidance on how to manage land assets and commercial property investments.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury will publish a revised Green Book at Spending Review 2020. This will reflect the findings of the Green Book review which was established at Budget 2020 to investigate whether the Green Book hindered the Government's levelling up ambitions. It does not specifically address the management of land assets and commercial property investments. However, as part of a recent consultation, the Government set out that Local Authorities should not be investing in commercial property investments that serve no direct policy or treasury management purpose, and made proposals to amend the lending terms of the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) to address the issue. The consultation closed on 31 July and the Government will be issuing a response in due course.

■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe: [\[98792\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support his Department is providing to retail supply chain businesses that are ineligible for both the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises that the past few months have been very challenging for businesses in a wide variety of sectors. Small businesses occupying properties for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes were likely to have been particularly affected by COVID-19 due to their reliance on customer footfall, and the fact that they were less likely than larger businesses to have sufficient cash reserves to meet their high fixed property-related costs. The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund was intended to help small businesses in this situation.

Local Authorities could choose to make discretionary grants to businesses in other sectors if they feel there is a particular local economic need. However, the priority of all the grants schemes was to help the smallest businesses, and small businesses which were facing significant property-related costs and operated in sectors which were particularly hard hit by the steep decline in customer footfall.

Businesses which did not receive a grant from any of the business grant schemes should have been able to benefit from other policies in the Government's unprecedented package of economic support during this difficult time. Businesses in the retail supply chain should also be able to benefit from the additional support

measures which the Government announced on 24 September as part of the Winter Economy Plan. These new measures include:

- The new Jobs Support Scheme, which for six months from 1 November will see the Government contribute towards the wages of employees across the UK who are working fewer than normal hours due to decreased demand related to COVID-19;
- The SEISS Grant Extension, which provides additional taxable grant funding to self-employed individuals who are currently eligible for the SEISS and are actively continuing to trade, but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19;
- Extending the temporary VAT cut for hospitality and tourism businesses to March 2021;
- Extending the deadline for new applications to four of the COVID-19 loan schemes to 30 November; and
- Help for businesses in repaying loans from Government-backed schemes through the Pay as you Grow scheme and allowing lenders to extend the terms of CBILS loans to up to 10 years.

■ Self-employed: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[98759]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide self-employed people with the same level of financial support as those in full-time employment.

Jesse Norman:

The UK continues to have one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is helping those that have been adversely affected by COVID-19, and has already helped 2.6 million people with over £7.6bn of support. Furthermore, as set out in the Winter Economy Plan, the Government is extending the SEISS Grant; an initial taxable grant will be provided to cover three months' worth of profits for the period from November to the end of January 2021. The second grant will cover a three-month period from the start of February until the end of April. The Government will review the level of the second grant and set this in due course.

The SEISS Grant Extension is a top-up to support self-employed people who are currently actively trading and facing reduced demand due to COVID-19. The Government has broadly aligned the grant with the Government's contribution to the Job Support Scheme which has been introduced to support employers who may be facing continued reduced demand over this winter as a result of COVID-19. It is also worth noting that unlike under the Job Support Scheme, there is no requirement for the self-employed to reduce their hours by 66% to get the maximum Government contribution. In addition, the Job Support Scheme grant is scalable, and the SEISS Grant Extension is broadly equivalent to the maximum contribution.

■ Tourism: Taxation

Patricia Gibson: [\[100435\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what impact assessment his Department made on the decision to withdraw tax free shopping for all passengers travelling from the UK.

Patricia Gibson: [\[100436\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of (a) withdrawing tax free shopping for all passengers travelling from the UK and (b) the VAT refund scheme for foreign tourists on wider international tourism spending.

Patricia Gibson: [\[100437\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision to (a) withdraw tax free shopping for all passengers travelling from the UK and (b) the VAT refund scheme for foreign tourists on the Government's policy to promote a Global Britain.

Christine Jardine: [\[99715\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors in (a) Edinburgh and (b) Scotland of the decision to withdraw tax free shopping from 1 January 2021.

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 arriving from or going overseas (passengers). 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 VAT Retail Export Scheme in Great Britain will not be extended to passengers travelling to the EU and will be withdrawn for all passengers.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales for non-excise goods will be removed across the UK.

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 to the EU before.

The final costings 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.

■ Working Tax Credit: East Renfrewshire

Kirsten Oswald:

[101033]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many families with children received the £20 per week uplift in working tax credit basic element payments, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 20 March 2020, in East Renfrewshire constituency in each month since it was introduced.

