



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 14 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

#### ■ **Construction: Coronavirus**

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[101294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October to Question 99055 on Construction: Coronavirus, what steps he is taking to tackle shortages of building products in the construction industry.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Whilst the supply situation for most building products has steadily improved over time, the Government continues to work closely with the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force, which is monitoring the supply and demand of products.

#### ■ **Consumers: Prices**

**Yvonne Fovargue:**

[\[101273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the loyalty penalty in the (a) mobile, (b) broadband and (c) mortgage market.

**Paul Scully:**

In 2019, new rules for mobile phones were created by Ofcom which required companies to provide better upfront contract information on pricing for bundled handset and airtime services, and several companies voluntarily agreed to reduce bills for out-of-contract customers. In broadband, a number of major providers took steps to reduce the loyalty penalty, including capping prices. An updated review was published by Ofcom in July 2020.

Other telecoms interventions have been developed, including Ofcom's new rules which require communication providers to send a notification to their customers when they are nearing the end of their contract. The Government and Ofcom continue to work on 'Open Communications' as part of the Smart Data project to help consumers access information and switch providers accordingly, for which Ofcom published a consultation in July 2020.

The Financial Conduct Authority conducted a mortgage market study in 2019 which noted that they are working with lenders to make it easier for borrowers to switch, where that is possible and would be of benefit, in light of the 'loyalty penalty'. That work continues.

## ■ Electricity Generation

**Alec Shelbrooke:** [\[99591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to support innovative projects in the energy market to use smart meter readings to send signals to automatic voltage control devices in the primary electricity network to optimise the voltage for customers.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government welcomes innovations that can improve the quality of supply to consumers and demonstrate value for money, including the safe use of active control of voltage levels.

The Government offers support to companies seeking to bring innovative technologies to market which can help drive the transition to net zero emissions by 2050, through competitive innovation funding grants such as the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund competition. Innovation support schemes are also offered by InnovateUK and Ofgem.

## ■ Heating

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[99763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the outcome was of the meeting between officials of his Department and representatives of the Pump It Up campaign on 15 September 2020.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

BEIS Ministers and officials have regular meetings with industry as part of the process of policy development and delivery. This meeting enabled a discussion of the market for large heat pump projects in the context of the announcements made in the Budget and Summer Economic Update and the development of future policies to meet our commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out future actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings.

## ■ Licensed Premises: Coronavirus

**Jane Hunt:** [\[99773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of allowing licensed venues to undertake their own risk assessments to determine how many people their facilities can hold whilst adhering to social distancing rules to enable events to go ahead.

**Paul Scully:**

There is no change from the usual requirements of risk assessment. Employers have a duty to conduct a risk assessment in consultation with workers and unions where applicable.

All employers and self-employed people whose activities may pose a risk to the health and safety of other people should meet the objectives in the guidance to help keep people safe, but the actions they take will depend on the working environment, the size of their workforce and the site.

Businesses that have fewer than five workers do not need to record their risk assessment but still need to take all reasonably practical steps to reduce the risks of COVID-19.

As per guidance outside of new tiering local restrictions, people will still be able to meet in a group of larger than 6 for work purposes while maintaining social distancing.

Any meeting in a hotel venue, or similar, should also follow relevant guidance for the specific venue, including any relevant risk assessment and compliance with social distancing requirements.

## ■ **Manufacturing Industries: Environment Protection**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[99766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support job creation in green manufacturing industries in the North West.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The North West has excellent natural resources including offshore wind, tidal, geothermal and unconventional oil and gas. The area boasts an established energy sector supporting over 32,200 jobs and a £3.1 billion economic contribution. It is also the largest manufacturing region in the UK. The North West is therefore well placed to make a significant contribution to a green recovery and the UK's transition to a low carbon economy, creating new sources of competitive advantage in green manufacturing.

In July, the Government announced £40 million of funding to unlock thousands of green jobs, including in Cheshire and Lancashire, by developing the next generation of nuclear energy technology. The Government has also funded the North West Energy Hub to support the huge opportunities for the region in renewable energy and its manufacturing supply chains.

On 6<sup>th</sup> October, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out new plans to Build Back Greener by making the UK the world leader in clean wind energy – creating jobs, slashing carbon emissions, and boosting exports. £160 million will be made available to upgrade ports and infrastructure across the North of England to hugely increase our offshore wind capacity. This will enable the sector to support up to 60,000 jobs directly and indirectly by 2030 in ports, factories, and supply chains, thereby manufacturing the next generation of offshore wind turbines and delivering clean energy to the UK.

## ■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

**Mick Whitley:** [\[99740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of projected job losses in the automotive industry in the North West of England in financial year 2020-21 as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

We recognise the challenges facing the automotive industry as a result of Covid-19. Firms can draw upon our package of support, which is one of the most generous and comprehensive globally, with a fiscal response so far totalling £160 billion.

The Government has been working closely with key industry stakeholders throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, to understand how we can support the resilience and continued competitiveness of the UK's automotive manufacturing sector at this time.

At the same time, we are continuing our long-standing programme of investment in the automotive sector. To date, the Government has invested £497 million through the Advanced Propulsion Centre's innovation grants to develop the next generation of low carbon technologies, which have helped to secure or create over 40,000 jobs and have saved around 225 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Mick Whitley:** [\[99741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of potential job losses in the automotive industry in the event that the UK and EU fail to secure a trade agreement before the end of the transition period.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government remains committed to reaching an agreement with the EU. There are large areas of convergence and we will keep working to bridge the gaps.

