



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:36 P.M., 13 October 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Staffordshire

Jonathan Gullis: [\[99141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the number of loans provided through the Bounce Back Loan scheme to applicants in (a) Stoke-on-Trent, (b) Kidsgrove and (c) Talke.

Paul Scully:

A breakdown on the number of loans provided through the Bounce Back Loan scheme as of 7 August is in the table below.

CONSTITUENCY	LOANS OFFERED	VALUE OF LOANS OFFERED (£)
Stoke-on-Trent North (which includes Kidsgrove, Talke and part of Stoke-on-Trent)	1040	30,573,493
Stoke-on-Trent South	861	26,011,673
Stoke-on-Trent Central	1149	35,168,237

■ Climate Change Convention

Alan Brown: [\[99026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what deadline the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has set for submissions of Nationally Determined Contributions in advance of COP26.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Under the Paris Agreement, all Parties have committed to communicating or updating Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2020 and every five years after that. We are currently working on our NDC, including on the timing for its publication.

■ Coal

Catherine McKinnell: [\[101007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of increased domestic supply of coal on levels of coal imports.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Domestic production of coal, alongside the amounts of coal imported in the UK, have been steadily declining in the last five years. This is evidenced by the figures published by the Department here: [DUKES table 2.4](#).

In order to tackle climate change and deliver a net zero economy by 2050, we need to further reduce our use of coal. We are among the first countries in the world to commit to closing all unabated coal power plants. We intend to do this by 2024.

Consumer Goods: Counterfeit Manufacturing**Emma Hardy:****[99090]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with (a) online retailers and (b) online retailing platforms on preventing the sale of counterfeit products.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government takes the protection of intellectual property seriously and supports a range of initiatives designed to reduce this illicit trade.

Officials from the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) have been holding roundtable meetings with representatives from online platforms and rights holders to discuss the availability of counterfeits on their platforms and to help co-ordinate law enforcement action against sellers.

In September 2013, we launched a dedicated Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU), run by the City of London Police. It is dedicated to tackling serious and organised online piracy and counterfeiting (affecting digital and physical goods) and protecting legitimate UK businesses. IPO provided funding of around £9 million over the period 2013-2019.

Coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund**Richard Fuller:****[98927]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the coronavirus local authority discretionary grants scheme, how many local authorities added additional eligibility criteria to the scheme.

Paul Scully:

The Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) announced on 1 May was established to support certain small businesses not liable for business rates or rates reliefs and therefore out of scope of the main Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF) schemes. The department asked local authorities to prioritise certain types of businesses through the LADGF, but we also allowed them the discretion to add additional local eligibility criteria according to local economic need. We do not receive management information from local authorities on local scheme eligibility criteria over the lifetime of the LADGF.

Richard Fuller:

[98928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the coronavirus local authority discretionary grants scheme, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the introduction of additional criteria by local authorities in addition to those criteria set by his Department.

Paul Scully:

The Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) announced on 1 May has supported many thousands of small businesses in England not liable for business rates or rates reliefs and therefore out of scope of the main Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHGLF) schemes. The Department asked local authorities to prioritise certain types of businesses through the LADGF, but we also allowed them the discretion to add additional local eligibility criteria according to local economic need. Local authorities naturally took different approaches to this since they differ in scale and local requirements.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Private Finance Initiative**

Alan Brown:

[99028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 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.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department does not have any Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

Rosie Cooper:

[100914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will allocate additional financial support to businesses in the West Lancashire hospitality sector affected by covid-19 restrictions.

Paul Scully:

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) was announced on 9 September to support businesses in England that are required to close during enhanced local restrictions introduced in areas by Her Majesty's Government to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

On 9 October, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced changes to the grants within this scheme to provide further support to businesses required to close due to local restrictions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/job-support-scheme-expanded-to-firms-required-to-close-due-to-covid-restrictions>

These grants will be issued for each two-week period that a business is closed following the implementation of statutory localised restrictions and business closures.

The Government continues to monitor local restrictions and will work closely with any Local Authorities that become eligible for this grant scheme.

■ Local Restrictions Support Grant

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[101057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which local authorities have received or are in the process of receiving funding under the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme.

Paul Scully:

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) announced on 9 September provides support to businesses required to close as part of localised restrictions to control Covid-19. On 9 October, government increased the cash grants to businesses eligible under the LRSG to up to £3,000 per month for each hereditament required to close as a result of restrictions. Grants will be issued for each two-week period that a business is closed following the implementation of statutory localised restrictions and business closures.

Business closures in Bolton triggered the LRSG on Wednesday 30 September. We have worked closely with Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to ensure they can distribute grants to eligible businesses as quickly as possible and will adjust their funding allocation so businesses are able to benefit from the increased grant amount from the beginning of their closure period. We continue to monitor local restrictions across the country and are ready to provide LRSG funding to other local authorities as appropriate.

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[101058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the five per cent top-up for discretionary business support that can be received by local authorities in receipt of funds under the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme, on what basis the five per cent is calculated; and at what stage local authorities are notified of the size of the five per cent top-up.

Paul Scully:

The 5% discretionary element of the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme is designed to help those businesses that are required to close but are not on the ratings list, as well as those affected by closures or indirectly forced to close due to restrictions. This funding will only be available in areas that have triggered the main Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme element.

The Government will work with the affected Local Authority to assess the number of businesses in a Local Authority area in scope for the business rate element of the scheme. This will enable a figure to be calculated for that part of the grant fund. An additional 5% of this figure will be supplied to cover the discretionary element of the fund. This will apply for each two-week qualifying period.

■ Redundancy

Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[98870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total number of employees made redundant in each of the last 12 months is based on the HR1 forms that have been received by the Redundancy Payments Service.

Paul Scully:

Employers are required to file an HR1 Form with the Redundancy Payments Service where they are proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees at a single establishment. The Redundancy Payments Service is not notified where less than 20 dismissals may be proposed.

The HR1 Form does not detail actual redundancies made, only the numbers of dismissals proposed. The HR1 data includes proposed dismissals due to the restructuring of a solvent/continuing business and proposed dismissals where the employer is insolvent. A proposal does not necessarily result in all or any redundancies occurring.

The Redundancy Payments Service is responsible for processing redundancy payments where actual redundancies result from the insolvency of an employer or, in a small number of cases, where a solvent employer cannot or will not pay the statutory redundancy. The number of claims received by the Redundancy Payments Service in respect of employees of insolvent employers (including a small number for solvent employers), and total HR1 Forms received from all employers where there are proposals to dismiss 20 or more employees at an establishment, over the last 12 months, are set out in the following table:

<i>MONTH</i>	<i>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING REDUNDANCY</i>	
	<i>PAYMENTS FROM THE REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS SERVICE</i>	<i>NUMBER OF HR1 FORMS RECEIVED FROM ALL EMPLOYERS</i>
Sep 19	9,619	303
Oct 19	9,265	343
Nov 19	5,874	305
Dec 19	5,367	196
Jan 20	7,855	372
Feb 20	7,855	329
Mar 20	14,931	485
Apr 20	8,745	447
May 20	8,745	871

MONTH	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS FROM THE REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS SERVICE		NUMBER OF HR1 FORMS RECEIVED FROM ALL EMPLOYERS
Jun 20	12,045		1,888
Jul 20	9,551		1,784
Aug 20	11,894		966

■ Sustainable Innovation Fund

Chi Onwurah: [\[98966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 2 October 2020 to Question 95073, how many of those applications that were rejected as a result of the applicant entering an incorrect start date were from the North East.

Amanda Solloway:

One of the twenty-seven applications rejected as a result of the applicant entering an incorrect start date were from the North East.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Ian Mearns: [\[100956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to launch revised local content methodology for the offshore wind industry; and whether that methodology will apply to supply chain contractors.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Offshore Wind Industry committed to updating its UK content methodology and a longer-term move towards increased transparency as part of the Offshore Wind Sector Deal. The industry has committed to reviewing the methodology and they will publish this once agreed.

The methodology applies to every developer, who are obliged to seek UK content data from their suppliers, using the same methodology, for all contracts above £10m.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Private Finance Initiative

Alan Brown: [\[99027\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, 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.

Julia Lopez:

The Cabinet Office has no live PFI contracts.

■ Coronavirus: West Yorkshire**Jon Trickett:**[\[98876\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2020 to Question 74443 on Coronavirus: West Yorkshire, what information the UK Statistics Authority holds on the number of people (a) under 50 years old, (b) aged 51 to 65, (c) aged 66 to 75, (d) aged 76 and above by (i) gender, (ii) ethnicity, (iii) socio-economic group and (iv) occupation who have (A) tested positive for and (B) died as a result of covid-19 in (1) Hemsworth constituency, (2) Wakefield Council area and (3) West Yorkshire Combined Authority area.

Jon Trickett:[\[98877\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2020 to Question 74442 on Coronavirus: Death, what information the UK Statistics Authority holds on the number of people who have died as a result of covid-19 in each socio-economic group.

Jon Trickett:[\[98878\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2020 to Question 70319 on Business: Closures, what information the UK Statistics Authority holds on the number of businesses that have ceased trading in Hemsworth constituency since March 2020.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ98876 [PQ98876.pdf]
2. UKSA response PQ98877 [PQ98877.pdf]
3. UKSA response PQ98878 [PQ98878.pdf]

■ UK Trade with EU**Sir Roger Gale:**[\[100273\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Smart Freight system will be available for testing by road haulage drivers.

Rachel Reeves:[\[100973\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with SMEs on their requirements as the end of the transition period approaches.

Rachel Reeves: [\[100974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the organisations he has had discussions with on preparations for the end of the transition period.

Rachel Reeves: [\[100975\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to provide (a) businesses and (b) their employees who rely on seasonal work with the information they require to prepare for the end of the transition period.

Rachel Reeves: [\[100976\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the Smart Freight system will be ready in time for the end of the transition period.

Penny Mordaunt:

Further to the statement by my right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 23 September, details of external ministerial meetings are published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Regarding the 'Check an HGV is ready to cross the border' service (formerly known as 'Smart Freight'), I refer to the answer given to [PQ 92707](#).

It is vital businesses, including those who rely on seasonal work, and workers prepare for the end of the Transition Period. That is why the Government has launched a public information campaign to ensure those affected are ready for the changes this will bring. The campaign uses a range of communication channels and events to help employers understand and prepare. Guidance for businesses is available on [gov.uk/transition](https://www.gov.uk/transition).

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust

Rachael Maskell: [\[99044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2020 to Question 89778 on Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, how much of the £6 million allocated to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund has been spent.

Johnny Mercer:

The COVID-19 Impact Fund for the Armed Forces Charity Sector was distributed by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust through grants to more than 100 charities in August 2020. A full list of organisations who received support is available at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-funding-for-service-charities-as-veterans-support-is-stepped-up>

The terms of the fund require organisations to have delivered the projects the grants were made for by 31 October 2020.

■ **Armed Forces: Atlantic Ocean Islands**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[99775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel from each branch of the armed forces are serving as part of the British Forces South Atlantic Islands.

James Heappey:

There are **958** military personnel serving as part of British Forces South Atlantic Islands. This figure varies during the year due to individual posting plots and unit moves.

The breakdown for each service is:

RAF	576
Army	343
Royal Navy	39
Total	958

■ **Armed Forces: Recruitment**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[99774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces recruits there were from September 2015 to September 2020 by Parliamentary constituency.

James Heappey:

The attached spreadsheets contain information detailing intake to the untrained Regular Armed Forces, by Parliamentary Constituency, 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2020. Information to cover the period April to September 2020 is not currently available.

Attachments:

1. Untrained Regular Armed Forces [20201009 - PQ - Intake by Parli Constituency 2015-16 to 2019-20.xlsx]

■ **Military Bases: Coronavirus**

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[99776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has plans in place to impose lockdowns on UK military bases overseas in the event of a surge in covid-19 cases in those areas.

James Heappey:

We continue to monitor the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in our overseas bases and host nations, and have plans in place to manage any outbreaks while prioritising the safety and welfare of our people and maintaining key Defence outputs.

Imran Ahmad Khan:[\[99777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to impose lockdowns on UK military bases in the event of a surge in covid-19 cases in those areas.

James Heappey:

We continuously monitor the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in our UK military establishments and have plans in place to manage any outbreaks in line with any local measures, while prioritising the safety and welfare of our people and maintaining key Defence outputs.

■ Remembrance Day: Safety**Stephen Morgan:**[\[99721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with (a) local authorities and (b) the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on safety guidelines for Remembrance services.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence continues to work with local authorities and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on safety guidelines for Remembrance services. Every effort will be made to ensure we pay our usual due respect to the fallen and to our veterans.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ ARM: Sales****Sarah Olney:**[\[101045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the facilitation of an alternative deal that will see ARM become a publicly traded company listed in the London Stock Exchange.

Sarah Olney:[\[101046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of placing a legal obligation on Nvidia to keep ARM's headquarters in Cambridge if the planned sale of ARM to Nvidia goes ahead.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Government monitors acquisitions and mergers closely. When a takeover may have a significant impact on the UK we will not hesitate to investigate further and take appropriate action. We are examining this deal carefully to understand its impact on the UK.

■ Commonwealth Games 2022

Liam Byrne: [\[98887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish the Commonwealth Games 2022 legacy plan.

Nigel Huddleston:

The £778m investment in the Birmingham 2022 Games is a clear statement of Government's commitment to ensure the Games deliver deep and lasting benefits, both for the West Midlands and for the whole of the UK. Working with our Games partners, the Government is committed to publishing a legacy plan in early 2021.

■ Culture: Finance

Paula Barker: [\[100555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how the £1.57 billion support package for the arts and culture sectors has been allocated.

Caroline Dinenge:

On 22nd August, the £3.36 million Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund was shared among 136 venues across England who applied for support to survive the imminent risk of collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The first independent cinemas to be funded by the BFI grants were also announced on 2nd October. In total, 42 independent cinemas across England received a share of £654,883 in funding to preserve the local cultural offer and rescue organisations at risk of insolvency. As this is a rolling fund, more funding decisions regarding cinemas will be announced over the coming weeks. Awards for cinemas can include £10k to help with safety improvements and up to £200k available for business sustainability.

On Friday 9th October 445 heritage organisations were awarded £103 million from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage. Grants of up to £1m will deliver a lifeline for the heritage sector in England with further support to follow and larger grants for capital projects awarded through the Heritage Stimulus Fund.

On Monday 12th October Arts Council England awarded £257 million to over 1,300 organisations which applied for less than £1 million. The funding goes to theatres, galleries, performance groups, arts organisations, museums and local venues facing the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic to ensure they have a sustainable future.

Further announcements of how the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will be allocated will be made in the coming weeks.

■ Events Industry and Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Matt Vickers: [\[97753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support he is providing to the (a) events, (b) hospitality and (c) nightlife industries which are unable to open as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are aware that the events, hospitality and nightlife industries have been severely impacted by Covid-19. Businesses can continue to access the Government's UK wide support package. This includes the Bounce Back Loans scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

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

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

■ Football: Coronavirus**Stephen Morgan:**[\[98278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to introduce restrictions on financial support for football club owners that have been deemed to be profligate with their funds.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs form the bedrock of local communities. It is vital they are protected.

We have worked closely with football throughout the pandemic including getting the Premier League and English Football League back behind closed doors but we have been clear that we expect the game - where it can at the top tiers - to support itself. The Government will then focus our support on those in the sector most in need as a result of the October 1 decision.

We are working through the details and will set that support in the coming days.

■ Football: South of England**Gareth Thomas:**[\[98864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial assistance he is providing to clubs in the (a) Spartan South Midlands Football League and (b) Southern Football League; if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

The Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses throughout this period, including a comprehensive and sizable package of direct fiscal support for business through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support. Many football clubs have benefited from these measures.

The Football Foundation has also provided financial support to grassroots clubs through its Matchday Support Fund, helping clubs to prepare for the resumption of football, as well as the safe return of supporters to stadiums where permitted. This investment follows the Foundation's Pitch and Club Preparation Funds, which also saw grants for local clubs.

Importantly, under government guidance these clubs are able to admit spectators, whilst adhering to COVID-19 guidance, generating crucial revenue that is vital for their survival.

■ **Greyhound Racing: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[98896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the greyhound racing sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

Greyhound racing has been eligible to access the help announced by the Chancellor on 17 March, including the business rates holiday for leisure industry businesses, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. It will also be eligible to access the Job Support Scheme which is due to open on 1 November.

Officials continue to be in communication with the Greyhound Board of Great Britain to understand the needs of the sector during this time.

■ **Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus**

Dr Luke Evans:

[R] [\[99133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) public health officials and (b) the Rugby Union authorities on the (a) timescale for and (b) safety of admission of spectators to sports stadia during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS Ministers and officials are in regular discussions with both public health officials and rugby union authorities across a range of matters, including the admission of spectators to sports stadia.

We recognise the news that stadia would not be reopening from 1 October was disappointing to many fans and sports, particularly after all the work on test events and preparations. However we have to take difficult decisions that give us the best chance of containing the virus this winter. The safety and security of spectators and players is of paramount importance.

The Government will also continue to work closely with the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) and a whole range of sports to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes the creation of a new Sports

Technology Innovation Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this.

Ministers and officials will continue to engage directly with both the Rugby Football Union and with Premiership Rugby as part of this process.

■ Telecommunications

Chi Onwurah: [\[98965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 77608 on Telecommunications, whether a clear and ambitious diversification strategy was published prior to 14 July 2020.

Matt Warman:

We will be publishing our targeted diversification strategy to rebalance the supply chain in the autumn, alongside the introduction of the Telecoms Security Bill. We are continuing to work at pace to develop this strategy to ensure our approach is best fitted to achieve a sustainable and comprehensive rebalancing of our supply chain.

EDUCATION

■ Education: Finance

Jon Trickett: [\[98883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to tackle the imbalance in education funding between the most deprived and least deprived areas of the country.

Nick Gibb:

This Government is delivering the biggest funding boost for schools in a decade, which will give every school more money for every child.

The Department has increased core school funding by £2.6 billion this financial year, then £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion by 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively, compared to the financial year 2019/20, including additional funding for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This investment has enabled us to increase school funding by 5% in 2020/21 alone.

Areas with high proportions of students from a disadvantaged background will continue to receive the highest levels of funding and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed considerably in both primary and secondary schools since 2011. Through the National Funding Formula, we provide a total of £6.3 billion targeted at schools with higher numbers of pupils with additional needs, including deprivation. On top of that the pupil premium, worth £2.4 billion this financial year, provides additional support for disadvantaged pupils – those currently or formerly claiming free school meals and currently or formerly looked after – to tackle educational inequality.

The Department has also announced a new £350 million National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils, as part of the COVID-19 catch-up package. This will increase access to high-quality tuition for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackling the attainment gap between them and their peers.

■ Educational Institutions: Counselling

Jon Trickett:

[98884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to introduce a mandatory provision of counselling services in secondary schools and colleges across England.

Vicky Ford:

It is important for schools and colleges to have the freedom to decide what support to offer pupils based on their particular needs and to draw on an evidence base of effective practice. This support can come from a number of sources, including counselling.