Steve Barclay:

The latest available information on the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit at the parliamentary constituency level is for April 2020. In April 2020, the number of families with children receiving Working Tax Credit in the East Renfrewshire constituency was 800.

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

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

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

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

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Attendance Allowance: Mobility

Caroline Lucas:

[99582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to provide help, through the benefits system, with mobility costs for people in receipt of attendance allowance; what assessment she has made of the level of need of that support; and if she will make a statement.

Guy Opperman:

Attendance Allowance helps those with a severe disability, who have long term care or supervision needs, where those needs arise after reaching State Pension age. Entitlement is based on the on-going need for frequent personal care and attention, or supervision to ensure personal safety. There is no constraint on what the benefit can be used for, and individual recipients can choose to use their Attendance Allowance to fund mobility aids.

Latest published figures at end of February 2020, show that nationally there were 1.44m claimants of attendance allowance; In terms of expenditure - nationally this was forecast to be £5.9 billion in 2019/20.

Children: Maintenance**Justin Madders:**[\[97601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many child maintenance cases with arrears awaiting enforcement action were put on hold as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and how many of those cases are yet to commence enforcement action.

Mims Davies:

We have been clear throughout COVID-19 that those found to be abusing the system can be subjected to the full extent of our enforcement powers and the Child Maintenance Service will continue to pursue all cases, where appropriate.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent closure of all courts, legal enforcement action was put on hold for 2,198 cases. The information required to assess the current status of these particular cases is not collated centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

It may be helpful to note, however, that at the beginning of October; 390 enforcement cases had been progressed and now have a confirmed court date, and 1790 cases were awaiting further court action, consisting of both newly referred cases and the original cases put on hold.

Drew Hendry:[\[97640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the Child Maintenance Service debt that has been written-off in the last 12 months where the paying parent has an ongoing maintenance liability.

Mims Davies:

No Child Maintenance Service (CMS) debt has been written off. The Department is offering one last attempt to collect historic Child Support Agency (CSA) debt, where it is cost effective to do so and there is a reasonable chance of collection. Where this is not possible, the debt will be written off.

There are no longer any CSA cases with ongoing maintenance.

Our main focus is to collect money owed to children who will benefit today, thereby preventing the build-up of arrears under the CMS.

■ Immigrants: Coronavirus

Claudia Webbe:

[98786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Recommendation 13 of the Work and Pensions Select Committee's report entitled, DWP's response to the coronavirus outbreak, HC 178, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of suspending the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' conditions on public health grounds for the duration of the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

Access to DWP income-related benefits such as Universal Credit flows from an individual's immigration status.

DWP has no legal powers to award taxpayer-funded benefits to an individual whose Home Office immigration status specifies no recourse to public funds. Non-UK nationals and family members who are issued with a residence permit with a 'no recourse to public funds' condition are not eligible to access taxpayer-funded benefits such as Universal Credit.

Guidance on the support available for persons granted leave with no recourse to public funds conditions, including from local authorities, is available on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk). Those with a 'no recourse to public funds' condition can claim contributions-based benefits, such as new-style Jobseeker's Allowance, providing they meet the eligibility criteria.

■ Industrial Accidents: Death

Shabana Mahmood:

[100341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many investigations the Health and Safety Executive has carried out into fatal accidents in workplaces since 1 January 2010; and what the average time taken was to complete those investigations.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has completed 1485 investigations into fatal accidents in workplaces since 1 January 2010.

The average time taken in days to complete those investigations is given in the table 1.

Table 1

BASED ON/YEARS	2010 TO 2014	2015 - 2020	2010 TO 2020
Incident Date to Closed Date	654	428	547
Records with Primacy* Date recorded until Closed Date	463	345	409

* Primacy is when the lead for investigating the incident passes to HSE from the police.

Notes

The average completion time analysis is based on the difference in days between the incident/primacy date and the date that the investigation case was closed on its operational database rather than the date the investigation was concluded which is not recorded. The administrative practice of closing investigation cases has changed over the past 10 years and has not always been as soon as possible after the completion of the investigation. This explains the difference in the reduction in the time taken to complete an investigation as highlighted in Table 1 in addition to the operational improvements that have been made to reduce the time taken.

The figures were extracted from HSE's live operational database and provide the picture on the date of extraction i.e. 8 October 2020.

Shabana Mahmood:

[99578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many fatal workplace accidents resulted in the employer being found liable by the Health and Safety Executive each year from 2010 to 2020 in (a) the West Midlands and (b) England and Wales.

Mims Davies:

This information is not available in the format requested.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not record this information as proof of culpability/liability is not a component of the relevant statutory provisions for which HSE is the enforcing authority.