The Government is continuing to engage extensively with business and industry about how to prepare for changes to trade at the end of the transition period. Many businesses have already begun preparing for life outside the Customs Union and we urge others to do the same. This includes getting an Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) number and making plans for completing customs declarations, where traders will need a customs agent or their own software.

## ■ Post Offices: Closures

**Marion Fellows:** [\[99652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Post Offices were temporarily closed in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) each region of England on (i) 31 August 2020 and (ii) 30 September 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent

business. As such, the number of temporary closures across the UK on the 31st August and 30th September are operational matters for Post Office Limited.

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[99653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Post Offices were temporarily closed in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) each region of England on (i) 31 August 2020 and (ii) 30 September 2020, by branch type.

**Paul Scully:**

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, the company has the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. As such, the number of temporary closures, by branch type, across the UK on the 31st August and 30th September are operational matters for Post Office Limited.

## ■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

**Alan Brown:**

[\[99655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of increasing the installation and servicing of offshore wind developments on demand for green vessels built in UK shipyards.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government recognises the importance of the UK maritime sector to our economy and to our future global trading ambitions. The National Shipbuilding Strategy, led by the Ministry of Defence, aims for the Government to work with shipbuilders and the supply chain to improve public procurement, increase trade, and drive innovation through diversification and the use of greener technologies.

The Government's Offshore Wind Sector Deal includes an aspiration to increase UK content to 60% by 2030. This includes increasing UK content in the capital expenditure phase, as well as developing a roadmap for how the 60% target will be delivered.

## ■ Solar Power

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[99540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate his Department has made of the average return on investment for lifetime of usage of solar thermal systems; and for what reasons those systems are included in the Green Homes Grant Scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The average return on investment for solar thermal systems will depend on a range of factors including whether the owner of the solar thermal installation is in receipt of grant funding (such as the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive) or not.

The measures in the scheme were chosen because they deliver: demand for the energy efficiency sector, creating and preserving jobs; lasting carbon emission savings that contribute to reaching net zero; energy efficiency installations which are high quality and represent good value for money; and create long-term growth in the energy efficiency supply chain.

#### ■ **Travel: Consumers**

**David Linden:** [\[99716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of the travel industry on protecting consumers' rights.

**Paul Scully:**

BEIS officials hold regular discussions with travel and tourism sector representatives, including ABTA, travel businesses and consumer advocacy bodies. Most recently this has been to assess the impact of cancellations made in light of the Covid-19 outbreak. The Government is committed to safeguarding consumers' rights and protections.

#### ■ **Wind Power and Solar Power: Scotland**

**Andrew Bowie:** [\[99704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) onshore wind, (b) offshore wind and (c) solar sites in Scotland which plan to bid in the contracts for difference auction round 4.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government considers a range of matters when setting the parameters for Contracts for Difference allocation rounds, including the anticipated pipeline of eligible projects. We will publish allocation round parameters in advance of the next auction in late 2021, when assessments of the potential volume of participants can be informed by the most current information on project pipelines.

#### ■ **Wind Power: Shipbuilding**

**Alan Brown:** [\[99657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on UK shipbuilding of the Government's plans to increase the production of offshore wind.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government recognises the importance of the UK maritime sector to our economy and to our future global trading ambitions. The MOD-led National Shipbuilding Strategy is seeking to work with shipbuilders and the supply chain to improve public procurement, increase trade and drive innovation.

The Government's Offshore Wind Sector Deal includes an aspiration to increase UK content to 60% by 2030 including increasing UK content in the capital expenditure phase and to develop a roadmap on how the 60% target will be delivered.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ **Blood: Contamination**

**Sara Britcliffe:**

[95249]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to have discussions with victims and families of the contaminated blood scandal on (a) compensation and (b) other matters.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

This Government remains committed to considering a framework for compensation, as well as actions to address disparities in financial and non-financial support for people infected and affected across the UK.

Cabinet Office officials are working with their colleagues in HM Treasury, the Department of Health and Social Care, and health departments in the devolved administrations to take this forward. I will update the House and the Inquiry, and those infected and affected as soon as these considerations have been concluded.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Cost Benefit Analysis**

**Philip Davies:**

[95611]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the cost-benefit analysis the Government has undertaken to inform its response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Government undertakes a wide range of analysis to support decision making and publishes information to keep Parliament and the wider public updated which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-statistics-and-analysis#social-impacts>.

There is no single cost-benefit analysis.

### ■ **Elections: Travellers**

**Cat Smith:**

[100441]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 94462, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of introducing mandatory voter ID on the ability of the Roma and Traveller community to vote.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[100442\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government not holding data on ethnic groups' possession of photographic ID on BAME voters in the event that the Government introduces voter ID.

**Chloe Smith:**

Further to my detailed answer of 1 October 2020, showing ID is something people of all backgrounds already do every day, for example to take out a library book, claim benefits or pick up a parcel from the post office. Proving who you are before you make a decision of huge importance at the ballot box should be no different. As I noted, ID is required already in many different areas of life, including by many constituency Labour parties.

The list of approved photographic ID will not be limited to passports and driving licences. For any voter who does not have one of the required forms of photographic ID, a local elector ID will be available, free of charge. Everyone who is eligible to vote will have the opportunity to do so.

The Government has taken due regard to the public sector equality duty throughout the process to date. We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders including charities and civil society organisations to make sure that such reforms are inclusive for all voters.

#### ■ **Ministerial Policy Advisers: Shares**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[96061\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what guidance he has issued on the ownership of shares by the Chief Scientific and Chief Medical Officers and others advising Government on science policy.

**Chloe Smith:**

As has been the case under successive administrations, the Civil Service Code and the Civil Service Management Code sets out relevant conduct standards.