The department has published guidance on how to put in place effective school-based counselling, which schools can use to identify where further counselling support is appropriate for their pupils. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

Our most recent survey of mental health provision in schools and colleges in 2016 and 2017 found that 61% of schools and colleges (56% of primary schools, 84% of secondary schools and 93% of colleges) reported offering access to a counselling service for their pupils.

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

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

■ Foster Care: Coronavirus

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[100421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that foster carers that normally offer (a) respite care and (b) short breaks placements but are unable to offer those services during the covid-19 outbreak are paid a retainer fee.

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>.

■ Free School Meals

Robert Halfon: [100941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase uptake of free school meals.

Robert Halfon: [100942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children eligible for free school meals are not registered for the scheme in the UK.

Robert Halfon: [100943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children registered for free school meals did not take up their entitlement in 2019-20.

Robert Halfon:

[100944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on introducing automatic enrolment with an opt-out for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Vicky Ford:

The provision of free school meals, to children from out-of-work families or those on low incomes, is of the utmost importance to this government. There are currently 1.4 million pupils eligible for and claiming a free, nutritious school meal, saving families more than £400 per year.

We do not routinely collect information on the proportion of pupils that would be entitled to a free school meal but do not make a claim. Our last estimate is that take-up is around 89% of those who are entitled. Take-up may currently be higher as during the COVID-19 outbreak we are temporarily extending free school meal eligibility to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Guidance on the NRPF extension is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-to-nrpf-groups>.

Whilst take-up of free school meals is strong, we want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their free school meals, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. To support this we provide an Eligibility Checking System to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities. We have also developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for free school meals and provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

We are grateful for the hard work that school staff undertake throughout the school year to deliver this provision locally for the families that are eligible for free meals. During the COVID-19 outbreak, we are especially appreciative of the actions schools have taken to continue free school meal provision in challenging circumstances.

■ Free School Meals: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy:

[99088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans in place to send free school meals to the homes of eligible children who are self-isolating as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

As schools and their kitchens are now open, they should provide healthy, nutritious meal options for all children who are in school. Meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria. If children are eligible for benefit-related free school meals but are

self-isolating, we expect catering providers to be in a strong position to support any eligible pupils through food parcels, be those daily or weekly. We have put guidance in place for schools on how they can support children in these circumstances, which is complemented by advice from the schools food trade organisation, LACA, and Public Health England on what a good food parcel should comprise. Our latest guidance for schools is set out here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum: [99750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support smaller higher education institutes who may have difficulty repaying loans during the covid-19 outbreak.

Apsana Begum: [99751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential for (a) higher education institutes to go into insolvency during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) job losses as a result of that insolvency.

Apsana Begum: [99752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support available to smaller specialist higher education institutes.

Apsana Begum: [99753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the financial viability of smaller, specialist higher education institutes.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak is bringing significant financial challenges to the higher education (HE) sector and we have been working closely with the sector, including with smaller specialist providers, the Office for Students (OfS), and other government departments to monitor the likely impacts.

The OfS as the independent regulator of HE in England monitors their financial sustainability. The OfS provides targeted allocations for world-leading specialist providers, which was £43 million for 2020/21. The OfS hopes to undertake a review of the current specialist provider funding arrangements later this year and will release further details at the earliest opportunity.

The government has also announced a package of measures which combines different ways to give further support to providers at this time of financial pressure. We have pulled forward an estimated £2.6 billion worth of forecast tuition fee payments to ease cashflow pressure this autumn. In the last academic year, we also brought forward £100 million quality-related research funding support for HE providers in England.

This is on top of the unprecedented package of support for businesses already announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and a range of business loan schemes, to help pay wages, keep staff employed and support businesses whose viability is threatened by the outbreak. HE providers are eligible to apply for these schemes.

The government has also announced a further package of support to universities, and other research organisations, to enable them to continue their research and innovation activities. This includes £280 million of government funding as well as a package of low-interest loans with long pay-back periods, supplemented by a small amount of government grants. In sharing responsibility for the future of science and research with our world-leading university system, from the autumn, the government will cover up to 80% of a university's income losses from international students for the academic year 2020/21, up to the value of their non-publicly funded research activity.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced further information about the Higher Education Restructuring Regime on 16 July. This may be deployed as a last resort, if a decision has been made to support a provider in England, when other steps to preserve a provider's viability and mitigate the risks of financial failure have not proved sufficient. The overarching objectives, which will guide the department's assessment of cases, will be protecting the welfare of current students, preserving the sector's internationally outstanding science base and supporting the role that HE providers play in regional and local economies by offering high quality courses aligned with economic and societal needs. We will consider providers' circumstances on a case-by-case basis, supported by expert advice, to ensure there is a robust value for money case for intervention. Public funds in the form of repayable loans to support restructuring will be as a last resort with strict conditions that align with wider government objectives.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[\[101047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring secondary school pupils to wear face coverings at all times on school premises.

Nick Gibb:

At each stage of the Department's response to the pandemic, we have listened to the latest medical and scientific advice, and if we think that the guidance should be revised based on further evidence then we will not hesitate to act swiftly and decisively.

On 21 August, the World Health Organisation published a new statement advising that "children aged 12 and over should wear a mask under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area." As a result, the Department revised its guidance on face coverings in schools and colleges, which can be found

here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>.

As the guidance outlines, in areas of national government intervention, face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and pupils in secondary schools when moving around indoors, such as in corridors or communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. All schools nationwide, including primary schools, have the discretion to require the use of face coverings by adults and pupils in year 7 and above in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed. Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

Based on current evidence, and in light of mitigation measures that schools will have put in place, face coverings are not necessary in the classroom. Face coverings can have a negative impact on teaching and their use in the classroom should be avoided.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animals: Exports**

Sarah Champion:

[\[101026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to end the export of live animals for consumption.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given to the Rt Hon Member for Chipping Barnet on 11 June 2020, PQ UIN 55899.

[questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-06-08/55899]

■ **Food: Standards**

Ed Davey:

[\[99513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that UK food standards are maintained at their current level after the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has been clear that in all trade negotiations we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards.

Legal protections for our standards will remain in place after the end of the transition period. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 retains our standards on environmental protection, animal welfare, animal and plant health and food safety. This provides a firm basis for maintaining the same high level of protection for both domestic and imported products.

■ Pesticides: Regulation

Julian Sturdy: [\[99604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress the Health and Safety Executive has made in their review of regulations on the use of pesticides by voluntary conservation groups for environmental conservation purposes.

Julian Sturdy: [\[99605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the natural environment in the event that voluntary conservation groups are prohibited from using glyphosate in environmental conservation work.

Victoria Prentis:

Pesticides regulations do not prohibit voluntary conservation groups from using glyphosate and other pesticides in environmental conservation work. Volunteers may use products that are authorised for amateur use; they may also use products that are authorised for professional use providing they are trained and hold a recognised certificate in the application of pesticides. Untrained conservation volunteers may apply pesticides that are authorised for professional use but only if they are under the supervision of a trained certificated user and are working towards gaining a recognised certificate in the application of pesticides.

At the request of Defra, the Health and Safety Executive reviewed this aspect of the pesticide regulations and the options identified are being considered.

■ Rivers

Jim Shannon: [\[98969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of water in rivers.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Stockport on 1 October 2020, PQ UIN 94575.

[\[questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-23/94575\]](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-23/94575)]

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Christine Jardine: [\[907461\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure (a) parliamentary and (b) independent scrutiny of Official Development Assistance spending.

James Duddridge:

This Government is fully committed to independent and parliamentary scrutiny. In August, the Foreign Secretary announced our commitment to maintaining the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). He also announced a departmental review to make ICAI even more effective, leveraging what works and producing even more practical recommendations.

Stephen Timms: [\[907478\]](#)

What information the US Administration is required to provide to his Department on its activities at RAF Croughton.

Wendy Morton:

The US military stationed at RAF Croughton are covered by the Ministry of Defence and governed by the NATO Status of Forces Agreement and Visiting Forces Act. Under an arrangement reached in 1995 there is also an Annex of the US Embassy in London based at RAF Croughton. The US Embassy, including the Croughton Annex, is under the same obligations as any other diplomatic mission.

Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations they must notify us of the appointment of members of the mission, their arrival and their final departure or the termination of their functions; and the arrival and final departure of members of their families. They must also notify us if someone becomes, or ceases to be, a member of such a family. These obligations apply as much to US Embassy staff at the Annex at RAF Croughton as they do in London.

■ **Air Pollution**

Layla Moran: [\[100530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 91717, how much funding his Department (a) has allocated in the last five years and (b) plans to allocate in 2021-22 to tackle pollution overseas.

Layla Moran: [\[100532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 91717, which developing countries are in receipt of funding from his Department to tackle pollution.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The UK Government provides extensive support for countries to cope with the effects of climate change, reduce pollution, and improve environmental standards. Reducing emissions and increasing the uptake of clean energy generation directly contributes to tackling air pollution. Since 2011, our International Climate Finance has avoided 31 million tonnes of emissions and installed 2,000 megawatts of clean energy. In the last 5 years the UK has spent £2.9 billion on climate change mitigation in many low- and middle-income countries. We have committed to doubling the UK's International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26. FCDO is providing support to tackle air pollution in South Asia, where the threat to public health is particularly severe. This includes the development of urban air quality improvement plans, as well as reducing pollution associated with a range of manufacturing processes through the Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution programme, which also operates in East and West Africa.

The UK Government is also supporting efforts to tackle plastics pollution and waste internationally. FCDO programmes have boosted research efforts, supported Ghana, Vanuatu and Uganda in testing new approaches to plastic alternatives, and will help communities in Haiti, Pakistan and Kenya with waste collection and recycling. The joint FCDO and DEFRA £500 million Blue Planet Fund will have a direct focus on combating pollution on land and sea. The UK has also committed £250 million, of which £150m is from FCDO, between 2018 and 2022 to the Global Environment Facility, which has ocean protection and tackling plastic pollution as major themes.

■ Belarus: Sanctions**John Spellar:****[100289]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international partners on the imposition of new sanctions on Belarussian officials.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has been at the forefront of international efforts to impose sanctions in response to the human rights violations and fraudulent election in Belarus. With Canada, we imposed sanctions against Lukashenko and his inner circle on 29 September.

The UK welcomed the announcement by the EU and the US on 2 October of further sanctions on Belarus. EU sanctions will continue to apply to the UK during the Transition Period and we will carry over the EU Belarus sanctions regime as an autonomous UK sanctions regime at the end of the Transition Period. We encourage our global partners to join the UK, Canada and US in sanctioning the leadership responsible for the ongoing crisis in Belarus.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Torture

Tulip Siddiq: [\[99687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what guidance he has issued to departmental staff on the investigation, documentation and reporting of cases of torture or suspected torture of British citizens imprisoned overseas.

Nigel Adams:

There is internal guidance and training for consular staff on what to do in cases involving allegations of torture by British nationals. Our actions in each case are dependent on the specific circumstances and wishes of the individual. As set out in our public guidance we cannot investigate torture or mistreatment allegations, as investigations are the responsibility of the local authorities. However, with the individual's permission, we can and do raise such allegations with the local authorities, demanding an end to the torture or mistreatment, an investigation of the allegations, and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

■ China and Tibet: Human Rights

Afzal Khan: [\[907465\]](#)

What steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help UK businesses to ensure their supply chains do not include workers subject to human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO funded research into forced labour in Xinjiang has been crucial to raising global awareness of this issue. Officials regularly meet business and industry stakeholders to make them aware of the scale of forced labour and other human rights abuses in Xinjiang. We continue to urge all UK businesses to conduct appropriate due diligence to ensure their supply chains are free of forced labour. On October 6th, 39 countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee expressing deep concern at the human rights situation in Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Tibet. This growing caucus willing to speak out reflects UK diplomatic leadership.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rushanara Ali: [\[907459\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure equitable access internationally to vaccines and medical equipment to tackle the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister recently announced up to £500 million to the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment to provide access to COVID-19 vaccines for 92 developing countries, contributing to the supply of one billion doses in 2021, and the vaccination of up to 500 million people. The FCDO is also using its international partnerships to support the delivery of the medical supplies and PPE.

■ Falkland Islands: Exports**Gavin Robinson:** [\[101028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on protecting tariff and quota free access to the EU for the Falkland Islands after the transition period.

Wendy Morton:

The Government always represents the interests of the Falkland Islands robustly, particularly in relation to supporting the Islands' exports to the EU, and elsewhere. The Government is confident that a viable and profitable trading relationship between the Falkland Islands and the EU will continue after the transition period.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Aviation**Layla Moran:** [\[101056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many air miles (a) Ministers, (b) special advisers and (c) civil servants in his Department took in (i) the last six months and (ii) each calendar year since 2015.

Nigel Adams:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Greece: Refugees**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[907468\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the situation of refugees in Lesbos.

Wendy Morton:

I am grateful to my Honourable Friend for his question, and for raising this with the Leader of the House at Business Questions on 8 October. I too am deeply concerned by the situation on Lesvos, following the devastating fire which destroyed the Moria migrant camp.

The UK has responded to Greek requests for humanitarian aid, providing kitchen sets to nearly 2,000 vulnerable families to prepare and cook food, and solar lanterns to help them stay safe. This is in addition to our commitment earlier this year of £510k worth of humanitarian supplies and equipment to help vulnerable migrants and refugees on Greek islands. We will continue to monitor the situation carefully.

■ Hostage Taking**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[99693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken in the last six months to coordinate with international allies a joint response to eliminate practices of hostage diplomacy and state hostage taking.

Nigel Adams:

HMG deplores hostage taking, or any other arbitrary coercive action against individuals for political ends. During the latest Human Rights Council session, the UK co-signed two joint statements on the issue of arbitrary detention, along with many other concerned countries.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[99694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department most recently reviewed the effectiveness of its hostage policy; and what updates it made to its approach to recovering British nationals held overseas as a result of that review.

Nigel Adams:

Consular policies are regularly reviewed. As set out in our guide on 'Support for British nationals abroad', the UK can provide consular support to the families of British nationals kidnapped overseas, including remaining in contact with the family and keeping them up to date with the situation as far as possible. We will try to do everything we properly can to make sure British nationals kidnapped are released safely. Where we can, we will work with the government in that country. We will not make substantive concessions to hostage takers such as paying a ransom, changing government policy or releasing prisoners. In some cases, British police may appoint a UK family liaison officer in which case our team will work closely with the local police force involved. We can also put families in touch with other specialist organisations such as Hostage International. When a British hostage is released, we will meet them and help them make contact with their family and with arranging travel to the UK.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[99696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development, whether the integrated defence and security review is formally considering (a) how the Government responds to risks of British citizens being taken hostage by state and non state actors and (b) the effect of wider Government policy on those risks.

Nigel Adams:

The Integrated Review will cover all aspects of international and national security policy, such as defence, diplomacy, development and national resilience.

■ Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict**Jim Shannon:**[\[101010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Azerbaijani and Armenian counterparts on the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Wendy Morton:

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing military action in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. I spoke to the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers on 28

September. I raised UK concerns over civilian casualties and fatalities, urged immediate de-escalation and reinforced the importance of returning to negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Sara Britcliffe:

[\[101069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what peace keeping role the UK has in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan; and what assessment he has made of the role of Turkey in that conflict.

Wendy Morton:

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing military action in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. As the Foreign Secretary has made clear in his joint statements issued with the Canadian Foreign Minister, the UK is urging immediate de-escalation of the conflict and a return to negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. We are also encouraging all external parties and friends of both states to redouble their efforts in support of an end to hostilities and to refrain from taking actions that risk exacerbating the crisis. We support the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group - of which Turkey is a member - to facilitate an end to the conflict.

Bob Blackman:

[\[99592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is the Government's policy to support UN Security Council resolutions (a) 822, (b) 853, (c) 874 and (d) 884.

Wendy Morton:

We acknowledge the importance of these UN Security Council Resolutions, which reaffirm the primacy of the OSCE Minsk Group as the international forum via which a peaceful settlement to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be reached. We consider that the Basic Principles for a settlement proposed by the Minsk Group Co-chairs provide the basis for a reasonable compromise in this regard, taking due account of the relevant OSCE principles governing relations between member-states.

■ Overseas Aid

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[98961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes have been (a) ended, (b) scaled back and (c) cancelled before inception as a result of the £2.9 billion reduction announced in July 2020.

James Cleverly:

Difficult decisions have been necessary to identify the savings needed to ensure we meet the 0.7 per cent commitment this year, however all steps possible were taken to minimise the impact of the reduction in development assistance, including where appropriate and practical, delaying payments to future years instead of ending programmes completely. This was done in a way to ensure continued support for five

Official Development Assistance (ODA) priorities; bottom billion poverty reduction, climate change, girls' education, COVID-19 and Britain as a force for good. As usual, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's National Statistics publication - 'Statistics on International Development' will provide a full breakdown of UK ODA spend for the previous calendar year. The Statistics for International Development published in Autumn 2021 will provide a full breakdown of the UK's ODA spend for 2020.

■ Turkey: Political Prisoners

Feryal Clark: [\[907470\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart on (a) democracy and (b) the arrest of opposition politicians in that country.

Wendy Morton:

Turkey is a NATO ally and an indispensable strategic partner for the UK. It sits on the frontline of some of the most difficult and serious challenges that we face. The Foreign Secretary most recently raised human rights and democracy with the Turkish Foreign Minister during his visit to London on 8 July. We recognise the concern over legal action against politicians from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). We expect Turkey, as a modern democracy, to undertake any legal processes against opposition MPs fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law.

■ Yemen: Armed Conflict

Chris Law: [\[101030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Yemeni civilians are protected from the covid-19 pandemic in the conflict lines of (a) Marib, (b) Hodeidah and (c) Abyan.

James Cleverly:

We are extremely concerned by the capacity of the Yemen's healthcare system to respond to the threat of a second wave of COVID-19 and continue to disburse our £200 million aid commitment for this financial year (2020/21) promptly to help the UN's response. Ultimately, a permanent ceasefire and co-operation with the UN-led political process is the best defence we have against COVID-19 in Yemen. We continue to call on all parties to the conflict to engage constructively with the peace process.

Caroline Lucas: [\[99583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the August 2020 monthly data from the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project in Yemen, that details 163 new civilian casualties from the ongoing conflict.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is deeply concerned by the findings of the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project August 2020 report. We take reports

of civilian casualties very seriously and we use every opportunity to raise the importance of complying with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the Coalition, including requesting investigations into alleged incidents of concern. The UK continues to call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to exercise restraint, comply fully with IHL and engage constructively with the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, which is the only way to end the cycle of violence.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling

Martyn Day: [95699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the (a) quality, (b) currency and (c) UK-relevance of labelling information on alcoholic drinks.

Martyn Day: [95700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the labelling information on calorie and nutrition on alcoholic drinks.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has worked with the alcohol industry to ensure that alcohol labels reflect the Chief Medical Officer's Low Risk Drinking Guidelines for drinks produced after 1 September 2019. The industry has committed to comply with this requirement.