■ Social Security Benefits: Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

Jonathan Edwards:

[99585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families with children are affected by the benefit cap in Carmarthen East and Dinefwr constituency.

Mims Davies:

The available information on the number of households, receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, who are subject to the Benefit Cap, by Family Type and Parliamentary Constituency, is published and can be found at:

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

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

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

Jonathan Edwards:

[99586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families are affected by the two-child limit on social security benefits in Carmarthen East and Dinefwr constituency.

Will Quince:

In Carmarthen East and Dinefwr 60 families on Universal Credit were affected by the policy in April 2020.

Notes:

- Families affected means households reporting a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 and not receiving a child element/amount.
- This data is for households that had an open UC claim in April 2020, and so will have been included in this year's Two Child Policy Publication.
- Percentages rounded to nearest percent and number of families rounded to nearest 10.

■ Social Security Benefits: Newport West**Ruth Jones:**[\[97721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families are affected by the two-child limit on social security benefits in Newport West constituency.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: In Newport West there were 160 families (or 9% of all households on Universal Credit with at least one child) affected by the policy in April 2020.

Notes:

1. Families affected means households on Universal Credit reporting a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 and not receiving a child element/amount.
2. This data is for households that had an open Universal Credit claim in April 2020, as included in this year's Two Child Policy Publication.
3. Percentages rounded to nearest percent and number of families rounded to nearest 10

■ Social Security Benefits: Overpayments**Nadia Whittome:**[\[95256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people on (a) universal credit and (b) legacy benefits were subject to deductions for benefit overpayments in the last month for which data is available.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: UC collects overpayments from the full range of benefits, including tax credits. As more people have moved on to Universal Credit (UC) this has resulted in a greater proportion of these overpayments being collected through UC.

For UC claims with payments due during February 2020, around 23% (579,000 claims) had deductions for benefit overpayments. The deductions from UC for benefit

overpayments include overpayments for tax credits, housing benefit and any DWP overpayments (including legacy benefits), not just UC overpayments.

For Legacy benefit claims with payments due during February 2020, around 1% (237,000 claims) had deductions for benefit overpayments.

The Department has an obligation to ensure that public funds are administered responsibly and to abide by the principles set out in Her Majesty's Treasury's guidance on Managing Public Money.

We understand the impact that debt can have on the wellbeing of claimants and we endeavour to ensure that the recovery of any overpayment is managed in a way that takes account of the claimant's individual circumstances. Where a person says they cannot afford the proposed rate of recovery, a reduction in their rate of repayment may be agreed. Debts can be waived if recovery is causing substantial medical and/or financial hardship to a claimant or their immediate family

Our Work Coaches are trained to gauge claimants' financial needs from their first contact and can refer them to more specialist support for personal budgeting, money guidance and debt advice if required, including through the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS).

Notes:

1. Claims figures rounded to the nearest 1,000.
2. Deductions for benefit overpayments include DWP, HMRC and Local Authority, fraud and non-fraud overpayments.
3. Figures are provisional and are subject to retrospective change as later data becomes available

■ **Social Security Benefits: Stockton North**

Alex Cunningham:

[97575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families are affected by the two-child limit on social security benefits in Stockton North in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: In Stockton North 240 families (or 7% of all households on Universal Credit with at least one child) were affected by the policy in April 2020.

Notes:

1. Families affected means households on Universal Credit reporting a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 and not receiving a child element/amount.
2. This data is for households that had an open Universal Credit claim in April 2020, as included in this year's Two Child Policy Publication.

3. Percentages rounded to nearest percent and number of families rounded to nearest 10

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Age**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[99588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is the Government's policy to increase the state pension age to 68.

Guy Opperman:

The Labour government passed the Pensions Act 2007 which legislated for State Pension age to increase to 68 by 2046.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad**

Sarah Atherton:

[\[99784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of uprating in line with inflation the state pensions of British nationals living in (a) Commonwealth countries and (b) other countries.

Guy Opperman:

The policy on the up-rating of UK State Pensions paid to recipients living outside of the UK is clear and is a long-standing policy of successive post-war Governments that has been in place for over 70 years. The UK State Pension is payable worldwide and the annual index-linked increases are paid to UK State Pension recipients where there is a legal requirement to do so. For example, where UK State Pension recipients are living in countries where there is a reciprocal agreement that provides for the uprating of the UK State Pension. The Government has no plans to change this policy.