#### ■ **Public Sector: Outdoor Advertising**

**Bob Blackman:**

[\[99593\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many outdoor advertising assets are held by the public sector in the UK; and what the value is of those assets.

**Julia Lopez:**

National and local channels, including TV, radio, digital and social media, and out of home advertising, are essential for the Government's communication with the public. We book large-scale outdoor advertising assets on a temporary basis from media owners, in line with campaign objectives and to maximise reach. These costs are regularly published as part of routine government transparency.

## ■ Small Businesses

**Rachel Reeves:**

[\[101272\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Government's commitment to spend £1 in every £3 with SMEs by 2022, what estimate he has made of the level of expenditure on public procurement with SMEs in the last two years.

**Julia Lopez:**

I refer the hon. Member to the [answer](#) given by my Rt. Hon. Friend Amanda Milling MP on 16 July 2020.

## ■ UK Trade with EU: Animal Products

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[98214\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) steps he is taking and (b) infrastructure is in place to protect the continuity of trade of products of animal origin and breeding stock after the end of the transition period; and what (a) steps are required and (b) infrastructure is yet to be implemented between the UK and EU in the event that no trade deal is agreed at the end of the transition period.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[98215\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to allocate financial and other support to industries affected by the imposition of tariffs in the event that the UK does not reach an agreement on future relations with the EU at the end of the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Further to the [statement by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 23 September](#), the Government is committed to helping business prepare for the end of the transition period. The Government has launched an information campaign to communicate the actions that all businesses need to take before 31 December 2020, and detailed guidance is available on [gov.uk/transition](http://gov.uk/transition).

The Government is negotiating with the EU and has been clear that we want a free trade deal, based on friendly cooperation. The Political Declaration sets as an aim a zero tariff and zero quota FTA. We would like to achieve that. Reducing the costs and processes associated with trade is in the interests of people and businesses across the UK and the EU.

As previously set out through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group (UKAMMG), Defra and the Devolved Administrations can monitor the market situation across various agricultural commodities.

## DEFENCE

■ **Afghanistan: Interpreters**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[101279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many locally employed civilian interpreters (a) began employment and (b) ended employment following (i) dismissal for disciplinary reasons, (ii) redundancy, (iii) expiry of their contract and (iv) another reason with the UK Government in Afghanistan in each month from October 2001 to December 2018.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The requested data is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

The data has been compiled by defence officials from a variety of sources, including pay records, Personnel files, patrol reporting and other archived records. Some data was destroyed in 2011 during a significant fire in the Camp Bastian Labour Support Unit which limits assurance. In particular there is a very small difference between the total recorded as commencing and of ceasing employment over the entire period.

**Attachments:**

1. Afghan Interpreters - Locally Employed Civilians [Copy of PQ101279 Afghan LEC.xlsx]

■ **Armed Forces: Pastoral Care**

**Virginia Crosbie:** [\[101326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to offer non-religious pastoral care to members of the Armed Forces.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes all aspects of the health and wellbeing of its personnel very seriously; we are working to create and sustain an environment where people feel able to be authentic in the workplace; where people feel respected and able to achieve their full potential.

All military Chaplains have long provided pastoral care to those of all faiths and none. Assurance work in this area consistently indicates that Service personnel have a high degree of satisfaction with this pastoral care – which is always non-invasive, professionally qualified and non-partisan. In addition, all Service personnel can access pastoral care from a variety of sources, including from within their Chain of Command, through the Services' professional social workers, medical staff, welfare staff and via the various staff networks.

In Defence we encourage and support a number of faith and belief staff networks to support and connect people with each other and help to create a better working environment for our staff. They also play an important role connecting Defence to local faith and belief communities, who often have a strong interest in our work. The Defence Humanist Network (DHN) is a thriving community, led by a strong champion, promoting Humanism consistently within Defence.

The DHN is committed to giving personnel with humanist beliefs the option to talk to someone with a similar view on life, should they need pastoral support. The DHN, working together with the MOD's Diversity and Inclusion team, have an active ongoing project which seeks to address the delivery of pastoral care to Defence personnel.

#### ■ **International Military Services: Business and Human Rights**

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[99689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of IMS Ltd's (a) implementation of the UN's Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and (b) potential areas of compliance risk since 1 April 2019.

**Jeremy Quin:**

IMS is expected to comply with all relevant legislation and with the principles set out in "Good Business", the update to the National Action Plan to implement the United Nations Guiding Principles and Business and Human Rights, which is available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522805/Good\\_Business\\_Implementing\\_the\\_UN\\_Guiding\\_Principles\\_on\\_Business\\_and\\_Human\\_Rights\\_updated\\_May\\_2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522805/Good_Business_Implementing_the_UN_Guiding_Principles_on_Business_and_Human_Rights_updated_May_2016.pdf)

#### ■ **Radioactive Waste: Dalgety Bay**

**Neale Hanvey:**

[\[101319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date his Department submitted an application to Scottish Environmental Protection Agency for the requisite licence to commence remediation works of the Dalgety Bay contaminated shoreline site for work scheduled to begin in summer 2020.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is not the authority responsible for applying for a licence to Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) to commence remediation works at Dalgety Bay, the responsibility lies with the MOD Prime Contractor to whom the Final Contract Award was made in February 2020.

The Prime Contractor is intending to submit an application to SEPA by the end of November 2020.

#### ■ **Weeton Barracks**

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[100945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress is being made on plans to redevelop Weeton Barracks into HQ North West by 2022 as part of the 2016 Strategic Defence Estate Review; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Menzies:** [\[100946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the timetable is for works to commence at Weeton Barracks as part of its transformation into HQ North West.