Through 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives', published on 27 July, we are committed to consult before the end of the year on our intention to make companies provide calorie labelling on all pre-packaged alcohol they sell. The consultation will also cover introducing calorie labelling on alcoholic drinks sold in the out of home sector, for example bought on draught or by the glass.

'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Mary Glendon: [95077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2020 to Question 85006 on Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse and with reference to his Department's engagement with an external stakeholder advisory group on future placement of Public Health England's responsibilities for drugs and alcohol policy, if he will list the (a) composition of the advisory group and (b) schedule of meetings between that advisory group and his Department.

Jo Churchill:

The membership of the stakeholder advisory group is shown in the following table.
The schedule of its recent meetings is as follows:

2 September

10 September

16 September

24 September

Future dates are to be confirmed.

NAME	ORGANISATION	ROLE
Jeanelle de Gruchy	The Association of Directors of Public Health	President
James Jamieson	Local Government Association	Chair
Seema Kennedy		Former Public Health Minister
Helen Stokes-Lampard	Academy of Medical Royal Colleges	Chair
Matt Fagg	NHS England	Director of Prevention
Matthew Winn	NHS England	Improvement Director of Community Health
Ed Garratt	Suffolk Integrated Care System	Executive Lead for the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System (ICS)
Professor Maggie Rae	Faculty of Public Health	President
Danny Mortimer	NHS Confederation	Chief Executive
Dr Jennifer Dixon	Health Foundation	Chief Executive
Paul Najsarek	SOLACE	Chief Executive, Ealing Council
Professor Jo Pritchard MBE	Social Enterprise UK	Chief Executive
Prof John Newton	Public Health England	Director of Health Improvement
Dr Jenny Harries	Department of Health and Social Care	Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Prof Paul Cosford	Test and Trace	Joint Chief Medical Officer

NAME	ORGANISATION	ROLE
Professor John Deanfield		Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist and Chair, NHS Health Checks Review
Professor Sir John Bell		Life Sciences Champion
Professor Kevin Fenton	Public Health England	Regional Director, London
Christina Marriott	Royal Society of Public Health	Chief Executive
Martin Reeves	Coventry City Council	Chief Executive
Paul Farmer	MIND	Chief Executive
Professor Susan Jebb	Nuffield Institute of Primary Health Care Sciences	Professor of Diet and Population Health
Louise Patten	NHS Clinical Commissioners	Chief Executive
Sally Warren	The King's Fund	Director of Policy
Professor Lord Patel of Bradford OBE	Social Work England	Chair
Donna Kinnair	Royal College of Nursing	Chief Executive/General Secretary

■ Contraceptives: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[95607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic, published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health on 10 September 2020, what recent assessment his Department has made on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on women's access to contraception; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure access to a comprehensive range of contraception types during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Sexual and reproductive health services are open during the pandemic though some are temporarily reducing their face-to-face appointments and may only be able to see emergency or urgent cases in person. This is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection. The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare have published clinical advice to support ongoing provision of effective contraception which health professionals should work to, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.fsrh.org/documents/fsrh-ceu-clinical-advice-to-support-provision-of-effective/>

Women need to be able to continue to access contraception during the pandemic and in line with these guidelines, where services should ensure that there is clear, up to date signposting for patients and partner services as to what local contraceptive services are currently available, how these can be accessed, and where available, to national online services.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[95609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic, published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health on 10 September 2020, if he will include reviewing the commissioning of contraceptive services in the national sexual and reproductive health strategy.

Jo Churchill:

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health's report, 'Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic', has raised a number of important issues, which will be considered as part of our upcoming work to develop the sexual and reproductive health strategy.

■ Coronavirus

Gareth Johnson:

[95060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of covid-19 infections acquired or transmitted in (a) educational settings, (b) hospital and healthcare settings, (c) care facilities, (d) pubs and restaurants, (e) offices, (f) residential premises and (g) retail premises in the last month.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England publishes the number of acute respiratory infection incidents reported each week in the national COVID-19 surveillance reports. 772 new incidents of acute respiratory infection were reported in week 38, week commencing 14 September 2020.

Of these, 195 incidents were from care homes where 134 had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19. 36 incidents were from hospitals where 31 had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19 and one tested positive for rhinovirus. 341 incidents were from educational settings where 222 had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19. Six incidents were from prisons where four had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19.

124 incidents were from workplace settings where 102 had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19. 22 incidents were from food outlet/restaurant settings where 17 had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19. 48

incidents were from other settings where 22 had at least one linked case that tested positive for COVID-19.

The most recent weekly COVID-19 surveillance report is available at the following link:

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

■ Coronavirus: North East

Alex Cunningham: [\[95626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 September 2020 to Question 81878, if he will make an assessment of the potential link between (a) covid-19 death rates and (b) regional health inequalities in the North East; and if she will take steps to collect more data on regional health inequalities.

Alex Cunningham: [\[95627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce covid-19 death rates through tackling health inequalities in the North East.

Alex Cunningham: [\[95628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of regional health inequalities on covid-19 death rates in the North East.

Alex Cunningham: [\[95629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment his Department has undertaken on the effect of regional health inequality on the covid-19 death rate in the North East.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: Public Health England's (PHE) review into factors impacting health outcomes from COVID-19 confirms that the impact of COVID-19 has replicated existing health inequalities and, in some cases, has increased them. Building on the PHE reviews, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP), is undertaking vital work that will contribute to reducing these disparities to protect our most vulnerable communities.

Recent data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that the North East had the third highest mortality rates for deaths involving COVID-19. The ONS will continue to review deaths involving COVID-19 and will release an update when appropriate.

Local authorities will be working with other local partners including clinical commissioning groups, voluntary sector partners and community leaders to identify the way in which COVID-19 has widened health inequalities and will already be taking mitigating actions factoring it into their local recovery plans.

■ Disadvantaged: Coronavirus**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[95211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to protect people living in deprived areas from covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) is reviewing the findings from Public Health England's reports to better understand the drivers behind the disparities in the risk and outcomes from COVID-19 and the relationships between the different risk factors. Her work will help us to improve understanding of the virus and who it affects so we can build on and protect our most vulnerable communities the existing action. This includes our childhood obesity plan, National Health Service health checks, our tobacco control plan and diabetes prevention programme.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[95608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic, published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health on 10 September 2020, what plans his Department has to maintain the number of dedicated sexual and reproductive health clinics.

Jo Churchill:

Sexual and reproductive health services have remained open during the pandemic though some are temporarily reducing their face-to-face appointments and may only be able to see emergency or urgent cases in person. Services are maintaining access during this time through scaling up of online services including increasing eligibility through current provision or utilising a neighbours' service for residents of another local authority. Public Health England have recently launched the National Framework for e-Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. This new national framework will allow local authorities and service providers to purchase an expanded range of online services including emergency contraception and the contraceptive pill.

■ Health Services**Alex Norris:** [\[95204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date his Department plans to publish a high-level options paper on future system and arrangements for prevention, health improvement and public health care services and Public Health England's health improvement functions.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: We plan to publish and engage on options later in the autumn.

■ Obesity

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[95711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the Government's obesity strategy will provide long-term support to people living with obesity beyond 12 weeks.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service 12 Week Weight Loss Plan is a starting point for those who are overweight or living with obesity, by supporting them on their journey to lose weight and adopt healthier eating and physical activity habits over time. The Better Health campaign and webpage provides ongoing support, including offers from weight-loss providers for those who would like or require additional support to lose weight and from physical activity providers for those who wish to become more active.

Through the new obesity strategy we are delivering a range of measures on weight management including a National Health Service 12-week weight loss plan app, expanding weight management services to help more people get the support they need, accelerating the expansion of the NHS diabetes prevention programme 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.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[95712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure Government communications do not stigmatise weight to avoid adverse mental health effects for people who are (a) overweight and (b) obese.

Jo Churchill:

We have been careful to consider the views of mental health charities and experts as we developed our plans for implementing the obesity strategy and we will continue to listen going forwards. This includes feedback from a wide range of experts in response to our public consultations on specific policy proposals.

■ Population Health Improvement Stakeholder Advisory Group

Mary Glendon:

[\[96892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the membership of the Population Health Improvement Stakeholder Advisory Group is; and what that group is next planned to meet.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: Membership of the Population Health Improvement Stakeholder Advisory Group is as follows. We expect the group to meet during October, with dates to be confirmed.

Jeanelle de Gruchy, The Association of Directors of Public Health, President

James Jamieson, Local Government Association, Chair

Seema Kennedy, Former Public Health Minister

Helen Stokes-Lampard, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Chair

Matt Fagg, NHS England and Improvement, Director of Prevention

Matthew Winn, NHS England and Improvement, Improvement Director of Community Health

Ed Garratt, Suffolk ICS, Executive Lead for the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System (ICS)

Professor Maggie Rae, Faculty of Public Health, President

Danny Mortimer, NHS Confederation Chief Executive

Dr Jennifer Dixon, Health Foundation Chief Executive

Paul Najsarek, SOLACE, Chief Executive of Ealing Council

Professor Jo Pritchard MBE, Social Enterprise UK Chief Executive

Professor John Newton, Public Health England (PHE), Director of Health Improvement

Dr Jenny Harries, DHSC Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Professor Paul Cosford, Emeritus Medical Director, PHE

Chief Medical Advisor, NHS Test and Trace

Professor John Deanfield, **Consultant Paediatric Cardiologist and Chair**, NHS Health Checks Review

Professor Sir John Bell, Life Sciences Champion

Professor Kevin Fenton, PHE, Regional Director, London

Christina Marriott, Royal Society of Public Health, Chief Executive

Martin Reeves, Coventry City Council, Chief Executive,

Paul Farmer, MIND, Chief Executive

Professor Susan Jebb, Nuffield Institute of Primary Health Care Sciences, Professor of Diet and Population Health

Louise Patten, NHS Clinical Commissioners, Chief Executive

Sally Warren, The King's Fund, Director of Policy

Professor Lord Patel of Bradford OBE

Donna Kinnair, Royal College of Nursing, Chief Executive/General Secretary

■ Prescription Drugs

Cat Smith:

[\[95681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) hospital admissions and (b) deaths related to (i) benzodiazepines, (ii) z drugs and (iii) antidepressants were recorded in the last year.

Jo Churchill:

Information on hospital admissions and deaths in hospital settings only related to benzodiazepines and antidepressants is shown in the following tables. We are unable to provide data for Z drugs in the format requested. It should be noted that this is not a count of people, as an individual may have more than one admission in any given period.

The following table shows a count of finished admission episodes (FAEs) in 2019/20 with primary diagnosis of benzodiazepines and antidepressants and a count of FAEs in 2019/20 with any diagnosis of benzodiazepines and antidepressants. Activity in English National Service hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector.

FINANCIAL YEAR	PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS -		ALL DIAGNOSIS -	
	BENZODIAZEPINES	ANTIDEPRESSANTS	BENZODIAZEPINES	ANTIDEPRESSANTS
2019/20	6,454	14,898	14,402	29,199

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital

The following table shows a count of finished discharge episodes in 2019/20 with primary diagnosis of benzodiazepines and antidepressants who passed away. Activity in English NHS hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector.

FINANCIAL YEAR	PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS - BENZODIAZEPINES	PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS - ANTIDEPRESSANTS
2019/20	9	16

Source: HES, NHS Digital

Cat Smith:

[\[95682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the increase in number of prescriptions for (a) benzodiazepines, (b) z drugs, and (c) antidepressants compared with the previous year's figures; and whether his Department will assess the need for increasing withdrawal services.

Jo Churchill:

No recent comparative assessment has been made on the number of prescriptions for benzodiazepines, z drugs, and antidepressants.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Employment****Tim Farron:**[\[100339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 September 2020 to Question 92763 on Asylum: Employment, if she will publish the evidence that granting asylum seekers the right to work could act as an incentive for asylum seekers to come to the UK.

Tim Farron:[\[100340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 29 September to Question 92763 on the right to work for asylum seekers, what is the evidential basis for the policy that granting asylum seekers the right to work would cause migrants to bypass work visa rules by lodging asylum claims.

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: Housing**Martyn Day:**[\[101041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 94482 on Asylum: Housing, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to ensure that asylum seekers are informed of the address of where they will be accommodated if their application is successful.

Chris Philp:

There are no current plans to bring forward legislation to inform an individual of where they will be accommodated if their application is successful.

Coronavirus: Disease Control**Sarah Jones:**[\[101051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of calls made to the police to report breaches of the covid-19 Rule of six.

Kit Malthouse:

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) provides the Home Office with data on the police use of Covid-19 enforcement notices issued under all emergency health protections.

The report contains data related to the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) issued to those individuals who contravene requirements to not participate in a gathering of more than six people, the 'Rule of six.' Data related to the number of calls made to the police to report breaches of this rule is not provided by the NPCC and is not held centrally by the Home Office.

Home Office: Private Finance Initiative**Alan Brown:**[\[99035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what live PFI contracts her 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.

James Brokenshire:

The most recent published information for live PFI contracts available is as at 31 March 2018 and can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805262/Current_projects_as_at_31_March_2018.xlsx

Immigrants: Coronavirus**Kate Osamor:**[\[99680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 October 2020 to Question 93654 on Immigrants: Coronavirus, what support is available for migrants with no recourse to public funds who are not entitled to contributory based benefits or local authority support and who are waiting for their change of conditions application to be processed.

Chris Philp:

The Government has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this crisis. We are committed to protecting vulnerable people and are confident that we have measures in place to support those who have no recourse to public funds.

Many of the wide-ranging coronavirus measures we have put in place are not considered public funds and therefore are available to migrants with no recourse to public funds. These range from protections for renters from evictions, a mortgage holiday for those who need it, as well as support for those who are vulnerable and need assistance with access to medication and shopping. Measures also include the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, along with statutory sick pay which is open to those with no recourse to public funds.

Those 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.

We recognise the important work being undertaken by the voluntary sector and have also allocated £750m funding for charities who are providing vital support to vulnerable people at this difficult time.

Local authorities, who have been allocated more than £4.3 billion to help them respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution.

■ Immigration**Stephen Timms:****[100882]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were granted an extension to their Leave to Remain in the last 12 months with No Recourse to Public Funds conditions.

Chris Philp:

In the year ending June 2020, there were 357,273 extensions of stay in the UK granted, the majority of which

would have the No Recourse to Public Funds condition imposed. See Exe_01: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910110/extentions-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx

Across in-country extension routes (not including Settlement), only the 'family and human rights' categories have the No Recourse to Public Funds lifted at the initial decision point. All other grants of limited leave(as shown in published statistics) would have the NRPF condition applied. Should a person's financial circumstances change and they are on a 'family and human rights' category, then they may apply for the NRPF condition to be lift through a Destitution Change of Circumstances application.

Data on Destitution Change of Circumstances can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-august-2020>.

The table below shows further analysis of the initial decision for grants, in the year ending June 2020, made in those routes where the condition may not have been applied, giving an indication of how many grants do not have the No Recourse to Public Funds condition imposed at this initial point of extension.

		NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS	RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS	% NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS
2019 Q3	In-country 'family' extensions	27,768	2,993	90%
2019 Q4	In-country 'family' extensions	25,314	3,222	89%
2020 Q1	In-country 'family' extensions	21,411	2,608	89%
2020 Q2	In-country 'family' extensions	6,720	1,080	86%

Across in-country extension routes (not including Settlement), only the 'family and human rights' categories have the No Recourse to Public Funds lifted at the initial decision point. All other grants of limited leave would have the NRPF condition applied. Should a person's financial circumstances change, then they may apply for the NRPF condition to be lifted through a Destitution Change of Circumstances. Data on Destitution

Change of Circumstances can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-august-2020>.

■ Members: Correspondence

Afzal Khan:

[101061]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 6 August 2020 on Mr Ismail Mehdi Taib Chalabi.

Chris Philp:

A reply was been sent on 9 October 2020.

■ Visas**Neil Coyle:** [\[99626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visa decisions were outstanding in the latest period for which figures are available; and what recent estimate she has made of the average waiting time for a decision on a visa.

Kevin Foster:

Information on visas work in progress and processing times for visa applications are published as part of the Migration Transparency data, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing: Construction****Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[99004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government's Affordable Homes programme and his Department's Guidance: Apply for affordable housing funding, published on 10 September 2020, what criteria his Department plans to use to determine whether an area is deemed to be an area of high affordability challenge.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing, and we are investing £12.2 billion in affordable housing over 5 years from next year (2021-2026). This represents the highest single funding commitment to affordable housing in a decade.

My department has not yet finalised the criteria for these areas for the 2021-26 Affordable Homes Programme. We will announce further details shortly.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Neil Coyle:** [\[98979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to develop guidance for mortgage lenders and insurers to ensure that requests for External Wall Fire Review assessments are not delayed or disrupted as a result of a lack of available qualified fire engineers to conduct inspections.

Christopher Pincher:

Assessments of External Wall Systems are required by some mortgage lenders to assist in the valuation of high-rise residential buildings for mortgage purposes. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) designed and implemented the EWS1 form in conjunction with mortgage lenders to assist with this. Use of the EWS1 form is determined by the lending policies of banks and building societies. RICS have issued guidance on the use of the EWS1 form.

The Department is aware that there are capacity challenges with the availability of professionals to undertake fire safety assessments of external wall systems. We are working with professional bodies to increase the number of skilled professionals who can undertake external wall assessments where one is required.

Neil Coyle: [\[98980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of qualified fire engineers on buildings that fall out of warranty while awaiting an inspection for their external wall fire review assessment.

Christopher Pincher:

The EWS1 form and process is not a government regulatory requirement. It is not a building safety certificate. If an assessment reveals issues that might fall under the warranty, these should be raised by the leaseholder or building owner in the usual way.

Neil Coyle: [\[98981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that building developers engage with settlement claims for building safety defect remediation works in a timely manner.

Christopher Pincher:

Settlement discussions are a matter for the appropriate parties and not for the Secretary of State. However, we have engaged with developers and building owners, and the remediation of over 50 per cent of privately owned high-rise residential buildings with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding will be paid for by building owners and developers, or through warranty or insurance claims - without passing the cost to residents. Those applying to the Private Sector ACM Fund to remediate a high-rise residential building with unsafe ACM cladding and/or those applying to the Building Safety Fund to remediate unsafe non-ACM cladding are also required to demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to recover the costs of replacing the unsafe non-ACM cladding from those responsible through insurance claims, warranties or legal action.

■ Community Housing Fund

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[99011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his plans are for the future of the Community Housing Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector offers significant potential for helping to meet housing need across England. The support and close involvement of the local community enables the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through speculative development. The principal way in which the Government supported the

community-led housebuilding sector in England in recent years was through the Community Housing Fund, making available £163 million in grants over 2018/19 and 2019/20. Budgets for future years will be considered at the Spending Review later in the year.