■ **Universal Credit**

Nadia Whittome:

[\[95254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of universal credit claimants are (a) repaying an advance payment and (b) also repaying other debts through the deductions system.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: For Universal Credit claims due a payment during May 2020, 40% had a deduction:

- 34% were having only advance repayments,
- 4% were having advance repayments and deductions for other debts (e.g. third party deductions)
- 2% were having only deductions for other debts.

New claimants do not have to wait for their first regular Universal Credit payment if they need up front support. 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, and the reduction of the deductions cap from 30% to 25%.

For those who find themselves in unexpected hardship, advance repayments can be deferred for up to three months in certain cases.

Notes

1. Deductions include advance repayments, third party deductions and all other deductions, but exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.
2. Figure rounded to the nearest 1,000.
3. Third party deductions were suspended due to covid-19 from 10th April to 10th May and 'other deductions' (excluding advance repayments) were suspended for three months from the beginning of April, therefore these figures may not be representative of the full cohort of claims which would otherwise be having deductions.
4. Other debts include Universal Credit third party deductions and all other deductions, but exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.

Nadia Whittome:**[95255]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claimants were subject to a deduction of any type in the most recent month for which data is available.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: For Universal Credit claims due a payment during May 2020, 40% (1,627,000 claims) had a deduction.

Notes

1. Deductions include advance repayments, third party deductions and all other deductions, but exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.
2. Figure rounded to the nearest 1,000.
3. Third party deductions were suspended due to covid-19 from 10th April to 10th May and 'other deductions' (excluding advance repayments) were suspended for three months from the beginning of April, therefore these figures may not be representative of the full cohort of claims which would otherwise be having deductions.

4. Other debts include Universal Credit third party deductions and all other deductions, but exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.

Neil Coyle:

[99631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people sought an advance payment of universal credit in each of the last 10 months.

Will Quince:

Applications for a Universal Credit advance can be made in a number of ways: in person, by telephone and also online.

The department published a set of supplementary management information on the number of Universal Credit Advances paid by the four advance types. This information is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-declarations-claims-and-advances-management-information>.

Information on unsuccessful advance applications is not held.

Neil Coyle:

[99633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long it takes a claimant to repay a full advance of universal credit on average.

Will Quince:

The average amount of time it takes to repay an advance is 12 months.

■ **Universal Credit: Coronavirus**

Jonathan Edwards:

[99587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of retaining the weekly £20 increase to universal credit payments beyond April 2021; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The Government introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth around £9.3 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates was introduced as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year, in recognition of these consequences.

Future decisions on spending will be made at the next appropriate fiscal event and Parliament will be updated accordingly.

■ **Universal Credit: Domestic Abuse**

Barry Gardiner:

[100279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the merits of bringing forward proposals to amend universal credit regulations to allow her Department to apply discretion on the recovery of advance loans taken out by domestic abuse victims under duress.

Will Quince:

The Government is fully committed to the prevention of abuse and the Department for Work and Pensions has a range of measures designed to support people who flee violent and abusive households.

If a Universal Credit claimant has been forced into claiming an advance through domestic abuse, we would urge the claimant to talk to the Department about this. If the advance was taken whilst part of a couple claim, 50% of the outstanding balance would be apportioned upon pursuing a single claim. Additionally, the Department offers deferrals of advance repayments by up to 3 months in exceptional circumstances and will apply discretion wherever possible with the rates of repaying other government debts. A range of other support is available across the Department for those impacted by domestic abuse.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-and-abuse-help-from-dwp/help-available-from-the-department-for-work-and-pensions-for-people-who-are-victims-of-domestic-violence-and-abuse#universal-credit>

The Department will continue to look at ways to further support the victims of domestic abuse.

■ Universal Credit: Fraud**Colleen Fletcher:****[100430]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support victims of universal credit scams.

Will Quince:

The Department takes this issue very seriously and we continue to look across government and beyond to tackle benefit fraud.

In June, the Department launched a new process for claimants who allege that without their participation or knowledge, their identity has been used to make a fraudulent claim for Universal Credit. Where this is found to be the case, the Department will consider reinstatement of relevant legacy benefits and/or tax credits.

The Department considers each case on its own merits and decisions are made on the strength of the evidence provided.

If a claimant has been the victim of a scam, and has not benefited from it in any way, they will not be held liable for any debt. In these cases, we will seek to recover any losses from the perpetrator of any fraud.

■ Universal Credit: Self-employed**Owen Thompson:****[100476]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the temporary removal of the minimum income floor for all self employed universal credit claimants that has applied since April 6 2020 will end.

Mims Davies:

These easement regulations are due to expire on 12/11/20. We are monitoring the situation and carefully considering next steps. Universal credit claimants will be informed before the Minimum Income Floor is reinstated.