**Mark Menzies:** [\[100947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the date on which military personnel will move in to Weeton Barracks as part of HQ North West.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The move of HQ North West from Fulwood Barracks to Weeton Barracks forms part of the Defence Estate Optimisation Portfolio which will result in the disposal of Fulwood Barracks in 2027 - a delay in disposal which was announced in February 2019 in the House.

As part of Departmental assessment to enable this move, a capacity study and technical surveys have now been completed at Weeton Barracks to determine the development requirements and, subject to all required permissions, construction work is due to commence September 2023 to December 2024, assuming successful awarding of the contract.

On current plans therefore, HQ North West is scheduled to be re-located from Fulwood Barracks, Preston to Weeton in the summer of 2025.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Charities and Voluntary Organisations: Finance

**Owen Thompson:** [\[99668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what fiscal steps he is taking to support small community-level voluntary organisations and charities.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

There are generous measures available for the whole charity sector which include more than £1.3 billion a year in respect of Gift Aid on donations. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the government has made available a support package to all charities and businesses, including deferring their VAT bills, paying no business rates for their shops next year, and furloughing staff where possible.

In addition, the Government has made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. This will ensure charities and other civil society organisations, including those at risk of financial hardship, can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 outbreak. £60 million from this package has been distributed via the Barnett formula to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to support all types of charities on the frontline of the response.

## ■ Data Protection: Taxation

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[100434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the taxation system to disincentivise the collection of personal data by companies.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Government has not made an assessment of the use of taxation as a disincentive to the processing of personal data. The better use of data can help organisations of every kind succeed – across the public, private and third sectors. Data can be a driver of scientific and technological innovation, and central to the delivery of a whole range of vital public services and societal goals, from tackling climate change to supporting the National Health Service.

All organisations in the UK that process personal data, whether large or small, have to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The DPA and the GDPR strengthen the obligations on companies to process people's data fairly, lawfully and transparently and to keep it safe and secure. It also strengthens people's rights to seek to access, rectify or delete their data.

The legislation is regulated and enforced by the independent Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO has issued comprehensive guidance for organisations on how to comply with the legislation and works closely with specific sectors to address areas of risk.

The ICO has a range of corrective powers and sanctions to enforce the GDPR, including:

- issuing warnings and reprimands;
- imposing a temporary or permanent ban on data processing;
- ordering the rectification, restriction or erasure of data; and
- suspending data transfers to third countries.

## ■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[99778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the viability of jobs in the events industry.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[99781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the steps he is taking to support the events industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

My department continues to closely assess the impact on all aspects of the events industry, including employment. We are also in regular contact with Her Majesty's Treasury to closely assess the effectiveness of COVID-related support measures for the events industry.

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

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

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

**■ Football: Coronavirus**

**Tom Tugendhat:** [\[99654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to provide financial support to National League clubs.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Football clubs are the bedrock of our local communities and it is vital they are protected.

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

Government recognises the implications for sports clubs of not being able to admit spectators to stadia from 1 October, and are working urgently on what we can do now to support them.

**■ Musicians: British Nationals Abroad**

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[102059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support his Department plans to provide to UK musicians touring in the EU after the end of the transition period.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

The Government is continuing to engage with the creative sectors to ensure that freelancers, organisations and businesses know what they need to do to prepare for changes at the end of the transition period.

On 1st September 2020, the Government launched a comprehensive communications campaign to help the UK prepare for the end of the transition period. This includes guidance on customs and mobility procedures important to professionals in the live music industry, including freelance musicians and touring artists. My department will continue to engage with the music sector on the specific issues they may face.

**Paul Blomfield:**[\[102060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in EU countries on protecting and supporting UK musicians touring the EU after the end of the transition period.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

The Government recognises the importance of touring for UK musicians. We are seeking a reciprocal agreement with the EU that could allow UK citizens to undertake some business activities in the EU without a work permit, on a short-term basis. We are unable to comment on the detail of these arrangements as discussions are ongoing.

**■ National Archives****Dan Jarvis:**[\[101278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to make an assessment of the effect of access restrictions at the National Archives on (a) historians and (b) the general public.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

In line with Government guidance at the time, The National Archives was closed to the Public during the early stages of the COVID outbreak. I receive regular updates from The National Archives on the implementation of its reopening strategy, and current work to make its services safe for the public.

In order to be Covid-secure in line with scientific evidence, The National Archives has been forced to reduce the number of visitors to around 15% of usual capacity to allow for social distancing, and is implementing a 72-hour quarantine of accessed records. This inevitably impacts upon The National Archives' ability to deliver its services as it ordinarily would. As well as this in-person service, The National Archives has continued free access to digital records through its Digital Downloads service, which has supported the download of over 1 million records by around 80,000 users since April 2020.

The measures which are currently in place are subject to weekly review and The National Archives are also undertaking surveys of users to take feedback on its provision, the results of which are shared with myself.

I appreciate that this reduced provision will have a particular impact on intensive users such as historians as well as the general public, but I and the Archives are cognizant of the need to balance the desire for greater access to public records with the need to ensure the continuing safety of The National Archives' audiences. With this consideration in mind, I will continue to monitor the situation in collaboration with The National Archives.

### ■ Operation Sleeping Beauty Fund

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[101266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of Operation Sleeping Beauty funding he plans to allocate to productions in (a) London, (b) regions outside London and (c) the East Midlands.

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[101267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the criteria are for applications to the Operation Sleeping Beauty fund.