■ **Coronavirus: Government Assistance**

Jon Trickett: [\[98879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 69446, on Coronavirus: Government Assistance, how many and what proportion of people classed as clinically extremely vulnerable were registered to request support with food and/or basic care as at 13 September 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

National advice to shield was paused on 1 August. In advance of this pause, the National Shielding Service website and automated phonenumber were closed to new registrations on 17 July. On closure of new registrations, 198,167 individuals had registered a need for help to obtain essential supplies. To the same timeframe, 71,282 individuals were registered a need for basic care. Everyone who had requested priority access to online supermarket slots by 17 July has also retained this access. There are around 2.2 million clinically extremely vulnerable individuals in England, and the vast majority of those did not request support.

Jon Trickett: [\[98880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 69446 on Coronavirus: Government Assistance, what levels of Government support are available as at 27 September 2020 to the 341,463 clinically extremely vulnerable individuals who as at 13 May 2020 had registered to request support with food and/or basic care.

Christopher Pincher:

National advice to shield was paused on 1 August. Where shielding guidance has continued in particular areas subject to local restrictions, councils have been at the heart of delivery, taking responsibility for understanding the needs of those shielding and facilitating access to food and basic support. Nationally, everyone who had requested priority access to online supermarket slots by 17 July has also retained this access. We will continue to work in partnership with councils to consider how best to support clinically extremely vulnerable individuals in the event that shielding guidance is reintroduced in local areas.

■ **Floods: Expenditure**

Stephanie Peacock: [\[99707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 96981, to which local authorities his

Department has provided additional financial support under the Community Recovery Grant.

Luke Hall:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: Community Recovery Grant support was made available to the following local authorities:

1. Amber Valley Borough Council
2. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
3. Bassetlaw District Council
4. Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
5. Bradford Metropolitan District Council, City of
6. Burnley Borough Council
7. Bury, Metropolitan Borough of
8. Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
9. Craven District Council
10. Derbyshire Dales District Council
11. Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
12. East Riding of Yorkshire Council
13. East Staffordshire Borough Council
14. Erewash Borough Council
15. Forest of Dean District Council
16. Gedling Borough Council
17. Herefordshire Council
18. Kirklees Council
19. Lichfield District Council
20. Malvern Hills District Council
21. Newark & Sherwood District Council
22. North Lincolnshire Council
23. North West Leicestershire District Council
24. Pendle Borough Council
25. Ribble Valley Borough Council
26. Rossendale Borough Council
27. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
28. Rushcliffe Borough Council

29. Sheffield City Council
30. South Derbyshire District Council
31. South Staffordshire District Council
32. Stratford-on-Avon District Council
33. Telford & Wrekin Council
34. Tewkesbury Borough Council
35. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
36. Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
37. West Lindsey District Council
38. Worcester City Council
39. Wychavon District Council
40. Wyre Forest Borough Council

■ Green Belt

Chris Grayling:

[\[98893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is his policy to require local authorities to release green belt land for housing in the event that is the only developable land available to them.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework maintains a high level of protection for the Green Belt, and states that local authorities should propose to alter Green Belt boundaries only where they can demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances and that they have examined all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development needs. They are expected to show that they have been using their brownfield and under-used land; optimising density; and exploring opportunities in neighbouring authority areas under the duty to cooperate. In examining local plans, a planning inspector will look for evidenced justification of any proposed change to a Green Belt, to check that all reasonable alternatives have been considered.

In line with our manifesto commitment, the reform proposals in *Planning for the Future*, currently out for consultation, do not affect the Framework's strong protections for Green Belt land.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[100925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that leaseholders and tenants living in high-rise properties fitted with flammable cladding materials are not paying unaffordable costs to fund a waking watch.

Christopher Pincher:

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

Rachael Maskell:[\[99039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to help prevent owners and developers of high rise buildings from passing on the cost of removing unsafe aluminium composite cladding to the leaseholders of those buildings.

Christopher Pincher:

Leaseholders are protected from the cost of removing unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding on high rise residential buildings. The remediation of over 50 per cent of privately owned high-rise residential buildings with unsafe ACM cladding is being paid for by building owners and developers, or through warranty or insurance claims, without passing the cost to residents. Government is providing £600 million to protect leaseholders in both the private and social sector from costs of removal of unsafe ACM, where other funding solutions cannot be found.

■ Housing: Construction**Chris Grayling:**[\[98891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the housing need for each local authority is when calculated through the standard method.

Chris Grayling:[\[98892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons his policy to build 300,000 new homes a year is greater than the ONS projection of future household growth.

Chris Grayling:[\[98894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons his Department's consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations does not propose to include the income level of residents who live in one local authority but work in another local authority in the calculation of local housing need.

Chris Grayling:

[\[98895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the affordability measure for local housing needs assessment in his Department's consultation on changes to planning policy and regulations takes into account self-employed incomes.

Christopher Pincher:

To get enough homes built in the places where people and communities need them, a crucial first step is to plan for the right number of homes. To support our overall aspirations, and to target more homes into areas where they are least affordable, we are proposing to revise the number of homes authorities should plan for. We have not published an authority by authority list of numbers generated by the formula. The formula uses variable data and it is down to local planning authorities to calculate their local housing need. Paragraph 23-39 of the *Changes to the current planning system* consultation explains step-by-step the proposed calculation for the updated standard method. Lower household projections do not mean that fewer homes are needed – in some cases they reflect existing under-supply, where lack of provision stops new households from forming. Not all homes that are planned for are built, so our proposed formula includes a buffer to account for the drop off rate between permissions and completions. This gives the best opportunity to deliver against our aspirations while also ensuring that the market offers a good choice of homes. The affordability adjustment used in the proposed standard method is based on the median house price to workplace-based earnings ratio, published annually by the Office for National Statistics. The house price to workplace-based earnings ratio compares the median salary earned in a local authority against the median house price in that same authority area. This ratio is used as people typically choose to live close to where they work – and therefore is a proxy for demand within the housing market. Earnings data is taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) Release, which provides data on the levels, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked by UK employees. This data does not cover the self-employed. The proposals were out for consultation until 1 October 2020. Following consideration of the consultation responses received, the Government will publish a response in due course. The response will set out any decisions and any associated proposed implementation.

■ **Marriage: Coronavirus**

Rehman Chishti:

[\[98941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason (a) religious marriages and (b) humanist marriages are subject to different restrictions on the number of people allowed to attend under restrictions on meeting in groups of more than six people, announced on 9 September 2020.

Luke Hall:

We understand the significance that weddings hold in people's lives. By their nature, weddings are events that bring families and friends together, so to minimise risks

around transmission, a maximum of 15 people can attend a wedding. Humanist weddings can also take place with a maximum of 15 people present.

■ **Planning Permission: Local Press**

Emma Hardy: [\[99092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has an evidential basis for removing the statutory requirement to publicise planning applications in local newspapers.

Emma Hardy: [\[99093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of removing the statutory requirement to publicise planning applications in local newspapers.

Christopher Pincher:

Local planning authorities are required to publicise certain types of planning applications in local newspapers as set out in Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

In the response to coronavirus restrictions, temporary regulations have been introduced to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications. Local planning authorities now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirement for newspaper publicity – for instance, if the local newspaper is not now in circulation. These steps can include the use of social media and other electronic communications, such as local online news portals, and must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development. However, if a local planning authority is required to publicise a planning application in a local newspaper, and that paper is still in circulation, then they must continue to do so.

■ **Religious Buildings: Coronavirus**

Robert Halfon: [\[87536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the scientific basis is for the decision to require face masks to be worn in places of worship.

Christopher Pincher:

Places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership for many individuals, and in bringing communities and generations together. However, their communal nature also makes them places that are particularly vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

- UK advice on face covering follows advice from SAGE.
- SAGE advised that using cloth masks as a precautionary measure could be at least partially effective in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not always possible, creating a risk of close social contact with multiple parties the person does not usually meet.

- This advice does not replace or change existing advice on other measures – such as hand washing, social distancing and self-isolation – which remain more important (because of stronger evidence and larger effects).
- The Government is committed to following the evidence and will keep reviewing evidence from around the world and update our position as and when needed.

Guidance around using places of worship safely during the pandemic can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Thomas Tucker

Emily Thornberry:

[90067]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the answer of 14 September 2020 to Question 87503, which of the companies listed under the name Tommy Tucker by Companies House was the one with whom she held an official ministerial meeting on 10 October 2019 to discuss international trade (a) Company No. 02690618, (b) Company No. 08682902, or (c) Company No. 09109623.

Greg Hands:

This information is not held centrally within the Department.

■ Shipping: Coronavirus

Rosie Cooper:

[99563]

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.

■ UK Trade with EU

Christine Jardine:

[101052]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she will take to support businesses with cross-border supply chains after the end of the transition period.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade is supporting cross-government efforts to prepare businesses for the end of the transition period. Steps include redeploying a number of advisors to provide direct advice to companies, developing digital tools covering all the steps needed to move goods across the border and webinars being run for EU based businesses to support their continued trade with UK partners.

JUSTICE**■ Administration of Justice: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:****[100999]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department (a) has taken and (b) is planning to take to ensure courts and tribunals remain open in the event that an individual on the premises tests positive for covid-19.

Chris Philp:

HMCTS is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all members of its staff, and takes its duty of care towards members of the judiciary, contractors and to court and tribunal users extremely seriously. In the event of any person testing positive for Covid-19, prompt action is taken, in line with public health guidance, to minimise the risk of further transmission within our buildings and maximise our ability to keep the site open and operational.

Since the start of the pandemic, HMCTS has increased its cleaning regime significantly with additional cleaners regularly cleaning frequently touched areas throughout the day, and to undertake deep cleans where an individual either shows symptoms or has tested positive.

Detailed guidance is available to all staff and is subject to continuous review to ensure it remains consistent with advice from Public Health organisations and HM government.

Alex Cunningham:**[101000]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department (a) has taken and (b) is planning to take to ensure courts and tribunals can continue to work in the event that there is a local outbreak of covid-19.

Chris Philp:

HMCTS is committed to ensuring the health and safety of everyone working in and using the courts and tribunals; and to ensuring access to the justice system is maintained despite the public health crisis. Since the start of the pandemic, it has taken a number of steps to ensure that courts and tribunals can remain operational, including in the event of a local outbreak.

Steps being taken include significantly increasing the cleaning regime, with additional cleaners brought in to sanitise frequently touched surfaces, making hand wash and sanitiser available to anyone within the buildings, and using visible queues to ensure that people adhere to social distancing. HMCTS has also introduced measures including plexiglass screens and the requirement (unless exempt) to wear face coverings in all public areas of courts and tribunals across England and Wales.

Court and tribunal staff are following central government guidance and a significant number continue to work from home. Those whose roles require them to work in a physical office are working in risk assessed Covid-secure conditions. But HMCTS and the judiciary are working hard to ensure access to justice can be facilitated in

new and innovative ways, too. The number of hearings being held virtually has increased substantially throughout the pandemic, helping to reduce the number of people required to work in or attend physical buildings.

Dealing with local outbreaks must be managed on a case by case basis, working with local health officials and following public health guidance to ensure the most effective measures to control and limit transmission of the virus.

■ Courts: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham:

[\[100998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Nightingale Courts are planned by region; and for how long his Department plans to operate each such court.

Chris Philp:

18 Nightingale Courts, totalling 36 courtrooms, have been announced with sites in each region. HM Courts & Tribunals Service continue to review capacity requirements across the estate and where necessary we will consider additional temporary court provision. Plans for any further courts will be announced in due course.

We will continue to operate each site on a rolling basis as need requires.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[101002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether all planned Nightingale Courts are (a) open and (b) being used to full capacity.

Chris Philp:

The following 13 Nightingale Courts have opened

SITE	OPENING DATE
Former county court at Telford	17/08/2020
Former Magistrates court Fleetwood	24/08/2020
Prospero House, London	03/08/2020
Hertfordshire Development Centre	17/08/2020 Ended 28/08/2020
Chichester, East Pallant House	20/07/2020
Middlesbrough Town Hall	17/08/2020
Leeds, Cloth Hall Court	24/08/2020
Swansea Council Chambers	17/08/2020
102 Petty France - London	24/08/2020
Knights' chamber and visitor centre Peterborough Cathedral	28/08/2020

SITE	OPENING DATE
Manchester, The Lowry Theatre	28/09/2020
York, Hilton Hotel	29/09/2020
Middlesbrough – Jury’s Inn	30/09/2020

Nightingale courts are scheduled to open at the following locations during October

SITE
Bristol
Chester
Liverpool
Winchester

An additional Nightingale court in Cirencester will open in due course.

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

■ Courts: Standards

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[98949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Magistrates' Court and (b) Crown Court case are outstanding.

Chris Philp:

The estimated volume of outstanding cases at the criminal courts is published routinely.

The latest national estimates are available as part of Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) management information at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmcts-weekly-management-information-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Further breakdowns of the outstanding caseload at the criminal courts is available as part of the National Statistics series 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' (latest to June 2020):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[98950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the estimated average waiting time is for a case to be heard in (a) Magistrates' Courts and (b) Crown Courts.

Chris Philp:

Timeliness estimates for criminal court cases at the magistrates' courts and Crown Court are published by the Ministry of Justice as part of the National Statistics series 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' (latest to June 2020):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

- Data regarding the estimate average duration in days for magistrates' courts cases through the criminal justice system can be found in Tables T3 (latest to December 2019);

- Data specifically relating to the waiting time in weeks for cases at the Crown Court (latest to June 2020) can be found in Tables C6 (by case type), C7 (by plea) and C8 (by remand status).

■ **HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Staff**

Alex Cunningham:**[101001]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff were employed by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

HMCTS was formed on the 1st April 2011. I have provided two sets of figures for each of the past (i) calendar years and (ii) financial years.

	HMCTS		AGENCY		TOTALS	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
Dec-2011	21,198	18,979.64	-	255.30	21,198	19,234.94
Dec-2012	19,498	17,409.24	-	762.70	19,498	18,171.94
Dec-2013	18,983	16,935.04	-	799.03	18,983	17,734.07
Dec-2014	17,880	15,932.26	-	890.26	17,880	16,822.52
Dec-2015	16,907	15,044.77	-	1,042.02	16,907	16,086.79
Dec-2016	15,772	13,998.30	-	1,513.23	15,772	15,511.53
Dec-2017	15,501	13,775.45	-	2,140.89	15,501	15,916.34
Dec-2018	15,904	14,194.15	-	1,844.52	15,904	16,038.67
Dec-2019	15,753	14,081.70	-	2,049.04	15,753	16,130.74
	HMCTS		AGENCY		TOTALS	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE

	HMCTS		AGENCY		TOTALS	
Mar-2012	20,653	18,499.34	-	461.94	20,653	18,961.28
Mar-2013	19,397	17,311.49	-	829.30	19,397	18,140.79
Mar-2014	18,819	16,783.38	-	819.79	18,819	17,603.17
Mar-2015	17,758	15,825.29	-	992.16	17,758	16,817.45
Mar-2016	16,696	14,844.27	-	1193.92	16,696	16,038.19
Mar-2017	15,780	13,992.33	-	1773.67	15,780	15,766.00
Mar-2018	15,848	14,115.86	-	2205.13	15,848	16,320.99
Mar-2019	15,730	14,041.28	-	2171.00	15,730	16,212.28
Mar-2020	15,832	14,163.20	-	2014.81*	15,832	16,178.01*

These figures have been extracted from data which is already published in the public domain. The weblink is as follows:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workforce-management-information-moj>

The latest available data published on the internet (via the previous weblink) only goes up to January 2020.

*The HMCTS headcount and FTE will be correct, however, the agency FTE and total FTE for March 2020 may not be the total figure. This figure is only from one set of internal HR data (Brook Street agency data), as we do not have the figures for contractors, therefore the end figure could be higher, as per similar results on the table.

■ Prisons: Education

Ms Lyn Brown:

[98913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which prisons have been affected by (a) redundancies of education staff employed through the Prison Education Framework (PEF) contract and (b) reductions in hours of PEF education staff since April 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

There have been restrictions on the delivery of face-to-face education due to Covid-19. In line with Cabinet Office guidance we have offered supplier relief to all suppliers commissioned through Core Education contracts or under the Prison Education Framework (PEF) and Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), in both the adult prison estate and the youth custody estate. This has involved maintaining payments to providers to ensure that they have the capacity and capability to continue to deliver as the current restrictions are eased and return to full delivery as rapidly as possible.

Prison Education Framework (PEF) providers are contracted to provide a service and, so long as they provide this service, the staffing of this and how each PEF provider manages their staff is a matter for them and not the MoJ. We are not aware that any changes of staffing levels by any of the PEF providers has led to any reduction in the delivery of the service at any prison. Any erosion of service delivery, for whatever reason, will be challenged at all levels.

■ Remand in Custody: Children

Tulip Siddiq: [\[101042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has undertaken a children's rights impact assessment for recent changes to custody time limits in the crown court set out in the Prosecution of Offences (Custody Time Limits) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

Whilst a separate Child Rights Impact Assessment was not carried out, data on children was considered as a part of the Equalities Impact Statement. The Equalities Impact Statement is publicly available on gov.UK:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/953/pdfs/uksipes_20200953_en.pdf

■ Sentencing: Birmingham

Shabana Mahmood: [\[100926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people resident in Birmingham at the point of their original sentencing are serving sentences of imprisonment for public protection; and as a proportion of that number, what the (a) ethnicity and (b) diagnosed (i) mental and (ii) physical health conditions are of those prisoners.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[100927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people in England and Wales are subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection sentences; and as a proportion of that number, what the (a) ethnicity and (b) diagnosed (i) mental and (ii) physical health conditions are of those prisoners.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice does not hold centrally a record of those IPP prisoners who were residing in Birmingham at the point they were sentenced to their IPP.

The Ministry of Justice does hold the number of prisoners serving a sentence of imprisonment for public protection (IPP) and (a) their ethnicity in England and Wales, and I have provided the proportions as requested in the table below.

The Ministry of Justice does not hold centrally a record of the diagnosed mental and physical condition of serving IPP prisoners.

Every prison in England and Wales must adhere to the Equality Act 2010. This includes support for those with mental and physical health conditions, such as the

duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Since April 2018, a National Partnership Agreement on Prison Healthcare has been in place, to deliver safe, decent, effective healthcare for offenders.

Our primary responsibility is to protect the public. Prisoners serving IPP sentences 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 under probation supervision.

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.

Proportion of IPPs in prison by ethnicity as at 30 June 2020

ETHNICITY	PROPORTION OF IPP PRISONERS
White	78%
Mixed	4%
Asian / Asian British	4%
Black / Black British	13%
Chinese / Other	less than 1%
Not Stated/Missing	less than 1%

DATA SOURCES AND QUALITY

The figures in this table has been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

SCOTLAND

■ Public Expenditure: Scotland

Christine Jardine:

[101053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Scottish Government on the effect of the cancellation of the Autumn Budget on the devolved budget and furlough arrangements.

Mr Alister Jack:

At all stages of the pandemic the UK Government has sought to work constructively with the devolved administration in Scotland and will continue to do so.

HM Treasury made an unprecedented upfront guarantee to the devolved administrations, guaranteeing Scotland would receive at least £7.2 billion in additional funding this year on top of their Budget 2020 funding. This gives Scotland the budget certainty for coronavirus response in the months ahead.