Owen Thompson:[\[100477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the financial effect of ending the removal of the minimum income floor for all self-employed universal credit claimants.

Mims Davies:

The government announced an unprecedented package of measures to protect millions of people's jobs and incomes, including the temporary relaxation of the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) for all self-employed UC claimants affected by the COVID-19, for the duration of the outbreak.

This means a drop in earnings due to sickness or self-isolation or as a result of the economic impact of the outbreak is reflected in claimants' awards. It ensures that the self-employed are supported by the benefit system so that they can follow Public Health England guidance on social distancing and self-isolation.

The Office for Budget Responsibility will be publishing its assessment of this in due course as part of its Autumn forecast.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **The Electronic Communications and Wireless Telegraphy (Amendment) (European Electronic Communications Code and EU Exit) Regulations 2020 - Transposition Update**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital Infrastructure (Matt Warman):
[\[HCWS500\]](#)

I am today laying legislation in Parliament which implements the European Electronic Communications Code Directive.

The importance of electronic communications has been underlined during the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK's networks are ensuring the connectivity which has underpinned the way society is responding to COVID-19.

We are confident that the positive changes implemented during the pandemic will outlast the pandemic itself. For example, it has clearly demonstrated that technology enables many businesses to be agile, allowing many people to work from home. Technology has also played a critical role in continued learning, and has played a more important role than ever in keeping people in touch with friends, family and others in their communities.

The increased reliance on and use of digital infrastructure brings new expectations around these services, and the infrastructure must keep up with growing levels of demand. Combined with future expectations around new technologies and services including 5G, building future-proofed networks will be essential to our future economy. This is why we are committed to delivering nationwide gigabit-capable connectivity, and the Budget 2020 committed £5 billion investment in gigabit-capable broadband rollout in the hardest-to-reach areas of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The transposition of the European Electronic Communications Code into UK law will help ensure that both the government and Ofcom have the tools required to deliver these ambitions.

The Directive revises the EU telecoms regulatory framework which has underpinned UK telecoms law since 2003. The UK played a leading role in the negotiations for the European Electronic Communications Code prior to its exit from the EU, and in the development of the directives which preceded it, which largely reflect UK best practice. And our commitments in the European Union Withdrawal Agreement require transposition of European Union law until the end of the transition period.

The core objectives of the Directive are to: drive investment in future-proofed networks and communications services through sustainable competition; support efficient and effective use of radio spectrum; and provide a high level of consumer protection. Therefore, the changes introduced in the Directive include new measures that are important to delivery of our digital ambitions. Transposing these changes into UK law will ensure Ofcom's powers remain operable and reflect recent technological innovation.

Some measures are being given effect through alternative legislation, such as the requirements for the security of networks and services.

The changes we are making as part of this SI are a crucial milestone towards our delivery of our digital ambitions. These changes will facilitate a pro-investment regulatory environment, supporting gigabit-capable rollout across the UK.

I therefore lay this instrument in the House today.

EDUCATION

■ Schools Update

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):

[[HCWS501](#)]

This government has always made the education of young people a priority. We are determined to make sure that when the time comes, young people are able to take the next step in their lives with the knowledge and qualifications they need. We want to build on the remarkable efforts of teachers, students and parents across the country as children return to school – and education – through these challenging times. We must continue to do all we can to minimise the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on all those who are studying at school or college.

I know that students due to sit exams next summer have experienced considerable disruption to their education, our £1 billion Covid-19 catch-up package will help to tackle the impact of lost teaching time. It is right that our approach to exams and assessments in 2021 also reflects these students' experience.

Today I can confirm that GCSE, AS and A level exams in 2021 will go ahead, with most exams moved back 3 weeks next year to give students more time to prepare and a chance to catch up on education lost due to COVID-19. We know that exams are the fairest way of measuring a student's abilities and accomplishments, including the most disadvantaged. We want to give our young people the opportunity next summer to demonstrate what they know and can do.

The main exam series will start on 7 June and end on 2 July. One maths and one English GCSE exam will take place before the May half-term, giving any Year 11 pupils who need to self-isolate during the exam period the best possible chance of still sitting a paper in each of these core subjects. Some A and AS levels with typically very small numbers of students entering will also be scheduled in the days just before half term. It is expected that for the majority of vocational and technical qualifications that are taken alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS or A levels, awarding organisations will look to align timetables with 2021 exams.

Results days for AS/A levels and GCSEs will fall on Tuesday 24 August and Friday 27 August respectively, with students taking vocational and technical qualifications needed for progression to further or higher education receiving their results no later than their peers.