**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[101268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether not-for-profit productions are eligible to apply for the Operation Sleeping Beauty fund.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Operation Sleeping Beauty aims to bring some theatre and Panto back by Christmas and support local theatres whilst they face a very challenging backdrop. As part of this, the National Lottery has teamed up with Qdos Entertainment for a promotional event and provided £6m of funding to support a number of panto productions to get up and running this winter across the country. This promotional activity is in addition to the ongoing support the National Lottery provides to good causes through the National Lottery Distribution Fund. Approval of National Lottery promotional spend is a matter for the Gambling Commission. DCMS does not hold a decision making role in the allocation of the funds.

We welcome this announcement from the National Lottery, who have found innovative ways to support sectors that have been hit hardest by Covid.

The National Lottery funding is in addition to the £1.57billion support the Government is already providing the arts through the Cultural Recovery Fund.

### ■ Political Parties: Data Protection

**Jack Brereton:** [\[100522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to page 54 of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) report of 6 November 2018 entitled

Investigation into the use of data analytics in political campaigns, what the status is of the ICO's investigation into the (a) Liberal Democrats' sale of electoral data to Open Britain and (b) use of personal data by the Remain side of the EU referendum campaign.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The ICO took advice from the Electoral Commission on the matter of the Liberal Democrats. As a result this case was referred to the Metropolitan Police on 26 October 2018 as the issues fell outside the jurisdiction of the ICO. The Metropolitan Police later confirmed that they were unable to consider the matter any further.

The ICO's wider investigations of several organisations on both the remain and the leave side of the UK's referendum about membership of the EU has now concluded. The ICO identified no significant breaches of the privacy and electronic marketing regulations and data protection legislation that met the threshold for formal regulatory action. Where an organisation has continued in operation, the ICO has provided advice and guidance to support better future compliance with the rules.

The ICO will shortly publish a report of audits on the main political parties.

■ **Sports: Coronavirus**

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[99770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support (a) professional and (b) amateur sport during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

We have also supported elite sports to return to "behind closed doors" competition, which enabled vital broadcast revenue, retained competitive integrity and brought joy to millions of sports fans. The government also ensured Project Restart was shared with everyone by getting Premier League football on the BBC for the first time ever.

The government recognises the implications for sports clubs of not being able to admit spectators to stadia from 1 October, and are working urgently on what we can do now to support them. The Department will continue to work with colleagues across Whitehall to support the sector.

■ **Sports: Television**

**Julie Elliott:**

[\[101009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of sporting events that must be available on free-to-air television under the Broadcasting Act 1996; and if he will publish an update on the Government's consultation announced in 2019 on listed sporting events.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The listed events regime strikes a balance between retaining free-to-air sporting events for the public while allowing rights holders to negotiate agreements in the best interests of their sport.

The government recognises that more can be done to improve the diversity of the listed events regime and to support the broadcasting of disability and women's sport.

This is why we have added the Paralympic Games to the list, recognising that it is an event of 'special national significance' on par with the Olympic Games. We have also consulted on the addition of the women's equivalent of men's events already on the list and we will respond to this consultation in due course.

**■ Television Licences: Concessions****Jamie Stone:****[100515]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of people over 75 who are registered blind and qualify for the 50 per cent discount of the television licence.

**Jamie Stone:****[100516]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of people over 75 who claim the 50 per cent discount of the television licence.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The BBC is responsible for the collection and enforcement of the licence fee and all of its concessions. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport therefore does not hold information on the number of people who claim, or are eligible for, the blind (severely sight impaired) TV licence concession.

Local authorities hold the register of those who are registered blind or severely sight impaired, and NHS Digital published a report in 2017 on the numbers of people registered. This report can be found here: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/registered-blind-and-partially-sighted-people/registered-blind-and-partially-sighted-people-england-2016-17>.

The Government is deeply disappointed in the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75s licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. The BBC must ensure that it supports those affected by its decision and must look at how it can use its substantial licence fee income to support older people and deliver for UK audiences of all ages.

**■ UK Trade with EU: Data Protection****Rachel Reeves:****[100972]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of relaxing (a) General Data Protection Regulations and

(b) UK data protection rules on securing a free trade agreement with the EU before the end of the transition period.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

During the transition period (until 31 December) there is no change to the current data protection regime, and the GDPR will continue to apply.

At the end of the transition period, the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EUWA) will retain the GDPR in UK domestic law, while the legislation implementing the Law Enforcement Directive (LED) (Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018) will also be preserved.

We have made Regulations under the EUWA to make necessary and appropriate changes to the retained legislation so that the UK's data protection law continues to function effectively after the transition period. In order for the free flow of data from the EEA to the UK to continue at the end of the transition period, we are seeking adequacy decisions from the EU under both the GDPR and the LED.

As with all policy areas, the UK will control our own data protection laws and regulations in line with our interests, after the end of the transition period. We want our data protection law to remain fit for purpose and to support the future objectives of the UK. The UK intends to operate a high-quality regime that promotes growth and innovation, and underpins the trustworthy use of data as the global economy becomes increasingly digitised and data-enabled.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children: Coronavirus

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[100922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support clinically extremely vulnerable children who cannot attend school; and what support is available to the children of clinically extremely vulnerable people to enable safe and effective learning out of classrooms.

**Vicky Ford:**

This government will always prioritise the health and welfare of staff and pupils.

Being in nursery, school and college is vital for children and young people's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of nursery, school and college is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development.

Current evidence suggests schools are not high-risk settings when compared to other workplace environments. The risk to children of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 is very low and there are negative health impacts being out of school.