In addition, the UK Government has taken substantial action to rescue the economy from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the Plan for Jobs, published in July.

In September, the Chancellor announced a targeted package of measures in his Winter Economic Plan to support jobs and business through the winter months, by supporting businesses to keep staff on through the introduction of a new Job Support Scheme and an extension to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant.

TRANSPORT**■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus****Sir Greg Knight:****[100894]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list the categories of people exempt from the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days when returning to the UK from a country not on the travel corridor list; what plans he has to amend that list; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

Exemptions to the self-isolation requirement are in place primarily to meet the UK's international obligations, provide for continued security of supply into the UK and so as not to impede work supporting national security or critical infrastructure.

The full list of exemptions is available on gov.uk at the link below: full list here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules

The list of exemptions is kept under regular review.

Sir Greg Knight:**[100895]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the level of compliance with the requirement to self-isolate when returning to the UK from a country not on the travel corridor list; what provisions exist to verify that those meant to self-isolate are doing so; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

These measures are subject to review every 28 days and supported by an Impact Summary, to ensure they are in line with the latest scientific evidence and remain effective and necessary.

On arrival Border Force conduct spot checks on passenger forms which include contact details, passport number and address while in the United Kingdom (UK).

Further compliance checks are carried out by Public Health England's Isolation Assurance Service (IAS) who attempt to contact randomly sampled arriving passengers to ensure that they are self-isolating. IAS will only contact passengers with a quarantine address in England and Northern Ireland.

If IAS are not satisfied that the individual is self-isolating, their information will be passed to Border Force and the police for potential enforcement action.

Failure to self-isolate if required following international travel already attracts a £1,000 penalty. Anyone who commits a second offence will receive a penalty of £2,000. Further repeat offences will attract penalties of £4,000 and then £10,000 for each repeat offence.

■ Jet Skis: Accidents**Hywel Williams:**[\[100899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 82606, what progress he has made on those enforcement measures; when he plans to publish those measures; whether he plans to ensure that those measures cover England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The Department is continuing to develop draft legislation which will provide powers for enforcement authorities to ensure that anyone who wilfully or neglectfully causes an accident when using a personal water craft can be prosecuted. A consultation on the draft legislation, which would be applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom, will be published shortly.

Local and harbour authorities already have significant powers to introduce measures deal with any issues in the waters they manage through byelaws and harbour directions.

■ Motorway Service Areas: Leasehold**Karl McCartney:**[\[100968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with operators of state-owned motorway service areas on renewing their leases.

Karl McCartney: [\[100969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with operators of state-owned motorway service areas on their ability to access investment for (a) site improvements, (b) HGV parking facilities and (c) electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Karl McCartney: [\[100971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to make a decision on whether to renew or extend the leases at state-owned motorway service areas with leases expiring in 2020-32.

Rachel Maclean:

In November 2018 and March 2019 ministers met all three operators who directly hold leasehold interests, MOTO, Welcome Break, and Roadchef, to seek their general views about the options on expiry of the current lease for the state-owned Motorway Service Area (MSA) sites. There has also been frequent engagement between the operators and officials regarding site improvements.

In September this year, Baroness Vere met Roadchef, to hear their current proposals for lease renewal. Topics discussed included the option of agreeing an extension to the lease well in advance of the earliest lease expiry dates in 2030, which would provide a longer tenure in which the operators could invest to modernise the ageing sites, including the upgrades to electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, provision of additional HGV parking.

Ministers are considering which approach will secure best value for the taxpayer and enhance the experience for future road users and have requested that the operators work with officials to help understand how the timelines for each option could affect the timing of any investment.

In the March 2020 Budget, the Government announced the Rapid Charging Fund was announced as part of a £500 million commitment for EV charging infrastructure.

It will be available to fund a portion of costs at strategic sites across the strategic road network where upgrading connections to meet future demand for high powered chargepoints would be prohibitively expensive and uncommercial. Timing and process for delivery of this funding will be confirmed in due course.

The Government will be working with the operators of MSAs to ensure that charging provision is in place ahead of customer demand. The aim is to help support early adoption of electric vehicles and remove range anxiety concerns for drivers on long journeys.

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance

Sarah Olney: [\[101044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of how many miles of rail could be reinstated if half the Government's £27 billion road building programme is used instead for that purpose.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have a £10.4bn budget for rail enhancements in Control Period 6 (2019-2024), £500m of which is available for Restoring Your Railway schemes. All rail enhancement schemes are assessed on a case by case basis and have unique costs and benefits.

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

■ Road Traffic Act 2004**Andrew Selous:**[\[100307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when part six of the Road Traffic Act 2004 will be implemented.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has started discussions with key stakeholders about implementing Part 6 of the Traffic Management 2004 and this will inform the drafting of regulations and statutory guidance. Implementation will require a number of statutory instruments to be made covering matters such as enforcement, level of penalties, approved devices, adjudication, representations and appeals. It is not possible at this stage to say when the powers will be available to local authorities.

■ Roads: Safety**Helen Hayes:**[\[100491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of (a) the UN's declaration of the second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-30) and (b) the Stockholm Declaration made at the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety: Achieving Global Goals 2030 Stockholm, 19–20 February 2020; and what plans his Department has to review speed limits.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes road safety very seriously, and supports the aims of both of these to prevent 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries. The Government was active in the development of these important international documents, with Ministerial attendance to the Stockholm Ministerial Conference and officials actively working on the drafting of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety Declaration. The Government continues to support activities that promote road safety both domestically and internationally and support the aims of both the UN and Stockholm Declarations.

With regard to 20mph, local authorities have the power to determine speed limits on the local road network, and are asked to keep the limits under review with changing circumstances. There are currently no plans to review the English national limits.

■ St Richards Catholic Primary School Skelmersdale: Road Traffic Control

Rosie Cooper:

[\[100915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he can take to assist residents in the area surrounding St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Skelmersdale, who are often inconvenienced by poor management of the school traffic.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities have a range of measures available to them to manage traffic outside schools. The Cycling and Walking Plan for England, published on 28 July 2020, set out that the Government expects local authorities to install more School Streets to help increase levels of active travel on the school run.

Local authorities in England are able to install School Streets already. However, outside London, offences against the signs used to create a School Street can currently only be enforced by the police.

The Plan also included a commitment to give local authorities outside London the powers to enforce these offences, by commencing Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Once this is in place, local authorities will be able to apply to the Department for the powers to enforce a range of moving traffic offences, including those signs use to create School Streets.

A further £1 million has also been announced to boost the number of children walking to school. The 'Walk to School Outreach Programme' – which has already generated four million new walking trips – is being extended to roll out further measures to support walking.

This includes tackling the barriers which may prevent children and their families choosing to walk to and from school, as well as providing schools with classroom materials and access to local coordinators who can help schools get new walking initiatives up and running.

■ Trains: Hydrogen

Andrew Griffith:

[\[99161\]](#)

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

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government supports the use of new technologies and further electrification to decarbonise the railway and help us meet our net zero carbon emissions by 2050 target. Network Rail is currently working to determine which parts of the network could be best suited to hydrogen or battery trains and which could be best suited to further electrification.

The Department supports development of rail hydrogen technology and has contributed £750,000 to facilitate trials of the UK's first hydrogen-powered train, HydroFLEX.

■ Union Connectivity Review

Hywel Williams:

[\[100898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timescale is for the completion of the Union Connectivity Review; whether that review will make an assessment of the potential merits of air connectivity between (a)(i) Ynys Mon and (ii) Gwynedd and London and (b)(i) Ynys Mon and (ii) Gwynedd and Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Union Connectivity Review interim report will be published in January 2021, with final recommendations in Summer 2021. The Review will cover transport connectivity between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland via road, rail and air and across the Irish Sea. This will be an independent review chaired by Sir Peter Hendy who will determine which air corridors should be assessed.

TREASURY

■ Air Passenger Duty: Coronavirus

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[100883\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the amount of Air Passenger Duty charged by airlines which has not been refunded to passengers who did not undertake their booked flights in the last six months; and if he will make it Government policy that Air Passenger Duty should be repaid to passengers without the imposition of an administration fee.

Kemi Badenoch:

APD is a tax paid by airlines based on the number of passengers on board an aircraft that takes off from a UK airport. Whether airlines pass on the cost of the tax to their passengers is a commercial decision. If a pre booked passenger does not subsequently fly the airline has no APD liability for that passenger. HMRC does not collect information on such passengers. Where the cost is passed on by airlines, there is no legal obligation to refund this business charge. Refunds from airlines will be governed by the terms and conditions attached to the sale of the ticket. However, the government expects all airlines operating in the UK to make their terms and conditions, including their refund policy, clear at the time of booking.

■ Airports: Non-domestic Rates

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[100924\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing business rate relief for airports in response to the reduction in passenger traffic.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation industry as a result of COVID-19, and firms experiencing difficulties as a result of COVID-19 can

draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills. Firms in the aviation sector will now also be able to take advantage of the targeted package of measures to support jobs and businesses through the winter months.

The Government has also launched a new Global Travel Taskforce to work with industry to support the safe recovery of international travel.

■ ARM: NVIDIA

Daniel Zeichner: [\[98989\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of holding discussions with (a) Softbank and Arm on the Softbank/Arm deal of 2016 and (b) Nvidia and Arm on the Softbank/Nvidia Arm deal of 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport is leading engagement with the parties involved, all queries should be directed to the DCMS.

Information about ministerial meetings can be found at gov.uk. It would be inappropriate to divulge further detail at this stage.

■ Beer: Excise Duties

John Healey: [\[100892\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of the small breweries relief to breweries producing (a) 3,000 hectolitres, (b) 4,000 hectolitres and (c) 5,000 hectolitres of beer each year.

Kemi Badenoch:

Small Brewers producing less than 5,000 hectolitres per year are currently entitled to a 50% reduction in the rate of duty charged on their beer. The value of the relief to an individual Brewer will depend on the strength of the beer produced. At an average strength of 4% this would reduce a Brewer's beer duty bill by £114,480 on 3,000 hectolitres, £152,640 on 4,000 hectolitres, and £190,800 on 5,000 hectolitres per annum.

HMRC publishes annual statistics on Small Brewers Relief, this includes the number of people claiming the relief and the total cost of the relief. Information on the total cost of the relief by production volume is not readily available. The latest publication of annual tax relief data for Small Brewers Relief can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>.

Patrick Grady: [\[101035\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on small, independent brewers of the proposal to reduce the production threshold at which Small Brewers Relief starts to taper.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government anticipates that by replacing the existing taper with a more gradual one spread over a wider range of production, small breweries will find it easier to grow and expand.

Patrick Grady:[\[101036\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the further consultation on the proposed reforms of Small Brewers Relief.

Kemi Badenoch:

As previously announced, the consultation will be published in the Autumn.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[99113\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he is taking steps to reduce the duty paid by pubs and breweries; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury has supported pubs and breweries with cuts and freezes to alcohol duties at six of the last seven Budgets, costing £6.2 billion in revenue since 2013. This has made a pint of beer 16p cheaper than it otherwise would have been had duty rates increased with inflation. Alcohol duties are kept under review and further announcements will be made at the next fiscal event.

■ Beer: Small Businesses**John Healey:**[\[100891\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many breweries produce less than (a) 2,100 hectolitres and (b) 5,000 hectolitres of beer in each local authority area each year.

Kemi Badenoch:

HMRC publishes annual statistics on Small Brewers Relief, this includes the total number of people claiming the relief and the cost of the relief. Information on the location of Brewers receiving the relief is not readily available. The latest publication of annual tax relief data for Small Brewers Relief can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>.

■ Business: Coronavirus**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[99083\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer to Question 97003 on Business: Coronavirus, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the extended VAT reduction on businesses which are legally prevented from re-opening during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[99086\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer to Question 97003 on Business: Coronavirus, what estimate he has made of the additional money businesses

which are legally prevented from trading as a result of covid-19 legislation will receive from the extension to VAT reduction.

Jesse Norman:

To support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and to protect 2.4 million jobs, the Government has applied a temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors. This relief came into effect on 15 July 2020 and will end on 31 March 2021. This relief is estimated to be worth over £3 billion to the tourism and hospitality sectors.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[99045\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 88904 on Charities: Coronavirus, how much of the guaranteed £12.7bn in additional resource funding this year for devolved Administrations on top of their Spring Budget funding is for Barnett consequentials associated with the coronavirus funding for charities; and how much of that funding has been (a) allocated and (b) disbursed to devolved Administrations.

Steve Barclay:

The devolved administrations received £6bn of Barnett consequentials at Main Estimates 2020-21 and will formally receive the remainder of the guaranteed funding at Supplementary Estimates towards the end of the financial year.

The Barnett consequentials associated with the funding for charities in England will contribute up to £106m to these guarantees.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Jon Trickett:

[\[98881\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2020 to Question 69443 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, if he will publish the names of those companies which submitted those claims totalling in excess of £1,000,000 through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC are unable to provide information on organisations which have used the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

Owing to HMRC's duty of confidentiality, they cannot publish identifying information that relates to one of their functions.

The CJRS is one of HMRC's functions and publishing a list of organisations would provide identifying information.

■ Coronavirus Self-isolation Payment Scheme

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[101060\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that information on the eligibility of self-isolation payment claimants is being shared with the (a) Department of Health and Social Care and (b) Department for Work and Pensions in a timely manner.

Jesse Norman:

Operation of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme in England does not require HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) information to be disclosed to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Local Authorities are administering the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme in England. All central government departments directly involved in the scheme (DHSC, MHCLG, DWP and HMRC) are collaborating to make sure Local Authorities have access to information necessary to administer this scheme and provide a clear view of its use.

HMRC have been working closely with DWP to make use of HMRC information to support the scheme. HMRC already disclose earnings and tax credit information to DWP under the Welfare Reform Act 2012. HMRC have agreed for DWP to extend its disclosure of taxpayer information to support Local Authorities in England which are administering the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. This will provide information on claimants to Local Authorities in a legal, secure, proportionate and efficient way to enable Local Authorities to determine who is eligible for the scheme.

Under the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005, HMRC have a duty of confidentiality for information they hold. HMRC may only disclose taxpayer information under a limited number of circumstances, such as where legislation provides an information sharing gateway with another department for a specific purpose. Consent is generally required from HMRC for onward disclosure to organisations beyond those directly receiving taxpayer information

■ Developing Countries: Debts

Chris Law:

[\[101031\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to work with international partners to extend the Debt Service Suspension Initiative beyond the end of 2020; and what plans he has to promote the inclusion of (a) private lenders and (b) multilateral institutions in that agreement.

John Glen:

To date, the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) has supported 43 countries which have requested suspensions by freeing up \$5 billion to fund their COVID-19 responses. Given the depth of liquidity needs in these countries, the Chancellor supports an extension of the DSSI into 2021 and is working with his G20 counterparts to secure agreement on the extension.

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

The G20 has supported the Multilateral Development Banks taking a "net positive flows" approach to complement the DSSI, ensuring that borrowing countries receive significantly more funds from the MDBs in 2020 than they repay. For the poorest countries, much of this funding will be on grant terms. This helps ensure the financial model of the MDBs remains sustainable, while allowing donors to target resources to support the most vulnerable countries.

■ Duty Free Allowances

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[100884\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the economic impact assessment of the decision to end tax free sales for air passengers and the VAT refund scheme from 1 January 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Ian Murray: [\[100932\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the (a) direct and (b) wider effect of ending the VAT Retail Export Scheme on the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors in Scotland.

Ian Murray: [\[100933\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with (a) retail industry bodies and (b) trade unions on the effect on the retail sector of ending the VAT Retail Export Scheme.

Ian Murray: [\[100934\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) reverse his decision to end the VAT Retail Export Scheme or (b) postpone its implementation until an impact assessment has been conducted.

Patricia Gibson: [\[101037\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason (a) tax free shopping for all passengers travelling from the UK and (b) the VAT refund scheme for foreign tourists are being withdrawn.

Patricia Gibson: [\[101038\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the withdrawal of tax free shopping on the competitiveness of UK airports.

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 (UK) 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 UK, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- The VAT Retail Export Scheme (RES) 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 detailed rationale for these changes are included in the written ministerial statement and summary of responses to the recent consultation: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-11/hcws448> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-duty-free-and-tax-free-goods-carried-by-passengers>.

In 2019 HMRC estimate that VAT RES refunds cost around £0.5billion in VAT for around 1.2million non-EU visitors. In 2019 the ONS estimate there were substantially more EU visitors (24.8 million) than non-EU passengers (16.0 million) to the UK. This implies an extension to EU residents would significantly increase the cost by up to an estimated £0.9billion. This would result in a large amount of deadweight loss by subsidising spending from EU visitors which already happens without a refund mechanism in place, potentially taking the total cost up to around £1.4billion per annum.

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.

HMRC estimate that around £150 million of VAT is not charged as a result of tax-free airside sales. As with the VAT RES, extending the relief to the EU would significantly increase the cost of the scheme and result in a large amount of deadweight loss by subsidising spending from EU-bound passengers which already happens.

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.

■ **Events Industry: Non-domestic Rates**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[99124\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend business rates relief to the events and exhibitions sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to eligible businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure.

A range of other measures to support all businesses, including the events and exhibitions sector, 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 further protect jobs.

■ **Financial Conduct Authority**

Afzal Khan:

[\[99106\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department takes to ensure that the Financial Conduct Authority is in receipt of adequate funding from the public purse to effectively discharge its responsibilities.

John Glen:

The legislative framework provides for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to be operationally independent from Government. As a self-financing organisation, the FCA is funded via a levy on financial services firms, which is set by the FCA to cover its funding requirement each year following consultation. As such, the FCA is financed entirely by the financial services industry.

While the Government has no role in the FCA's budgeting or the setting of the levy, the Government works closely with the FCA to ensure that it has access to the resources necessary for its effective operation.

For more information on the FCA's finances, please see their policy statement regarding fees and levies in 2020/21, available online.

■ Hospitality Industry and Tourism: VAT

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[99140\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the temporary changes in VAT on businesses in the tourism and hospitality sectors in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has applied a temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors. This relief came into effect on 15 July 2020 and will end on 31 March 2021.

The temporary reduced rate aims to support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and protect 2.4 million jobs across the UK.

This relief is estimated to be worth over £3 billion to the tourism and hospitality sectors.

■ Insurance: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan:

[\[99722\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a Government-backed covid-19 insurance scheme for the events industry.

John Glen:

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

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

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

■ Job Support Scheme**Grahame Morris:** [\[100936\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 October 2020 to Question 98695, on what date HMRC started work on the Job Support Scheme guidance.

Jesse Norman:

While unable to provide a specific date, HMRC worked closely with HMT during policy development to enable the publication of an initial factsheet on 24 September 2020 while developing more detailed materials to accompany the start of the scheme.

■ Job Support Scheme: Parish Councils**Grahame Morris:** [\[100937\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 October 2020 to Questions 98695 on Job Support Scheme: Parish Councils, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including Parish and Town Council employees within the scope of the Job Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

As the Chancellor said when announcing the scheme on 24 September, the Government will publish full guidance on the Job Support Scheme in due course; this will include detail on who is eligible for the scheme.