I am also confirming today the subject-level changes to exams and assessments outlined in the public consultation carried out earlier this year by the exams' regulator, Ofqual. These changes to exams and assessments next year will support teachers and students by freeing up valuable teaching time. Ofqual has also consulted on how assessments of vocational and technical qualifications will be adapted to free up teaching time and respond to any future public health measures.

Schools and colleges have shown exams can be held, even in areas of local restriction, in the autumn exam series which is currently taking place. Exams next year will be supported by contingencies for all scenarios. Today I have written to Ofqual to ask the regulator to support Government in developing these arrangements, engaging closely with the school and further education leaders, teachers, exam boards, unions and the higher education sector. The results of this planning and ongoing discussions with the sector will be published later in the Autumn.

I am grateful for the commitment and willingness that has been shown by groups across the sector in enabling and delivering this additional teaching time next year, helping to ensure that young people have the best opportunity to succeed. Our approach will support students to prepare for exams with confidence and ensure they have the best chance of receiving the qualifications they deserve.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local government update

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):

[\[HCWS502\]](#)

Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset

On Friday, I issued invitations under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to principal councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire, and Somerset, including associated existing unitary councils, to submit proposals for moving to unitary local government in those areas. This is the first step in the statutory process under the 2007 Act for establishing unitary councils in response to locally led proposals from one or more existing councils in the area concerned.

Councils in these areas have requested such invitations and have been developing ideas about restructuring local government in their areas for some time. It is right that they should now have the opportunity to take their local discussions to a conclusion, and if they wish, make proposals for unitary reform. Under the statute such locally led proposals, subject to consultation and Parliamentary approval, can be implemented if I consider this appropriate.

There is thus no question of any top down imposition of Government solutions. We are clear that any reform of an area's local government, where there is strong local support for the principle of a unitary structure, is most effectively achieved through locally led proposals put forward by those who best know the area.

It is now for the councils in each of the three areas to make, if they wish, their unitary proposals, either individually or jointly with other councils in the area. The invitations provide that if a council is responding it must submit by 9 November 2020 at least an outline proposal, and if a full proposal has not been submitted by then, the full proposal must be submitted as soon as practical thereafter and by no later than 9 December 2020.

I will carefully consider any proposals I receive, assessing them on the basis of the longstanding criteria for establishing unitary councils, namely that if a unitary proposal is to be implemented it must be likely to improve local government in the area, command a good deal of local support overall across the area, and lead to unitary councils covering a credible geography.

Whilst traditionally various population ranges for unitary councils, such as 300,000 to 600,000 populations, have been referred to, regard must be had to the particular circumstances of a proposed unitary council; including issues of local identity, local geography, delivery of public services and economies of scale when assessing population size.

I recognise that when making proposals councils may request that the May 2021 local elections in the area are postponed. Such postponement of local elections where unitarisation is under consideration isprecedented, and I will carefully consider any such request.

With these invitations councils in the three areas now have an opportunity to move forward with reforms which can open the way to significant benefits for local people and businesses, delivering service improvements, facilitating economic growth, and contributing to the levelling up of opportunity and prosperity across the country.

Broader policy on local government reorganisation

The Government is also re-affirming its policy position on the issue of local government re-organisation; this broadly reflects that outlined in the Written Ministerial Statement made by my predecessor (my Rt Hon Friend, the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup) in July 2019.

Locally-led changes to the structure of local government, whether in the form of unitarisation or district mergers, can be an appropriate means of improving local service delivery, saving taxpayers' money and improving local accountability. However, restructuring is only one of the different ways that councils can streamline and make savings. Joint working with other councils and partners can take a variety of forms ranging from adopting joint plans, setting up joint committees, sharing back office services or special purpose vehicles to promote regeneration. Such joint working may extend across county boundaries. Indeed, councils' general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 makes it easier for councils to get on with sharing services.

The Government will not impose top-down restructuring of local government and will continue to follow a locally-led approach for unitarisation where councils can develop proposals which have strong local support. This has been the Government's consistent

approach since 2010, when top-down restructuring was stopped through the Local Government Act 2010.

When considering reform, those in an area will know what is best – the very essence of localism to which the Government remains committed. However, the pandemic has rightly necessitated resources across Whitehall and in local government being re-allocated to tackling Covid-19 and on economic recovery, and this must be Whitehall's and town hall's number one priority at present.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Negotiations on the UK's Future Trading Relationship with Australia: Update**

Secretary of State (Elizabeth Truss):

[[HCWS504](#)]

The second UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiating round took place from 21 September to 2 October.