We are clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools. That is why the Department for Education published guidance, endorsed by Public Health England, which provides a framework for

schools to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff. The guidance also ensures that all pupils receive a high-quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. If schools follow this guidance, they will effectively reduce risks in their school and create an inherently safer environment for pupils, families and staff. The guidance for the full opening of schools available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The national shielding programme for all adults and children was paused on 1 August 2020 (except areas in local lockdown). Clinically extremely vulnerable children should attend education settings in line with the wider guidance on the reopening of schools and guidance for full opening, including special schools and other specialist settings. Children who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can attend school. If parents or carers of learners remain concerned, we recommend schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting into place. The guidance for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Our guidance has a dedicated section on remote education support which outlines our expectations, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#res>.

Pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional are likely to discuss their care with their health professional at their next planned clinical appointment. Further advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is available here: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-talking-children-families-about-returning-school-guiding-principles>.

For disadvantaged children who are unable to attend school on clinical or public health advice and do not have access to a suitable device or the internet, their school can request support through the 'Get help with technology' service. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-laptops-and-tablets-for-children-who-cannot-attend-school-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Keeping children safe online is essential. The statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' provides schools and colleges with information on what they should be doing to protect their pupils online. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>.

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

**[101281]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have experienced a parental death due to covid-19.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government does not collect information from schools or local authorities on the number of primary and secondary school pupils who have suffered a family bereavement since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. There are no official estimates of the number of children who are affected by family bereavement, neither usually nor since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

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

We have worked hard to ensure that all pupils and learners were able to return to a full high-quality education programme in September. Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package, with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020-21 academic year, is supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place.

Staff need to be equipped to understand that some pupils may have experienced bereavement. Our guidance for the full opening of schools signposts to further support and resources, and is available here:

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

This includes the MindEd website which has specific material on bereavement and dealing with death and loss, and their website is available here:

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

This is in addition to the department's remote learning guidance and the National Children's Bureau's (NCB) self-review tool, 'Preparing for recovery: Self-review and signposting tool', which signposts online support from the Childhood Bereavement Network and Child Bereavement UK. More details on the NCB's self-review tool is available here: <https://www.ncb.org.uk/resources-publications/mental-health-and-wellbeing-primary-schools-preparing-recovery>.

The website for the Childhood Bereavement Network is available here:

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>.

The website for Child Bereavement UK is available here:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>.

These materials were supported by webinars over the summer which reached thousands of school and college staff.

We are also investing £8 million in the Wellbeing for Education Return Programme. This will provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and practical skills they need to support teachers, students and parents, to improve how they respond to the emotional impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The programme is funding expert advisers in every area of England to train and support schools and colleges during the autumn and spring terms. The training includes specific examples of supporting bereaved children.

School and college staff are not mental health professionals, and it is important that more specialist support is available for children and their families. All NHS mental health trusts have ensured that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. We have also provided £9.2 million of additional funding for mental health charities, including charities such as Young Minds, to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

In addition, Public Health England and Health Education England have developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This includes a specific section on dealing with grief and bereavement. The resources are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

#### ■ Further Education: Coronavirus

**Andrew Lewer:**

**[100538]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will (a) amend the delivery of the Study Programme for 16-18 year olds attending further education colleges to allow for catch-up learning rather than industrial placements and work experience as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and (b) take steps to ensure that colleges that are unable to offer full content but able to deliver the required hours under that programme do not have their funding reduced.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Industry placements and work experience for 16 to 18 year olds are important components of a student's study programme, providing genuine insight to the world of work and allowing students to gain valuable skills. Ofqual is currently working with awarding organisations to see what adaptations are appropriate and necessary for students to be able to complete their studies, as well as catch up on missed learning due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Adaptations to work experience placements that are part of their qualifications will also be considered.

Where a college or other provider is unable to deliver a work experience placement as part of a study programme they will still receive their full funding allocation if they continue to deliver the planned hours by replacing the work experience with other eligible activity relevant to the student's study programme.

## ■ GCSE

**Caroline Nokes:**

[\[99602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to (a) plan and (b) prepare for arrangements for year-11 exams at the end of the 2020-21 academic year.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has been clear on its top priority to keep schools open throughout the COVID-19 outbreak and ensure all pupils get a high quality education. On Monday 12 October, we announced that assessment by examination will be part of a normalised year for these cohorts because we believe examinations are the fairest form of assessment. The examinations will start on 7 June and end on 2 July for almost all AS/A levels and GCSEs. This is three weeks later than the usual start dates from previous years. The delay and the changes to the content of assessments for certain subjects, will give pupils extra time to study, without causing unnecessary disruption to the usual timetable of the academic year.

My right hon. Friend, The Secretary of State for Education has also asked Ofqual to work with the Department to develop and assess a range of contingency measures for potential disruption to 2021 examinations, engaging widely with schools and colleges, exams boards, unions and students as well as the further and higher education sectors. This is to ensure we plan for all foreseeable scenarios to safeguard students' ability to sit exams and achieve qualifications which allow them to progress to the next stage of their education or employment. We expect to share details of these contingency plans later in the autumn.

## ■ Higher Education: Mature Students

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[99755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the accessibility of higher education for part-time mature students.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Many mature students need to study flexibly and we have taken a number of steps over recent years to encourage more flexible learning. These include greater support for part-time learners through maintenance support, and removing restrictions which had prevented students getting loan funding for part-time science, technology, mathematics and engineering undergraduate degrees if they were equivalent or lower qualifications.

The number of part-time students undertaking full undergraduate degrees has increased in recent years, but the numbers of part-time students overall (including those taking shorter courses) has declined. Therefore, we need to take much more radical steps to support lifelong learning. This is why my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced that we will introduce a flexible lifelong loan entitlement to 4 years of post-18 education, providing incentives for people to build the skills the economy needs. This will provide finance for shorter-term studies, rather than people

having to study in 1, 3 or 4-year blocks. People will be able to break up their study into segments, transfer credits between colleges and universities, and take on more part-time study.