■ Kickstart Scheme**Stephen Farry:** [\[99158\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the the Barnett Consequential is arising to the Northern Ireland Executive from the Kickstart scheme in Great Britain.

Steve Barclay:

On 24th July we made an unprecedented upfront guarantee to the devolved administrations. We guaranteed that they will receive at least £12.7bn in additional funding this year on top of their Spring Budget Funding, including £2.2bn for the Northern Ireland Executive.

This gives the Northern Ireland Executive the certainty to plan and deliver their coronavirus response this year. The guaranteed funding will ensure people, businesses and public services in all three nations get the support they need throughout the pandemic.

■ Low Incomes: Coronavirus**Jonathan Gullis:** [\[99139\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support people on low-incomes in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is seeking to protect, as far as possible, people's jobs and incomes through the pandemic. This is being undertaken through a long-term, sustainable approach that focuses on employment, while ensuring everyone is supported by the welfare system in their time of need.

In response to the pandemic, the Government has announced an unprecedented package of support, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and a package of welfare measures which the Office of Budget Responsibility estimates to be worth over £9 billion, helping to protect incomes, jobs, and support those most in need. This package of temporary welfare measures includes a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance, and an increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile of market rents. In addition, to continue to protect jobs over the winter months, from November businesses facing lower demand due to COVID-19 will be able to apply to the Job Support Scheme.

In its Plan for Jobs, the Government has announced unprecedented support to help unemployed people find a job. The support is available across Great Britain and includes measures that will be delivered at a local level through DWP's extensive network of over 600 Job Centre Plus branches.

On top of these measures, the Government has introduced a new package to support those in self-isolation. People required to self-isolate who are on a low income, who cannot work from home, and have lost income as a result, will be eligible for a payment of £500.

■ National Savings Bonds**Rachael Maskell:**[\[99038\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that investors with National Savings and Investments receive their income bonds as speedily as possible when requested.

John Glen:

For NS&I Income Bonds customers, funds accrue interest from the date the customer has originally made their deposit, though the transaction may not necessarily appear in a customer's accounts until a later date

For an electronic transfer deposit received by 18:30 on a banking day will normally clear on the next banking day. Debit card and cheque deposits will clear no later than the seventh banking day after being received. However, if a customer applies to open a new Income Bonds account, or makes a subsequent deposit, by debit card between 8pm on the 20th of a month and the 5th of the following month, their updated balance will not display online until the 6th of the month. Instead, the transaction will show in 'Pending transactions'. This is because of a period where NS&I calculate the monthly interest payments. Customers will still accrue interest

from the date they originally made their deposit and NS&I will pay that accrued interest on the next available interest payment.

■ National Savings: Repayments

Rachael Maskell:

[\[99037\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that National Savings and Investments process repayments for investors as speedily as possible.

John Glen:

The time it takes for NS&I to process repayments for customers depends on which NS&I account(s) a customer has, how much the customer wants to withdraw and how the customer gives NS&I their withdrawal instruction.

The quickest way for customers to withdraw their money is online. Customers can also give their withdrawal instructions over the phone. Withdrawals by post will take longer and timescales will depend on customers' chosen method of post.

NS&I provides a payment timeline calculator on its website for online and phone repayments to enable customers to find out when they will receive their payment. The calculator is designed to tell customers when they would receive a single withdrawal from one account, if they withdraw online or by phone.

From 29 September 2020, NS&I became aware that a small number of customers using its online services were having difficulty when trying to withdraw money from their accounts. This was due to a technical issue which was resolved on 6 October 2020 and NS&I apologies for the inconvenience caused to customers. During the period when the technical issue was ongoing, customers could still withdraw money from their accounts by phoning the NS&I customer service team.

■ Offshore Fixed Structures: Decommissioning

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[98944\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what rate of tax relief a company would receive against the cost of decommissioning redundant oil platforms in UK Territorial Waters.

Kemi Badenoch:

The rate of tax relief for the decommissioning of redundant oil platforms will depend on the particular circumstances of the company in question. If the company is within the UK's oil & gas tax regime the rate of relief will be commensurate with the rates of tax charged.

■ Retail Trade: Money

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[99638\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of cashless shops on (a) people on low incomes, (b) vulnerable people and (c) disadvantaged communities.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that cash remains important to millions of people across the UK, which is why the government is committed to legislating to protect access to cash.

The government is working closely with regulators on issues related to cash, including through the Treasury-chaired Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group (JACS). As part of the work of the JACS group, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Payment Systems Regulator are conducting research into cash acceptance, including the factors affecting the decisions by small and medium enterprises to accept cash, and the Bank of England is tracking acceptance through consumer surveys. The Payment Systems regulator has previously commissioned market research which included information on acceptance of cash by small businesses and cash use across different demographic groups. The government and regulators will use this research to help ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure remains sustainable and supports the needs of cash users.

■ Self-employed: Coronavirus**Jane Stevenson:**[\[101063\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he is providing to self-employed people who did not meet the eligibility requirements for the Self Employed Income Support Scheme in March 2020.

Jesse Norman:

Those not eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support available. The Government has temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 by £20 per week and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor meaning that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly reduced, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. They may also have access to Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants, with a new extended deadline of 30 November.

In addition to this, up to half a million businesses which deferred their VAT bills will also be given more breathing space through the New Payment Scheme. This gives them the option to spread their payments over the financial year 2021-2022. In addition, all 11 million UK self-assessment taxpayers will be able to benefit from the recently enhanced Time to Pay 'self-service' facility to form a 12-month, interest-free payment arrangement for up to £30,000 of self-assessment debt.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[100890\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason (a) self-employed individuals receive wage support up to 20 per cent of pre-covid-19 income under the Self

Employment Income Support Scheme and (b) people in full-time employment can receive up to 77 per cent through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is helping self-employed people adversely affected by COVID-19. 2.7 million people claimed £7.8 billion of support under the first grant, and as at 20 September 2.2 million people had claimed £5.6 billion of support under the second grant.

The Government has announced a package of measures in the Winter Economy Plan that will continue to protect jobs and help businesses through the uncertain months ahead. The package includes a new Job Support Scheme (JSS) and an extension to the SEISS.

Under the next phase of the SEISS, eligible people will be able to claim a taxable grant covering 20% of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £1,875 in total.

Under the Job Support Scheme, employees must be working 33% of their usual hours. For every hour not worked by the employee, both the Government and employer will pay a third each of the usual hourly wage for that employee. The Government contribution will be capped at £697.92 a month.

The Government has broadly aligned the next SEISS grant with the Government's contribution to the Job Support Scheme. The extension is not intended to provide a direct income replacement, as people will be continuing to work while claiming the grant. Those who require more support may have access to other elements of the Government's support package.

Emma Hardy:

[\[99089\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on self-employed people of the setting of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant extension payments at 20 per cent of average monthly trading profits.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension provides critical support to the self-employed, by supporting those who are currently eligible for the SEISS and are continuing to trade but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19. The scheme will be in the form of two grants, and will last for six months, from November 2020 to April 2021. The first grant will cover a three-month period from the start of November until the end of January. This initial grant will cover 20 per cent of average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months' worth of profits, and capped at £1,875 in total.

The Government has broadly aligned this initial grant with the Government's contribution to the Job Support Scheme. The extension is not intended to provide a direct income replacement, as people will be continuing to work while claiming the grant. Those who require more support may have access to other elements of the Government's support package. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax

deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

■ Treasury: Private Finance Initiative

Alan Brown: [\[99032\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Department has one live PFI contract.

- a) Building and facilities management services are provided.
- b) The contract became live in 2000.
- c) The remaining term is 17 years.
- d) The annual Unitary Payment charge for FY 2019/2020 was £26,885,116.28.

■ Unemployment: West Midlands

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[99077\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of his Winter Recovery Plan on unemployment in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands by (i) gender, (ii) age, (iii) religion, (iv) ethnicity, and (v) socio-economic group.

John Glen:

The Government considers the equality impacts of individual policies on those with protected characteristics carefully and consistently, in line with both its legal obligations and its strong commitment to equality; and there are internal procedural requirements and support in place for ensuring that such considerations inform decisions taken by Ministers.

The Winter Economy Plan supports people, particularly groups at higher risk of unemployment due to the pandemic, including persons with a disability, young people and people from certain Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, including across Birmingham and the West Midlands.

WALES

■ Asylum: Penally

Nia Griffith: [\[100916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, when he was first made aware of the Government's decision to provide accommodation for asylum seekers at the Penally training camp.

Simon Hart:

I heard of the decision to use Penally training camp as accommodation for asylum seekers on 12 September.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Ammonium Nitrate: Safety**

John McDonnell: [\[98865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what inspections have been undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive of sites in the UK storing ammonium nitrate (a) prior to and (b) since the explosion caused by a result of the storage of that chemical compound in Beirut in August 2020.

John McDonnell: [\[98866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has requested a report from the Health and Safety Executive on the safety of the storage of ammonium nitrate in UK storage sites.

John McDonnell: [\[98867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has received reports from the Health and Safety Executive on the safety of the storage of ammonium nitrate at sites in the UK.

John McDonnell: [\[98868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has requested that the Health and Safety Executive undertake an inspection of the safety of the storage of (a) ammonium nitrate and (b) other similar chemical compounds at sites in Great Yarmouth.

John McDonnell: [\[98869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has received reports from the Health and Safety Executive on the safety of the storage of (a) ammonium nitrate and (b) other similar chemical compounds at sites in Great Yarmouth.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is an independent regulator, and has responsibility for regulatory oversight of the storage of ammonium nitrate (AN) at sites where it is the enforcing authority. The matters raised are primarily regulatory and operational matters and I encourage the Rt Hon colleague to contact HSE at Chief.Executive@hse.gov.uk to discuss any particular matters of concern.

As you may expect the storage of AN is subject to a robust regulatory framework, which considers the hazards posed by storage, product safety and measures to deal with emergencies. Sites storing the quantities of AN reported to have been involved in the tragic incident in Beirut would be subject to the provisions of the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) in the UK. All COMAH sites have a plan which sets out interventions with the site including inspections. Sites are subject

to proportionate, targeted intervention, in line with the Competent Authority (HSE and Environmental Agencies) approach to the regulation of COMAH sites.

Prior to incident in Beirut, all COMAH sites storing AN had been visited during the previous 6 years, in line with the intervention plans. Following the incident HSE has reviewed its last interventions with those sites and considered any appropriate changes to the planned interventions. As a result of this review inspections were undertaken to two sites where the last intervention was over 5 years ago. The outcomes from these inspections identified that the arrangements for the storage of AN were appropriate. It should be noted that it is often the case that organisations may operate more than one COMAH site and so interventions at one site offer the opportunity to assess an organisations general approach and identify areas for improvement which can then be implemented across the organisation.

There is one COMAH site in Great Yarmouth, currently operated by Origin UK Operations Limited. The site notified HSE that they intended to store COMAH qualifying quantities of AN in August 2018. HSE is scheduled to undertake an inspection of the current dutyholder at this site as part of this year's work plan. Prior to 2018 the site was operated by another dutyholder. HSE inspected the site in 2015 and verified that the ammonium nitrate storage conditions were appropriate. Between 2015 and 2018 AN was not stored in COMAH qualifying quantities at the site.

All sites storing COMAH qualifying quantities of AN fertiliser have to first gain Hazardous Substance Consent (HSC) from the Local Planning Authority. This process involves consultation with HSE to consider whether the site is suitable, taking into account risks to local people. HSE has recently reviewed all sites where such Hazardous Substances Consent (HSC) has been granted, but where no notification has been made under the provisions of the COMAH Regulations. HSE is contacting these sites to establish their current status to provide assurance that all regulatory provisions are being met.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Maladministration

Neil Coyle: [\[100422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department has paid out in response to findings of maladministration in each financial year since 2009-10.

Neil Coyle: [\[100423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people qualified for a payment from her Department following a finding of maladministration in each financial year since 2009-10.

Mims Davies:

DWP provides a high quality service to around 20 million people, and of those, less than 1% complain or receive redress for service failing. In instances where issues with payments arise, DWP operates a discretionary special payments scheme, which can provide financial redress if our maladministration has caused a customer hardship or injustice.

The table provides the special payment expenditure from April 2009 to March 2020. Information about payments for maladministration is also contained in DWP's Annual Report and Accounts. The most recent published report can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896268/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-2020.pdf

We do not record data in respect of the number of people who have been awarded a special payment by DWP. Instead, we record the number of special payments we have *authorised*. The number of authorised payments will not necessarily equate to the number of customers because an individual might be awarded redress under different categories (financial loss or a consolatory payment) or receive more than one payment.

SPECIAL PAYMENT EXPENDITURE

Reporting Year	Number of payments authorised	Total amount paid*
2009 – 2010	18, 820	£5.3m
2010 – 2011	16, 280	£5.1m
2011 – 2012	12, 527	£3.1m
2012 – 2013	13, 628	£2.3m
2013 – 2014	13,382	£2m
2014 – 2015	9,197	£1.6m
2015 – 2016	6,671	£1.3m
2016 - 2018	7, 447	£1.1m
2017 – 2018	7, 079	£0.86m
2018 – 2019	6, 946**	£1.2m**
2019 - 2020	6, 708***	£0.98m

**The special payment figures exclude financial redress paid for Loss of Statutory Entitlement (LOSE), a special payment which can be made if maladministration has caused a claimant to lose entitlement to statutory benefit payments. LOSE is excluded as it is not an extra cost arising from maladministration, but payment that should have been made anyway.*

***The special payment figures reported in the Departmental Report 2018/19 (24,175 payments totalling £2.496m) included 17,345 ex gratia payments totalling £1,674,770 (£1.7m). These were for support for mortgage interest and were paid to claimants*

whose benefit payments were not converted to a loan by 7 May 2019. There were 6,946 payments made for maladministration, totalling £1,221,070 (£1.2m)

****The figure in respect of the number of payments authorised in 2019/20 was not included in the 2019/20 Departmental Report, as that aspect of the special payment data had yet to be finalised prior to the report's publication*

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Private Finance Initiative

Alan Brown: [\[99030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what live PFI contracts her 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.

Mims Davies:

Following a search of our records we have established that the Department does not hold any live PFI contracts.

■ Employment: Young People

Cat Smith: [\[100438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Opportunity Guarantee announced by the Prime Minister on 30 June 2020 remains Government policy.

Cat Smith: [\[100439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to roll out the Opportunity Guarantee announced by the Prime Minister on 30th June.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The Chancellor's Plan for Jobs announcement in July outlined a comprehensive package of support for young people. As part of this, our new Youth Offer will provide a guaranteed foundation of support to all 18-24 year olds in the Intensive Worksearch group on Universal Credit. This includes our new 13-week Youth Employment Programme, the national expansion of the Youth Employability Coaches initiative and the Youth Hubs being rolled out nationally to help young people access wider support. These will be co-located and co-delivered with our network of external partners. Young people can be attached to a Youth Hub for up to 6 months to help them move either into work or onto appropriate training.

In addition, the Kickstart Scheme was launched on 2 September 2020 and will create hundreds of thousands of high quality, 6-month work placements aimed at young people aged 16-24.

We also continue to deliver our Mentoring Circles programme. This aims to increase the confidence, motivation and job search skills of the participants and will help them move closer to employment.

■ Industrial Accidents: Birmingham

Shabana Mahmood: [\[99577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department is taking to expedite the conclusion of the Health and Safety Executive investigation into the deaths of Almamo Jammeh, Ousmane Diaby, Bangally Dukureh, Saibo Sillah and Muhamadou Jagana, at the Hawkeswood Metal Recycling site in Birmingham in 2016.

Mims Davies:

My sympathy goes out to the families, friends and those closely affected by the deaths of the five workers and also to the survivor of the incident, who was seriously injured.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is an independent regulator it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the specifics of an ongoing investigation. I am assured by HSE that the investigation is progressing and following due legal process.

■ Industrial Accidents: Death

Shabana Mahmood: [\[99579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many fatal workplace accidents resulted in an employer prosecution following an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive in each year from 2010 to 2020 in (a) the West Midlands and (b) England and Wales.

Mims Davies:

The number of fatal workplace accidents per year which subsequently resulted in the prosecution of an employer are shown in the following table:

YEAR (A)	WEST MIDLANDS (B)	ENGLAND & WALES (C)
2010	7	82
2011	9	71
2012	8	70
2013	7	70
2014	7	67
2015	8	49
2016	2	23

2017	3	23
2018	-	6
2019	-	-
2020	-	-

(a) Commencing 1st January

(b) Defined by Government Office Region

(c) Figures include the West Midlands

Notes

The table shows fatalities reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013 and previous legislation and the analysis is based on the incident date and where the subsequent prosecution action has been completed.

There can be significant delays between a reportable incident and a prosecution concluding due to a number of reasons including: delays in primacy for the investigation passing to HSE from the police, delays arising from the need for an inquest etc. Consequently, there have no fatalities in 2019 or 2020 which have yet resulted in a concluded prosecution.

Prosecutions taken arising from a fatal investigation should not imply that the employer was liable for the death but only that we had sufficient evidence of a breach of law and that it was in the public interest to prosecute.

The figures were extracted from HSE's live operational database and provide the picture on the date of extraction – 8 October 2020 - this is not a static picture as there are ongoing investigations for a number of the incidents, especially those which occurred in recent years.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Jessica Morden:

[\[98908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 September 2020 to Question 90092 on Personal Independence Payment, what were the recorded reasons for those 1,860 claimants' claims being disallowed at initial decision under normal rules.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically. New Claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) are fast tracked and were being cleared in 4 working days on average in April 2020. This is compared to an average

of 16 weeks for New Claims cleared under Normal Rules in April 2020, down by 62% from their peak of 42 weeks in July 2014.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department. There is no evidence in this data to suggest someone's reason for claiming PIP was the cause of their death and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise. People claim PIP for various reasons, the majority of which are non-life threatening.

There were 1,860 claimants who were disallowed at initial decision under Normal Rules who had registered a claim between April 2018 – October 2019 and died within 6 months of that registration. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the disallowances broken by the disallowance type. Please note that the Department holds no further data on the reasons claimants are disallowed PIP.

Table 1: Breakdown of disallowance reasons for claimants cleared under Normal Rules who died within 6 months of registering a PIP claim

OUTCOME OF PIP CLAIM	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS CLEARED UNDER NORMAL RULES
Disallowed pre-referral to the Assessment Provider	330
Disallowed pre-referral to the Assessment Provider - due to non-return of Part 2 within the time limit	1,150
Disallowed post-referral to the Assessment Provider - Failed Assessment	280
Disallowed post-referral to the Assessment Provider – Failed to Attend Assessment	100
Total disallowances	1,860

Notes

Source: PIP ADS

- PIP data includes normal rules claimants only, and is for both new claims and Disability Living Allowance reassessment claims.
- The outcome is the first DWP decision recorded on the PIP Computer system (PIPES). This does not take into account any mandatory reconsideration or Appeal action so some of these claimants may have subsequently been awarded PIP. Some cases do not have a decision recorded.

- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- The latest PIP Official Statistics, including data to 31 st July 2020, were published on 15 th September 2020. We have provided figures here as at 30 th April 2020 for consistency with the original answer to PQ 90092 and PQ 81701.
- This is unpublished data from the PIPCS's management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Data has been rounded to the nearest 10.
- Components may not sum to the total due to rounding.
- Figures cover PIP claims registered from April 2018 – October 2019, initial decisions made from April 2018 – April 2020, and deaths from April 2018 up to 30 th April 2020 as recorded at 2 nd October 2020. Data may be subject to retrospection.
- GB Only.

Under the Social Security (Notification of Deaths) Regulations 2012 and s125 of Social Security Administration Act 1992 date of death is provided to the Department for all registered deaths. Additionally, next of kin also provide information on the date of death of an individual and this information is used appropriately in the administration of Departmental benefits.

Jessica Morden:

[98911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 September 2020 to Question 90093 on Personal Independence Payment, what the medical conditions were of the 5,520 personal independence payment claimants who applied under normal rules and who died after registering their claim but prior to her Department making a decision on their claim.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically.

New claims to PIP made under Normal Rules were cleared in an average (median) of 16 weeks in April 2020 and reassessments from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP under Normal Rules were being cleared in an average (median) of 27 weeks in April 2020.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department. There is no evidence in this data to suggest someone's reason for claiming PIP was the cause of their death and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise. People claim PIP for various reasons, the majority of which are non-life threatening.

The number of PIP claimants who died after registering a PIP claim under Normal Rules but prior to a decision being made on their case between 1 st April 2018 and 30

th April 2020 has increased from 5,520 to 5,530, since Question 90093 was answered. This is due to a live system.

The main disabling condition of the 5,530 PIP claimants who died after registering a PIP claim under Normal Rules but prior to a decision being made on their case between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2020 is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Main disabling condition for PIP claimants who died after registering a PIP claim under Normal Rules but prior to a decision being made on their case between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2020

MAIN DISABLING CONDITION	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS
Autoimmune disease (connective tissue disorders)	30
Cardiovascular disease	80
Diseases of the immune system	-
Diseases of the liver, gallbladder, biliary tract	80
Endocrine disease	30
Gastrointestinal disease	10
Genitourinary disease	30
Haematological Disease	-
Hearing disorders	10
Infectious disease	-
Malignant disease	450
Metabolic disease	10
Musculoskeletal disease (general)	90
Musculoskeletal disease (regional)	60
Neurological disease	180
Psychiatric disorders	270
Respiratory disease	150
kin disease	10
Unknown or missing	4,050
Visual disease	10

MAIN DISABLING CONDITION	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS
Total	5,530

Notes:**Sources: PIP ADS, Customer Information System**

- These figures include new claims and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP reassessment claims.
- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- This is unpublished data from the PIP computer system's (PIP CS) management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Claimants may often have multiple disabling conditions upon which the decision is based but only the primary condition is recorded on the PIP CS.
- The main disabling condition is only recorded for claimants who have attended a PIP assessment with an assessment provider.
- Figures include registrations made from 1 st April 2018 – 30 th April 2020 and clearances made up to 30 th April 2020 (as recorded on the system at 30 th April 2020) and claimant deaths from 1 st April 2018 – 30 th April 2020 (as recorded on the system at 2 nd October 2020) and may be subject to retrospection.
- The latest PIP Official Statistics, including data to 31 st July 2020, were published on 15 th September 2020. We have provided figures here as at 30 th April 2020 for consistency with the original answers to PQ 90093 and PQ 81700.
- Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and '-' is used for totals of greater than 0 but less than 5.
- Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
- GB only.

Under the Social Security (Notification of Deaths) Regulations 2012 and s125 of Social Security Administration Act 1992 date of death is provided to the Department for all registered deaths. Additionally, next of kin also provide information on the date of death of an individual and this information is used appropriately in the administration of Departmental benefits.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Terminal Illnesses

Jessica Morden:

[98909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 September 2020 to Question 90092 on Personal Independence Payment, how many of the 2,140 claimants who had their claim disallowed at initial decision applied under the

Special Rules for Terminal Illness; and what the recorded reasons were for those claims being so disallowed.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically. New Claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) are fast tracked and were being cleared in 4 working days on average in April 2020. This is compared to an average of 16 weeks for New Claims cleared under Normal Rules in April 2020, down by 62% from their peak of 42 weeks in July 2014.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department. There is no evidence in this data to suggest someone's reason for claiming PIP was the cause of their death and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise. People claim PIP for various reasons, the majority of which are non-life threatening.

There were 2,140 claimants who were disallowed at initial decision under Normal Rules or Special Rules who had registered a claim between April 2018 – October 2019 and died within 6 months of that registration. Of these, 280 originally applied under Special Rules and Table 1 shows a breakdown of these disallowances broken by the disallowance type. Please note that the Department holds no further data on the reasons claimants are disallowed PIP.

Table 1: Breakdown of disallowance reasons for claimants who originally registered under Special Rules, were disallowed and died within 6 months of registering a PIP claim

OUTCOME OF PIP CLAIM	N
Disallowed pre-referral to the Assessment Provider	260
Disallowed pre-referral to the Assessment Provider - due to non-return of Part 2 within the time limit	20
Disallowed post-referral to the Assessment Provider - Failed Assessment	-
Disallowed post-referral to the Assessment Provider – Failed to Attend Assessment	-
Total	280

Notes

Source: PIP ADS

- PIP data includes normal rules and special rules for the terminally ill claimants, and is for both new claims and Disability Living Allowance reassessment claims.
- The outcome is the first DWP decision recorded on the PIP Computer system (PIPICS). This does not take into account any mandatory reconsideration or Appeal action so some of these claimants may have subsequently been awarded PIP. Some cases do not have a decision recorded.
- The latest PIP Official Statistics, including data to 31 st July 2020, were published on 15 th September 2020. We have provided figures here as at 30 th April 2020 for consistency with the original answer to PQ 90092 and PQ 81701.
- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- This is unpublished data from the PIPICS's management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Data has been rounded to the nearest 10.
- Fields with fewer than 5 cases are replaced by a "-".
- Components may not sum to the total due to rounding.
- Figures cover PIP claims registered from April 2018 – October 2019, initial decisions made from April 2018 – April 2020, and deaths from April 2018 up to 30 th April 2020 as recorded at 2 nd October 2020. Data may be subject to retrospection.
- GB Only.

Under the Social Security (Notification of Deaths) Regulations 2012 and s125 of Social Security Administration Act 1992 date of death is provided to the Department for all registered deaths. Additionally, next of kin also provide information on the date of death of an individual and this information is used appropriately in the administration of Departmental benefits.

Jessica Morden:

[98910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 25 September 2020 to Question 90093 on Personal Independence Payment, after how many days on average after making a claim for personal independence payment under Special Rules for Terminal Illness did the 1,740 claimants die who applied under those rules for personal independence payment but prior to her Department making a decision on their claim.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically.

Claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) are fast tracked. New claims to PIP under SRTI were being cleared in 4 working days on average (median) in April 2020 and reassessments from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP under SRTI were being cleared in 6 working days on average (median) in April 2020.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department. There is no evidence in this data to suggest someone's reason for claiming PIP was the cause of their death and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise. People claim PIP for various reasons, the majority of which are non-life threatening.

For the 1,740 claimants who died after registering a PIP claim under Special Rules **but** prior to a decision being made on their case between 1st April 2018 and 30th April 2020, the average (median) number of working days between registering a claim and death was 5 working days.

Notes:

Sources: PIP ADS, Customer Information System

- These figures include new claims and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP reassessment claims.
- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- This is unpublished data from the PIP computer system's (PIP CS) management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Figures include registrations made from 1st April 2018 – 30th April 2020 and clearances made up to 30th April 2020 (as recorded on the system at 30th April 2020) and claimant deaths from 1st April 2018 – 30th April 2020 (as recorded on the system at 2nd October 2020) and may be subject to retrospection.
- The latest PIP Official Statistics, including data to 31st July 2020, were published on 15th September 2020. We have provided figures here as at 30th April 2020 for consistency with the original answers to PQ 90093 and PQ 81700.
- The averages provided are median working days. The median is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases.
- Median working days are provided to allow comparison with the figure published for all PIP new claims made under SRTI.
- GB only.

Under the Social Security (Notification of Deaths) Regulations 2012 and s125 of Social Security Administration Act 1992 date of death is provided to the Department for all registered deaths. Additionally, next of kin also provide information on the date of death of an individual and this information is used appropriately in the administration of Departmental benefits.

Jessica Morden:[\[98912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 September 2020 to Question 90092 on Personal Independence Payment, with reference to the 30 claimants who subsequently registered a claim under the special rules for terminal illness, what the average length of time was between those claimants receiving an award under special rules for terminal illness and initially registering that claim under normal rules.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is claimed by people with a range of health conditions and disabilities, many of which are degenerative or life limiting and the Department treats the death of any claimant sympathetically. New Claims made under Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) are fast tracked and were being cleared in 4 working days on average in April 2020. This is compared to an average of 16 weeks for New Claims cleared under Normal Rules in April 2020, down by 62% from their peak of 42 weeks in July 2014.

The cause of death of claimants to PIP is not collated centrally by the Department. There is no evidence in this data to suggest someone's reason for claiming PIP was the cause of their death and it would be misleading to suggest otherwise. People claim PIP for various reasons, the majority of which are non-life threatening.

There were 30 PIP claimants who died within 6 months of registering an initial PIP claim who were disallowed under Normal Rules and who subsequently registered a PIP claim under Special Rules. Because of the small number of claims in this category we are unable to provide an average for the length of time between registration of the initial claim and the clearance of the subsequent claim. Calculating averages for small populations has a risk of misrepresentative results skewed by non-typical values. This is in line with our practice for PIP statistical publications, where averages for populations of less than 50 are suppressed.

Notes**Source:** PIP ADS

- PIP data includes both new claims and reassessment claims from Disability Living Allowance.
- The outcome is the first DWP decision recorded on the PIP Computer system (PIPACS) for a given claim. This does not take into account any mandatory reconsideration or Appeal action so some of these claimants may have subsequently been awarded PIP. Some cases do not have a decision recorded.
- If a claimant dies before a decision is made on an outstanding claim, the Department establishes whether the claimant's representative or next of kin wishes to proceed with the claim. If not, the claim is withdrawn.
- The latest PIP Official Statistics, including data to 31 st July 2020, were published on 15 th September 2020. We have provided figures here as at 30 th April 2020 for consistency with the original answer to PQ 90092 and PQ 81701.

- This is unpublished data from the PIP CS's management information. It should be used with caution and may be subject to future revision.
- Figures cover PIP claims registered from April 2018 – October 2019, initial decisions made from April 2018 – April 2020, and deaths from April 2018 up to 30th April 2020 as recorded at 2nd October 2020. Data may be subject to retrospection.
- GB Only.

Under the Social Security (Notification of Deaths) Regulations 2012 and s125 of Social Security Administration Act 1992 date of death is provided to the Department for all registered deaths. Additionally, next of kin also provide information on the date of death of an individual and this information is used appropriately in the administration of Departmental benefits.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[100923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department is providing to people classed as clinically extremely vulnerable and who are unable to safely visit job centres or other assessment locations.

Will Quince:

Jobcentre Work Coaches are trusted and empowered to engage with claimants by the best and most appropriate channel, giving careful consideration to a claimant's personal circumstances and needs, such as any health conditions, and the local situation to determine whether or not this should be by phone, digital or face-to-face.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department made a number of changes to health and disability benefits to safeguard the health of claimants and staff and to prioritise new claims and continuity of awards. The changes included the suspension of all face-to-face assessments and the introduction of telephone-based assessments where suitable, in addition to paper-based assessments (paper-based assessments were in place for some claims prior to the Covid-19 pandemic).

■ Universal Credit

Neil Coyle:

[\[99630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people are currently in receipt of an advance payment of universal credit.

Will Quince:

Advances are available to support those in immediate financial need until their first Universal Credit payment is made.

If an advance of benefit entitlement is taken, this means that a claimant can receive 13 payments over the course of a year instead of 12. As of October 2021 the period over which you have to repay an advance also doubles from 12 months to 24 months

The department published a set of supplementary management information on the number of Universal Credit Advances paid by the four advance types. It is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-declarations-claims-and-advances-management-information>.

Neil Coyle:

[99632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much is owed to her Department in total from people in receipt of advance payments of universal credit.

Will Quince:

Advances are available to support those in immediate financial need until their first Universal Credit payment is made. This means that claimants will receive 13 payments in 12 months.

There were nearly 3 million additional claims to Universal Credit made in the period to July 2020 and nearly 2 million people who have received an advance.

The total value of advances is currently £939,795,907.

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Claire Hanna:

[100554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 September 2020 to Question 89694, what steps she is taking to ensure that people who received support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will be able to have their eligibility for universal credit assessed promptly at the end of that scheme; and what assessment she has made of the effect of including those people's final CJRS payments in their eligibility assessment for universal credit on those people's financial security over Christmas 2020.

Mims Davies:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is a HMRC-led initiative providing a grant to help employers pay the wages of their employee. When the scheme ends, any employee who sees their income reduced may be eligible to apply for Universal Credit. The Department ensures all claimants are supported in both making and maintaining a claim. For those claimants who are particularly affected by any loss of income and need urgent support, new claims advances are available during the first assessment period to provide upfront support – meaning the claimant will receive their first year's entitlement over 13 payments instead of 12. Where a payment from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is used to fund earnings, the earnings of the employee will be taken into account in the calculation of entitlement to Universal Credit in the usual way. The intention being that payments to employees should mirror the way equivalent income is treated in Universal Credit.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Overseas Operations

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS507\]](#)

The Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill currently before this House will provide reassurance to Service personnel that we have taken steps to help protect them from the threat of repeated investigations and potential prosecution in connection with historical operations overseas many years after the events in question. However, we are also clear that there should be timely consideration of serious and credible allegations and, where appropriate, a swift and effective investigation followed by prosecution, if warranted. In the rare cases of real wrongdoing, the culprits should be swiftly and appropriately dealt with. In doing so, this will provide greater certainty to all parties that the justice system processes will deliver an appropriate outcome without undue delay.

I am therefore commissioning a review so that we can be sure that, for those complex and serious allegations of wrongdoing against UK forces which occur overseas on operations, we have the most up to date and future-proof framework, skills and processes in place and can make improvements where necessary. The review will be judge-led and forward looking and, whilst drawing on insights from the handling of allegations from recent operations, will not seek to reconsider past investigative or prosecutorial decisions or reopen historical cases. It will consider processes in the service police and Service Prosecuting Authority as well as considering the extent to which such investigations are hampered by potential barriers in the Armed Forces, for example, cultural issues or operational processes. A key part of the review will be its recommendations for any necessary improvements. It will seek to build upon and not reopen the recommendations of the Service Justice System Review by HH Shaun Lyons and Sir Jon Murphy. Work by the Department in response to the Service Justice System Review is continuing to be taken forward separately.

I expect the review will report to me in around nine months' time.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Announcement of Arts Funding as part of the Culture Recovery Fund

Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Caroline Dinenage):

[\[HCWS509\]](#)

I am pleased to inform the House that yesterday we announced 1385 cultural organisations will share over £257 million from the Culture Recovery Fund to help support arts and culture organisations through the coronavirus pandemic.

This represents the biggest award to date of the Culture Recovery Fund and means we have now provided over £360million to support cultural and heritage institutions across England.

This vital government funding is a vital boost for the theatres, music venues, museums and cultural organisations that form the soul of our nation. It will protect these special places, save jobs and help the culture sector's recovery.

These funds are supporting cultural beacons the length and breadth of the country - from the Beamish museum in County Durham to the Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Bristol Old Vic.

The Theatre by the Lake, in Keswick, for example will receive over £800,000 in support which recognises its importance as the biggest employer in the area, the devastating impact coronavirus has had on it and theatres more widely, and the importance of safeguarding this wonderful cultural institution for the future.

Or, to take another example, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield. This cherished organisation will receive £804,000 to help the park to adapt its buildings to new regulations and help it reopen safely. Yorkshire Sculpture Park shows work by British and international artists including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

This is good news not only for these organisations but for towns, cities and workers in these sectors across the country - it will help to protect jobs and ensure our beloved local arts venue can remain afloat and support culture in many communities.

On top of this investment the culture sector has benefited from the Job Retention Scheme, Self Employment Income Support Scheme, the bounce back loan scheme, a reduction in VAT from 20% to 5% for tourism and hospitality firms for six months.

I want to reaffirm that we recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading.

The Culture Recovery Fund will benefit freelancers, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances which will provide more opportunities for freelancers to be engaged again.

It will also help many put on cultural activity within this Financial Year which wouldn't have been possible without this funding.

Additionally, to complement this funding for organisations, this year, the Arts Council have made over £115m of funding available for individuals, including free-lancers, to apply to, including £18m for the Developing Your Creative Practice programme which will open for applications this Thursday.

Regarding next steps, we are working flat out to support these sectors and to get the remainder of the funding and support out to those who need it most as quickly as possible.

There will be further announcements about hundreds of millions of pounds of allocations in the coming weeks to support the UK's incredible culture, heritage, arts and creative industries.

The government is here for culture. Help is on its way with more to come in the days and weeks ahead so that the cultural sector - the soul of our nation - can bounce back strongly.

EDUCATION

■ **Adult skills and National Retraining Scheme update**

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills (Gillian Keegan): [\[HCWS506\]](#)

Today I wanted to update both Houses on further policy developments we are making as part of our efforts to help boost productivity, ensure that businesses can find and hire the skilled workers they need, and help people to fulfil their potential. The impact of the current situation and the longer-term challenges we are likely to face have underlined the ever-present need to support all adults in gaining new skills that employers value, whether to progress in work or to boost their job prospects.

Last month the Prime Minister visited Exeter College and set out an exciting vision to make lifelong learning a reality, announcing new opportunities to help more people to realise their talents, develop new skills and pursue their careers. With that broader vision in mind, wanting to reduce complexity in the adult skills landscape and recognising the need to work closely with a wide range of key stakeholders and experts, we are integrating the National Retraining Scheme into the National Skills Fund. The National Retraining Scheme will no longer continue as a separate programme but rather its work and learning will be rolled into the development of the National Skills Fund. This will be reflected in wider communications around the National Skills Fund and our broader offer for adult skills. It will include the conclusion of the trials of the Get Help to Retrain service, a digital platform that helped adults identify their existing skills as well as new training options.

The findings we have gathered by testing Get help to retrain have already provided useful insights for the National Careers Service. This will help inform the further development of the National Careers Service website for people considering a change to their career.

The understanding and insights we achieved through high levels of research and comprehensive user engagement whilst developing the National Retraining Scheme have also produced a strong foundation for developing the National Skills Fund and other adult skills reforms. As both Houses know, the National Skills Fund is a long term, substantial investment of £2.5bn (£3bn included devolved administrations) that will drive adult retraining and support our ambitious agenda for reform to Further Education.