Talks were productive, and good progress was made towards a comprehensive deal between our two nations.

Both sides shared draft chapter text or papers outlining their preferred approach, and the groundwork was laid for an initial exchange of tariff offers. Officials from 12 different UK government departments held discussions with Australian officials, with some further sessions coming over the next week that will mean talks will have spanned the breadth of the FTA.

Both countries are committed to removing trade barriers and creating new opportunities for business, and believe a deep and dynamic agreement can send a clear signal to the world that both the UK and Australia are prepared to fight protectionism and advance free and fair trade.

Discussions were productive over all chapter areas, including Digital and Telecoms, where there is a shared willingness to go even further than CPTPP and consider more ambitious proposals.

The number of discussions has now totalled 73 sessions over the first two rounds of talks and both sides have committed to further discussions ahead of round three. This includes on Competition, Digital, Goods, Government Procurement, and Rules of Origin.

The UK and Australia are both keen to continue the momentum of discussions, and the third negotiating round is expected to take place in November.

Below is a summary list of those areas discussed in the round, which continued to take place by video conference:

- Anti-Corruption and Transparency
- Competition
- Cross-cutting general provisions
- Digital/e-commerce

- Environment
- Financial Services
- Trade in Goods
- Good Regulatory Practice
- Government Procurement
- Intellectual Property
- Investment
- Labour
- Trade Remedies
- Rules of Origin
- Services, including Movement of Natural Persons, Professional Business Services, and Transport Services
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- State Owned Enterprises
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- State-to-State Dispute Settlement
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Telecommunications

We also had further positive discussions on Clean Growth, Development, Women's Economic Empowerment, and Innovation.

Any deal the Government strikes must be fair, reciprocal, and ultimately in the best interests of the British people and the economy.

■ **Transparency and Scrutiny Arrangements with the International Trade Committee and the International Agreements Sub-Committee for the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement**

Secretary of State (Elizabeth Truss):

[\[HCWS499\]](#)

I am setting out transparency and scrutiny arrangements for international trade deals starting with the UK - Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (UK-Japan CEPA) which will be signed shortly.

At the outset of negotiations, the government published its objectives for this agreement, along with a scoping assessment. During the consultation period we have discussed progress with trusted advisors across industry, including with stakeholders in farming. This sector has been involved throughout, to ensure that nothing we agree undermines our farmers' ability to compete internationally whilst producing food at a high standard. The government has also established a Trade and Agriculture Commission to advise on future trade policy. This will look at policy for our trade agreements and our work to

improve the world's trade rules, making sure they work for British business and consumers.

We will share future trade agreements with the International Trade Committee in the House of Commons and the International Agreements Sub-Committee in the House of Lords, in advance of being laid in Parliament through the process set out under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRAg). Today we are doing this for the UK-Japan CEPA.

We will always endeavour to make sure the committees have at least 10 sitting days to read through these on a confidential basis, as we are doing for this deal. We are also sharing a full impact assessment which covers the economic impacts along with the social, environmental, and animal welfare aspects of the deal. This impact assessment has been independently scrutinised by the Regulatory Policy Committee.

At the end of negotiations, this government is committed to ensuring the final agreement text, alongside an explanatory memorandum, is laid in Parliament under the CRAg scrutiny procedure for 21 sitting days. This will ensure the House has sufficient time to scrutinise the detail of any deal.

This overall approach goes well beyond many comparable Parliamentary democracies. Parliament has been provided with the information it needs to provide effective scrutiny at all stages of the negotiations. We are also working constructively with the Select Committees referred to above, who may choose to produce independent reports on the agreement.

Widespread prior consultation and the publication of detailed impact assessments and objectives upfront, allows informed debate at the start of the negotiations. Extensive stakeholder engagement on the detail of the negotiations as they proceed, and confidential briefing of relevant committees, means we have taken best practice at every stage from comparable democratic systems. Combined with the confidential sharing of text at the end of negotiations, this is a best in class approach to transparency and openness to scrutiny by Parliament and other stakeholders, compared with such countries.

For example, before any of our negotiations with the US, Japan, Australia and New Zealand commenced, this government led a comprehensive public consultation or call for input. Like Canadian, Australian and New Zealand systems, we have kept Parliament updated on negotiations as they progress, including close engagement with relevant Select Committees.

These arrangements are appropriate to the UK's constitutional makeup and separation of powers. Ultimately if Parliament is not content with a trade deal, it can raise concerns by resolving against ratification and delay any implementing legislation indefinitely.