As the economy recovers from the COVID-19 outbreak, it will be even more important that individuals have opportunities to develop their skills over the course of their lifetimes. We will be consulting on the introduction of a lifelong loan entitlement in due course. This will set out proposals for how and when we will be introducing it. Where necessary, we will bring forward legislation in this Parliament.

## ■ Schools: Agency Workers

**Daisy Cooper:**

[99743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage schools to financially support their directly employed supply staff through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or Job Support Scheme.

**Nick Gibb:**

State funded schools continued to receive their budgets last academic year, as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. This ensured that they were able to continue to pay their staff and meet their other regular financial commitments. During the period of full or partial school closures, the Department's guidance advised schools to continue to pay any directly hired staff, including supply staff, as normal.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme guidance outlines that organisations with staff costs that are publicly funded, including schools, should use that money to continue to pay staff, and not furlough their staff. This guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

HMRC's Job Support Scheme will open on 1 November 2020 and run for 6 months, until April 2021. Further guidance will be published shortly and will be available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/job-support-scheme>.

In September, schools fully reopened for all pupils and the Department anticipates that the demand for supply teachers will return to normal in this academic year.

A broad range of specific COVID-19 financial support for all educational settings including early years, schools, further education colleges and universities is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>.

## ■ Students: Fees and Charges

**Daisy Cooper:**

[99742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on college students in cases where the uplift in universal credit has resulted in them

being ineligible for a fee waiver as per the threshold set out in the Adult Education Budget.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are aware of the changes to the Universal Credit thresholds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, in October 2020, we will be updating the criteria by which learners benefit from full funding in the Education and Skills Funding Agency's adult education budget funding rules 2020 to 2021 to reflect this.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ **Animal Welfare: Sentencing**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[98934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 14 February 2019 to Question 218781 on Animal welfare sentencing and recognition of sentience, what his timetable is for the introduction of legislative requirements relating to animal sentience and to increasing the maximum penalties for animal cruelty; what the outcome was of engagement with stakeholders to further refine the Government's proposals on animal sentience; and if he will make a statement.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government is committed to further strengthening our world-leading animal welfare standards and fully supports increasing the maximum custodial sentences for animal cruelty offences from six months to five years. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Chris Loder MP on 5 February. Second Reading is due on 23 October. The Government will continue to support it as it makes its way through Parliament.

We have committed to bringing in new laws on animal sentience. Any necessary changes required to domestic legislation will be made in an effective and credible way and will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows. In the meantime, Defra is continuing to engage closely with stakeholders to further refine the Government's proposals on animal sentience.

### ■ **Food: Sugar**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[101249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will hold discussions with Public Health England on the voluntary target of a 20 per cent reduction in the sugar content of foods on sale to the public.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Public Health England (PHE) oversees the voluntary sugar reduction programme on behalf of the Government, as set out in all parts of the childhood obesity plan. PHE is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the

Government department responsible for nutrition policy and the Government's obesity strategy.

PHE published the third progress report for the sugar reduction programme on 7 October 2020. This showed a 3.0% reduction in overall average sugar per 100g for retailers and manufacturer branded food products. Larger reductions were seen in some categories, but increased sales of higher sugar categories reduced the impact of these reductions. The eating out of home sector saw hardly any change in average sugar levels. The 2021 progress report will provide a fourth assessment towards the 20% reduction ambition.

DHSC will hold discussions with PHE on the sugar reduction programme and the voluntary ambition. Defra will work with other Government departments and agencies including PHE to respond to recommendations in Part Two of the forthcoming National Food Strategy relating to healthy eating.

## ■ Rivers: Pollution

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[99759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's budget is for tackling river pollution; and on what his Department plans to spend that budget.

**Rebecca Pow:**

A number of funded programmes across Defra deliver multiple environmental benefits. For example, from the start of 2014/15 to the end of 2021/22, we will have spent around £3bn on agri-environment schemes under the Rural Development Programme for England. These schemes help farmers deliver multiple and joint benefits for water, air, biodiversity, flood prevention and more. While some of this is directly targeted at water quality, the wider spend has broader, cross cutting benefits some of which will help to improve water quality, which cannot be simply disaggregated. There, is therefore, no single budgetary figure that can capture all the work done across the Department to tackle river and water pollution.

Of programmes specifically aimed at water management the Water Environment Improvement Fund, with a resources budget of £6.5 million and a capital fund of £10 million in 2020/21, supports local catchment schemes tackling river and other water pollution. A resource budget of £2.86 million and capital budget of £4 million is available for the Water and Abandoned Metal Mines scheme, which funds measures to prevent water from disused mines, polluted with harmful metals such as lead and zinc, entering surface and groundwater.

Tackling river and other water pollution is supported by considerable water company investment in environmental improvements, under their statutory obligations. In the Price Review period 2020-25, investment has been scaled up to £4.6 billion.

## ■ Zoo Animals Fund

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[98766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the £100m allocated for zoos and aquariums in response to covid-19 outbreak, whether he plans to (a) ringfence the remainder of that funding or (b) reform the eligibility criteria to ensure that funding supports its intended purpose.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The objective of the Zoo Animals Fund is to provide for operators who, due to a coronavirus-related drop in income are experiencing severe financial difficulties and need support in caring for their animal collections between now and the start of the next season. The eligibility criteria have been set to ensure the funding reaches those zoos in most need. ZAF grant payments to zoos begin when they reach their final 12 weeks of financial reserves. Zoos can though, apply at any time before reaching this 12 week point to help with their business planning. If zoos are downsizing or rehoming their collection the fund can also provide support for this to ensure the animals' welfare. We are monitoring uptake of the Zoo Animals Fund and remain in discussion with zoos about how the scheme is working. The Zoo Animals Fund applies in relation to financial difficulties arising until the end of 2020/21, after which the new zoos peak visitor season starts and viable zoos should be able to cover their costs.