Our engagement with employers on the National Retraining Scheme ensured we were better sighted on the skills they need their workers to have, as well as the need for a more flexible approach to the delivery of skills. Greater flexible provision was a clear need for both the employers and the individual. Both of these factors have been central to the design and delivery of the bootcamps announced in the Prime Minister's speech, which are a key element of the National Skills Fund offer.

The bootcamps will support local regions and employers to fill in-demand digital vacancies. The impact of the COVID crisis has shown that digital skills are in demand now more than ever, so these flexible initiatives will be instrumental in giving all adults the skills employers need. We are planning to expand the digital bootcamps to more of the country from Spring 2021 and we also want to extend this model to include other technical skills training.

The Prime Minister also announced, as part of his Lifetime Skills Guarantee, that for all adults who do not currently have an A Level equivalent, we will be fully funding their first full Level 3, focusing on the valuable courses that will help them get ahead in the labour market.

Through our development of the National Retraining Scheme we have also undertaken qualitative research into online training tailored for adults' needs. Our findings have shown that online training has the ability to deliver learning at a time and pace that would fit in with the busy lives that users have. It could also reach the more remote areas of the country where users might struggle to access provision at a time that works best for them. This has informed the development of The Skills Toolkit, which has recently expanded to provide access to even more high-quality, free courses, to help all adults gain the confidence and skills they need to move into new jobs, potentially in completely new sectors of the jobs market.

We remain firmly committed to working with industry, workers, and providers. That is why we plan to engage extensively with these groups right across the country through the upcoming consultation on the National Skills Fund.

Our strong evidence base, delivered through the National Retraining Scheme, is summarised in a Key Findings Paper that will be published today, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-retraining-scheme>). The paper sets out how the extensive learnings and evidence from the scheme will support our ambitious plans for levelling up across the country and help to ensure everyone can get the skills they need, at every stage of their life.

We will set out wider plans for adult skills later in the Autumn and we will update the Houses in due course. In the meantime, we will engage closely with stakeholders as we continue to develop detailed plans for the National Skills Fund, including considering what role the fund could play in meeting more immediate needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRANSPORT

■ Consultation on draft insurance and liabilities requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Rachel Maclean):
[\[HCWS505\]](#)

I am today publishing the consultation on the draft insurance, liabilities and charging requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018. This consultation seeks views

on the operability and effectiveness of the proposed liabilities, insurance and charging requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018, including the use of licence conditions to cover insurance requirements. It also seeks views on the draft Space Industry (Liabilities) Regulations and the associated guidance documents, as well as to gather new evidence and test the assumptions in the consultation-stage impact assessment.

The UK's space sector is a unique national asset, and this Government is committed to growing this exciting industry. Our regulatory framework for spaceflight will support safe and sustainable activities that will drive research, innovation and entrepreneurship in this vital sector, exploiting the unique environment of space, and providing a catalyst for growth across the space sector. Harnessing the opportunities provided by commercial spaceflight will also feed into our emerging National Space Strategy, the Government's agenda to level-up the UK, and Global Britain.

Government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global market to 10 per cent by 2030. To support this, our spaceflight programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch, sub-orbital spaceflight and space tourism from UK spaceports. To expand the UK's spaceflight capabilities, government is funding a range of industry-led projects. Separately, we are investing in related facilities and technology. This will provide industry with new commercial market opportunities, grow our export share and help to build new UK supply chains.

Liabilities and insurance requirements

An important element of the Space Industry Act 2018 concerns operators' liabilities arising from their spaceflight activity. Under UN space treaties, the UK Government is ultimately liable to pay compensation for damage caused by its space objects on the surface of the Earth or to aircraft in flight, and liable for damage due to its faults in space. This means that another state suffering damage can bring a claim against the UK Government under the UN space treaties. The Space Industry Act 2018 places an obligation on an operator carrying out spaceflight activities to indemnify the Government or listed person or body for any claims brought against them for loss or damage caused by those activities. It also includes liability provisions to provide the general public in the UK with easy recourse to compensation.

We recognise that this is an important issue for the UK space sector and understand that we need to create the right environment for the UK to be competitive and for our British companies to compete on the global stage. We have listened to the concerns industry has raised about liabilities and insurance and our consultation sets out approach to address those concerns, as well as other issues relating to insurance and liabilities. This follows a Call for Evidence on these matters published in March 2018.

We are proposing to limit operator liability and use the Modelled Insurance Requirement approach, which is considered to be critical to enabling launch and unlocking the benefits of spaceflight.

The insurance proposals and liabilities regulations are part of the package of regulations needed to implement the Space Industry Act 2018 and to allow for commercial

spaceflight launches to take place from the UK. They supplement the consultation which was launched on 29 July 2020 on the draft Space Industry Regulations, which covers the other secondary legislation and guidance needed to enable commercial spaceflight in the UK.

Together with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the UK Space Agency and Civil Aviation Authority we have legislated to allow for the regulation of a wide range of new commercial spaceflight technologies, including traditional vertically launched vehicles, air-launched vehicles and sub-orbital spaceplanes and balloons. It is our intention to merge the draft Liabilities and Space Industry Regulations once the consultations have concluded.

Next steps

The deadline for responses to the consultation is the 10 November.

Following which I will update the House and publish the Government's response to the consultation.

■ **HS2 6 monthly report to Parliament**

Minister of State for Transport (Andrew Stephenson):

[\[HCWS508\]](#)

High Speed Two: Update to Parliament, Autumn 2020

Overview

1. This Government has committed to provide an update to Parliament every six months on the progress of High Speed 2 (HS2), of which this is the first. This report covers data reported by HS2 Ltd to the end of August 2020. I have placed a copy of the report in the libraries of both houses.
2. After careful consideration of the independent Oakervee review and wider evidence, including the National Audit Office's (NAO's) progress update, the Prime Minister confirmed to Parliament in February 2020 that the Government would proceed with HS2. The Government intends HS2 to become the spine of the country's transport network, bringing our biggest cities closer together, boosting productivity and rebalancing the economy and opportunity for people across the country. It will also help meet our commitment to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 by providing a better alternative to regional air and road travel.
3. In taking this decision, the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport made clear the importance of a tighter grip by the Government on the delivery of the project and of the need for full transparency. That is why we have consulted the chairs of the Public Accounts Committee and Transport Select Committee in providing this report to Parliament and I intend for it to provide clear information about our progress.
4. In April, the Full Business Case for the first phase of the scheme between the West Midlands and London, 'HS2 Phase One', was approved with an increased budget and revised delivery into service date. This permitted HS2 Ltd's Main Works Civils Contractors to begin construction of Phase One. I was delighted to see the Prime Minister mark this significant milestone officially by visiting Birmingham Interchange a few weeks ago.

5. Authorising the Main Works signalled the Government's commitment to invest in our economic recovery in response to COVID. HS2 is central to our plans to build back better and will stimulate economic growth and rebalance opportunity across this country in the short, medium and long term.

6. HS2 Phase One is just the first step in levelling-up our great economic regions and better connecting the North, the Midlands and London. That is why we are progressing legislation to deliver Phase 2a to provide a high speed line from the West Midlands to Crewe, where trains will continue further north via the West Coast Main Line. The Phase 2a Bill is currently in the House of Lords. The Select Committee has finished hearing petitions and we await its report.

7. To deliver HS2 Phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail more effectively alongside other transport schemes, an integrated plan for rail in the North and the Midlands is being developed. This will be informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission, expected at the end of 2020. The Integrated Rail Plan will set out the form, scope and phasing of the Phase 2b route. It will also inform decisions on how to improve links to and from Scotland to strengthen the connectivity of the Union.

8. Achievements in this first reporting period include:

- Getting on with delivery by approving the Phase One Full Business Case and authorising the start of construction, supporting the industry and wider economy as part of the COVID response. Indeed, HS2 Ltd and its supply chain supports over 13,000 jobs, including over 400 apprenticeships. At peak construction, this will increase to 30,000 jobs.
- Getting a stronger grip on delivery to time and budget by establishing the Ministerial Task Force for Phases One and 2a, chaired by the Secretary of State for Transport, and attended by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government and myself. We have also strengthened the Board of HS2 Ltd by appointing three additional Non-Executive Directors.
- Putting the people and communities impacted by the scheme at the centre of our work by reviewing the land and property acquisition programme, the approach to compensation and, importantly, how HS2 Ltd supports and engages with people along the route. The review will be published shortly.
- Revisiting how best to deliver Euston Station as recommended in the Oakervee review, with the aim of providing an improved design and better delivery strategy. This includes revised governance providing closer collaboration between HS2 Ltd and Network Rail, through the new Euston Partnership Board chaired by Sir Peter Hendy.
- Developing the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands. This work focuses on reducing overall costs, identifying the correct schemes and sequencing to improve rail services and to determine how best to improve rail connectivity with

Scotland. A separate Ministerial Task Force is also overseeing preparation of the Integrated Rail Plan.

- Continuing the preparation of legislation for the Phase 2b Western Leg into Manchester, reflecting the findings in the Oakervee review that Phase 2b should be delivered in smaller sections with legislation brought forward as it is ready. This includes the Design Refinement Consultation launched on 7 October. The Integrated Rail Plan will set out the form, scope and phasing of the Phase 2b route, across the Western and Eastern Legs, and the Government will therefore consider responses to this consultation alongside the outcomes of the Integrated Rail Plan.
- Setting out our intent to establish enhanced reporting arrangements to demonstrate how HS2 Ltd is meeting the Government's environmental priorities.

Programme update on affordability, schedule and delivery Affordability

9. Earlier this year, the Government reset the funding regime for HS2, including a Target Cost and funding envelope for Phase One and revised estimates for the wider scheme. The total funding envelope for Phase One was set at £44.6bn (2019 prices) and the estimated cost for completing the full network was revised to a range of £72bn to £98bn.

10. For Phase One, including Euston, HS2 Ltd projects an outturn cost at £40.3bn (2019 prices) which is at the level of its Target Cost. This projection remains uncertain at this early stage in the project's lifecycle (as with all major infrastructure projects) and does not yet reflect the impact of COVID. HS2 Ltd is expected to provide its estimate of the COVID impact within the next six months. Any cost changes will be contained within the funding envelope using the contingency already assigned.

11. Of the £40.3bn, £9.6bn has been spent to date, a further £11.5bn is contracted, and £13.9bn is yet to be contracted and remains an HS2 Ltd estimate. The Target Cost also includes available HS2 Ltd delegated contingency of £5.3bn for managing the risk and uncertainty that are an inherent part of delivering major projects. HS2 Ltd is currently reporting cost pressures of £0.8bn. If not successfully remediated, these pressures will be drawn against the Company's delegated contingency. These pressures are driven by:

- Enabling works to prepare the line of route for construction. These have been underway since 2017 and in some areas have encountered more significant challenges than anticipated, such as the need to safely remove more asbestos than expected, resulting in increased scope and duration. These additional costs are likely to be in the order of £0.4bn according to HS2 Ltd.
- Euston Station, where further development of the baseline scheme has identified a significant cost pressure, which HS2 Ltd is currently reporting as in the order of £0.4bn. Further work is ongoing to validate these initial estimates and this could identify further pressure. As this remains at the design stage, work is underway to consider opportunities, efficiencies and scope reductions in order to redress these pressures and we will report further on this in the next report.

12. The total funding envelope for Phase One remains at £44.6bn (2019 prices). This includes further available contingency of £4.3bn over and above that delegated to HS2 Ltd, which is retained by the Department for Transport and Her Majesty's Treasury. I am determined to carefully scrutinise the use of contingency to ensure that it is sufficient to cover issues that may emerge later in the project and will provide updates to Parliament through these reports.

13. The overall Phase 2a cost is currently estimated as in the range of £5-7bn (2019 prices). This remains in line with the estimate set out at the time of the Prime Minister's announcement on 11 February and the NAO update of January 2020. Firmer ranges and a Target Cost will be confirmed, subject to the scheme being approved by Parliament and based on the scope and undertakings in the Act.

14. Updated cost estimates will be provided for the Phase 2b links to Manchester and Leeds once the Integrated Rail Plan is concluded. At this stage, ongoing design work suggests some further pressure on the most recent estimates but this depends in part on decisions on the route and sequencing, as well as decisions about the appropriate level of contingency to provide at this stage. We will provide further information as this work matures including as part of preparing legislation for the HS2 route from Crewe into Manchester.

Schedule

15. On Phase One, the Delivery into Service (DIS) range for initial services from Old Oak Common to Birmingham Curzon Street remains 2029 to 2033. HS2 Ltd continues to predict that it will provide services within this range but notes some pressures on the earliest date from COVID impacts and delayed handovers from Enabling Works, which it is seeking to mitigate. Schedule estimates will be more reliable once the Main Works are fully mobilised next summer and once the Rail Systems elements have been contracted.

16. The overall response to COVID by HS2 Ltd and its construction partners has been positive with the rapid implementation of safe working practices to protect the public and workers and the re-opening of the majority of sites after a safety review. However, some works have been delayed and at some sites COVID-safe practices have necessarily reduced productivity to a limited degree.

17. The range for initial opening of services from Euston remains 2031-2036, subject to further work on the study of design and delivery options.

18. Schedule ranges for Phases 2a and 2b will be established once their scopes are finalised.

Delivery progress

19. The Main Works Civils Contractors are currently taking possession of sites along the line of route on Phase One and mobilising their workforces and equipment, including the delivery of tunnel boring machines. Significant works are already underway at several sites.

20. The three other Phase One stations, Birmingham Curzon Street, Birmingham Interchange and Old Oak Common, have now received Schedule 17 planning consents.

Procurement is underway for the construction of Curzon Street and Interchange stations and design refinement is underway at Old Oak Common ahead of approving the start of construction.

21. The procurement of Rail Systems packages for track, catenary, power, control and communications systems has begun. Contracts for two packages, slab track and cross passage doors, have been awarded. The procurement of the Rolling Stock supplier continues and will be awarded in the summer of next year.

22. The timeline to achieve Royal Assent of the Phase 2a Bill by the end of the year is challenging, but remains feasible subject to Parliament's will.

23. As noted above, preparations are now underway for a hybrid Bill for the Western Leg of Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester). A consultation on design refinements to support future use of HS2 infrastructure as part of Northern Powerhouse Rail was launched on 7 October. At the same time a route wide update, decisions on changes previously consulted in 2019, and revised property safeguarding were published for the Western Leg.

Community and environmental impact

24. Since my appointment as Minister for HS2, I have sought to increase the focus on managing HS2's impact on communities along the line of route and on the natural environment.

25. Securing the land and property needed to construct the line of route across all Phases is vital to the programme's success and is often the first impact that we have on line of route communities. A range of statutory and non-statutory property compensation schemes are available that seek to compensate affected parties fairly while protecting the public purse.

26. Our policy is to provide fair compensation for those directly and indirectly impacted but the process and disputes for claims can inevitably be traumatic for some. I therefore commissioned a detailed review of the acquisition and compensation process to ensure that there is a renewed focus on those who are being impacted by the new railway. The report will be published shortly and we will move to consult where appropriate on the proposed reforms.

27. Some £3.6bn has now been spent acquiring land and property and in the order of 1,250 properties have been acquired to date across the three phases of HS2. The majority of this is from Phase One where £3.3bn has been spent to date.

28. I want to make sure that HS2 Ltd and its contractors are as sensitive as possible to the impact of construction on communities where impacts will unfortunately be unavoidable. HS2 Ltd needs to ensure that communities are properly informed and consulted and that the impacts are minimised to the extent that is reasonable. I intend to engage closely with Members of Parliament and the communities that they represent and ensure HS2 Ltd is meeting the terms of its planning consents.

29. I also intend to increase our efforts to limit the impact of HS2 on the natural environment and to ensure its construction and operation is as low carbon as possible.

30. In the coming months, HS2 Ltd will establish a new Environmental Sustainability Committee (as a sub-committee of the HS2 Ltd Board), led by its Chair, Allan Cook. This committee will be charged with strengthening Environmental Sustainability Reporting including the development and publication of an Environmental Sustainability Report. HS2 Ltd intends to publish the first report next year.

31. HS2 Ltd has been working with Natural England over the summer to enhance plans to support delivery of the route wide, 'No Net Loss to Biodiversity' target. Following Royal Assent of the Phase 2a Bill, HS2 Ltd will continue to explore opportunities to enhance its existing No Net Loss objective for that Phase of the programme. It will identify and implement appropriate opportunities, where it is reasonably practicable, to move towards net gains in biodiversity. This will be supported by a £2m biodiversity fund.

32. HS2 Ltd is also working in partnership with local communities to create new woodlands, diverse habitats and community green spaces beyond the construction boundary. Funding provided through the Phase One £40m Community and Environment Fund and the Business and Local Economy Fund has seen over 126 projects awarded funding of over £7.7m.

Forward look

33. For Phase One, the focus for the coming year will see the continued mobilisation of the Phase One construction programme and commencement of civil engineering and tunnelling activities alongside further contract awards for stations, rolling stock and systems. I will continue to focus on the control of schedule and cost whilst implementing the reforms on land and property acquisition, managing the impact of construction on local communities, and improving environmental performance and reporting.

34. Subject to Parliament's will, the Phase 2a Bill will continue through its final legislative stages to secure authority for construction of the route to Crewe and northern destinations via the West Coast Main Line.

35. We will continue to define the scope and scheme for Phase 2b as part of the work to conclude the Integrated Rail Plan and to prepare a hybrid Bill for the Western Leg from Crewe to Manchester.

36. I will continue to engage closely with Members of Parliament and will provide my next report to Parliament in April 2021.

Annex A: Period Financial Report [1]

	FORECAST COSTS			TOTAL	
	BY PHASE	PHASE	TARGET COST	ESTIMATED	CURRENT
				COSTS	FORECAST
				RANGE	
1	£40.3bn	£35-45bn	£40.3bn		
2a	Not set yet	£5-7bn	Not agreed		

	FORECAST COSTS			TOTAL	
	BY PHASE	PHASE	TARGET COST	ESTIMATED COSTS RANGE	CURRENT FORECAST
2b	Not set yet	£32-46bn[2]	Not agreed		
	HISTORIC AND FORECAST EXPENDITURE			2020/21 BUDGET	2020/21 FORECAST
	PHASE		SPEND TO DATE		
1		£9.6bn[3]	£3.79bn	£3.46bn	
2a		£0.4bn	£0.18bn	£0.16bn	
2b		£1.0bn	£0.25bn	£0.23bn	
Total		£11.0bn	£4.22bn	£3.85bn	

[1] All figures in 2019 prices and excluding VAT. Correct as of 31st August 2020.

[2] Validation of the Phase 2b cost range is ongoing and will be updated to support the bringing forward of separate legislation for the HS2 route into Manchester, in line with the conclusions of the Oakervee review. The range provided excludes scope intended to be funded by other sources such as Northern Powerhouse Rail.

[3] Spend to date includes a £1bn liability (provision) representing the Department's obligation to purchase land and property.