This government is committed to ensuring that no trade deal undermines key industries or lowers standards for consumers. We are concluding free trade agreements that benefit all parts of the UK, by creating opportunities for our world-leading industries and maintaining high standards, while increasing choice for consumers.

TREASURY

■ Economy Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak):

[[HCWS503](#)]

Following my announcement on Friday 9 October that I am expanding the Job Support Scheme (JSS), and increasing the generosity and frequency of Local Restrictions Support Grants, I am pleased to share more detail of these schemes and how this Government is supporting and protecting jobs and livelihoods.

The JSS is being expanded to provide temporary, localised support to businesses across the UK whose premises are legally required to close as a direct result of Coronavirus restrictions set by one or more of the four governments of the UK.

This expansion of the JSS will help businesses through the period they are affected by these restrictions, supporting the wage costs of employees in eligible premises who have been instructed to cease work and comply with this instruction. This scheme will enable those premises to reopen as quickly as possible when they can. It will help protect employee incomes, limit unemployment and maintain employer-employee matches.

This is part of the Job Support Scheme, available to employers from 1 November 2020 for 6 months, with the scheme reviewed in January. Further guidance will be published in the coming weeks. Employers will be able to make a claim in arrears on a monthly basis online through www.gov.uk from early December 2020.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) remains in place until the 31 October, and flexibility in the system means if an employer is required to close in October, eligible employees can be furloughed until 31 October. The new Job Support Scheme is available from 1 November, with payments from early December. Eligible employees whose employers use the expanded JSS will continue to be paid by their employer throughout this period. Neither the employer nor the employee needs to have previously used the CJRS to be eligible for the expanded JSS.

In line with the rules for the JSS already announced: all employers with a UK bank account and a UK PAYE scheme registered on or before 23 September can claim the scheme. Only employees that are on their employer's payroll by 23 September are eligible. This means a Real Time Information (RTI) submission notifying payment of that employee to HMRC must have been made on or before this date. This scheme will cover businesses that, as a result of restrictions set by one or more of the four governments in the UK, are legally required to close their premises. This includes businesses told to provide only delivery and/or collection services from their premises. This scheme is open to employers across the UK, and we look forward to working constructively with the devolved administrations to ensure it operates effectively in all four nations.

The scheme will pay a grant to the employer calculated based on the number of eligible employees who cannot work at the relevant premises (which has been required to close by government). Employers will only be able to use the scheme for employees who have been instructed to and cease work (paid or unpaid for that employer).

Eligible employees cannot work for a minimum of 7 consecutive (or calendar) days. An employee can return at a later date. Claims must not overlap and must be made monthly in arrears. These payments will be taxable, and employers will be required to cover employer NICs and automatic enrolment pension contributions in full, where applicable, but are not required to make further contribution to wage costs. However, employers can top up employee pay if they wish.

In line with JSS payments for hours not worked, the grant per eligible employee available from the UK Government is two-thirds of their normal pay up to a limit of £2100 per month. Further detail on how normal pay is calculated will be set out in guidance. If an employer is closed by Government regulations then they can claim under the applicable rules. When that changes and they are able to re-open they can claim under the wider JSS for firms facing reduced demand under the criteria we outlined in September. Employers will be able to claim the Job Retention Bonus for employees provided they are eligible. JSS grants can be used by employers to pay an employee's wages and help meet the JRB Minimum Income Threshold.

The employer must use the scheme to cover their employees' wages and pay relevant payroll taxes. The whole of the grant must be used to meet employee costs. The grant will not cover Class 1 employer NICs or pension contributions, although these contributions will remain payable by the employer. Payments will be made in arrears, reimbursing the employer for the Government's contribution.

On 9 September, the Government announced the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme. This scheme provided businesses which are forced to closed for three weeks or more due to a nationally imposed local lockdown in England with grants of up to £1,500 per three-week closure period.

The Government is now making this scheme more generous so that businesses receive up to £3,000 per month, and are eligible for payment sooner, after only two weeks of closure rather than three. The Government is also extending the scheme to include businesses which have been required to close on a national rather than a local basis, or which have not been legally able to reopen since the first lockdown in March.

Businesses will receive the following:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £1,334 per month, or £667 per two weeks
- For properties with a rateable value of between £15k-£51k grants to be £2000 per month, or £1000 per two weeks
- For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £3000 per month, or £1500 per two weeks

Local Authorities will continue to receive 5% of the funding which they received for the

Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme as a discretionary fund, which the Government will encourage them to use to support business that have been legally mandated to close by the Government but are outside of the business rates system.

Grants will be administered by Local Authorities, and eligible businesses will probably need to provide their details to their Local Authority to access this support.