## ■ Zoos Support Fund

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[101027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to extend the support scheme for zoos to all zoos facing financial difficulties.

**Victoria Prentis:**

On 3 August we announced the Zoo Animals Fund. This fund is an envelope of up to £100 million for England's zoos and aquariums and builds upon the previous Zoos Support Fund which operated until the end of July. The current Zoo Animals Fund already provides financial support to all zoos facing financial difficulties. The eligibility criteria for the current fund were extended beyond those of the initial fund. In particular, grant payments to zoos now begin when zoos reach their final 12 weeks of financial reserves, rather than 6 weeks. Zoos can now also apply for funding at any time before reaching this 12 week point to help with their business planning. This fund is there to help all zoos who due to a coronavirus-related drop in income are experiencing financial difficulties and therefore need support in caring for their animals. If zoos are downsizing or rehoming their collection the fund can also provide support for this to ensure the animals' welfare. Due to the Coronavirus State Aid Temporary Framework any support from this fund has to be committed by 31 December 2020, and the deadline for applications is 16th November. Grants which are awarded this year will be able to cover the financial difficulties zoos are facing up to 31 March 2021.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ **British Nationals Abroad: Torture**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[99686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his legal safeguarding obligations are in cases of the (a) torture and (b) suspected torture of British citizens imprisoned overseas.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO is not a statutory safeguarding body. However, in accordance with our guide on 'Support for British nationals abroad', we take all allegations or concerns of torture or mistreatment very seriously and follow up with action appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

■ **EU External Trade: Falkland Islands**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[100305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to protect the Falkland Islands' tariff-free access to the EU single market.

**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: Reorganisation**

**Neil Coyle:** [\[99634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which NGOs (a) were consulted in advance of and (b) supported the merger of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

**James Duddridge:**

We engaged with 26 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) including BOND, who in turn represent over 400 organisations, in round-table discussions with ministers to discuss the merger of the FCO and DfID and hear views. We have also engaged with organisations such as Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee and Amnesty International.

Engagement has also been carried out with key figures in several international organisations - Including Tedros Adhanom, Director General of the WHO, David Malpass, President of the World Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNHCR. We will continue ongoing engagement with UK and international CSOs, including on issues relating to the merger.

## ■ Gender: Equality

**Layla Moran:**

[\[101309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 97015, whether his Department plans to appoint a new Special Envoy for Gender Equality (a) before the end of 2020 and (b) within the next 12 months.

**Wendy Morton:**

As I stated in my answer on 8 October, gender equality is a core part of the FCDO's work as a force for good in the world. Promoting gender equality and advancing women and girls' rights on the international stage remains a priority for the UK Government including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education. The Prime Minister appointed Baroness Sugg as the UK Special Envoy for Girls' Education in March 2020. The UK Government continues to build on our Strategic Vision for Gender Equality alongside our National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security.

## ■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review: Scotland

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[101316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he (a) has had and (b) plans to have with the Scottish Government prior to the publication of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

**James Cleverly:**

Senior Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Cabinet Office officials have held discussions with the Devolved Administrations since the start of the Integrated Review. Most recently, at Ministerial level, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, as lead Minister for engagement with Devolved Administrations on the Integrated Review, met with the Scottish Minister for Justice Humza Yousaf, alongside colleagues from the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, to discuss the Review.

## ■ Iran: Official Visits

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[99695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the Government has next invited FM Zarif or President Rouhani to visit the UK.

**James Cleverly:**

We do not comment on future Ministerial engagement or travel. The Foreign Secretary and his officials take every opportunity to discuss with Iran a wide range of issues, including nuclear non-compliance, regional stability and security, the release of our dual-nationals and Iranian human rights violations.

**■ Jayder Quintana****Dan Carden:**[\[101308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on the reported killing of 18-year-old activist Jayder Quintana in Cauca, southwest Colombia.

**Wendy Morton:**

As we emphasised in the UN Security Council session on 14 July following the Special Representative's report, and will raise again in the Security Council on 14 October, the UK continues to be very concerned about the persistent level of violence towards human rights defenders, social leaders, former FARC-EP combatants, and others. We regularly raise these issues with the Colombian Government and in multilateral fora, and will continue to do so, including during Lord Ahmad's human rights-focused virtual visit to Colombia this week.

We have urged the Colombian Government to prioritise the tackling of this violence, and continue to work to improve security conditions around the country. The UK is also committed to continuing its own programming to support the government's efforts, and mitigate risks to communities.

**■ Overseas Aid: Disclosure of Information****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[101298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is taking to steps to prevent Government departments from spending UK aid that do not achieve a (a) good or (b) very good at the next assessment by the Aid Transparency Index.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is globally recognised for its expertise and transparency in aid spending and continues to be committed to improving transparency of aid globally and maintaining our own high standards for overseas spending. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will use this expert knowledge to work with aid spending Government departments to improve their aid transparency.

As with all public expenditure, HM Treasury allocates ODA funding to departments at each spending review. FCDO then provides support to these government departments through the HMG Transparency Community of Practice. This group has been used to champion aid transparency and has supported the majority of government departments to publish to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard. The assessment of 10 UK aid spending departments (Aid Transparency Review) which was published in 2020 provided a set of recommendations for future improvement which FCDO is helping them implement.

## ■ Saudi Arabia: Human Rights

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[100388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia.

**James Cleverly:**

Our close relationship with Saudi Arabia allows us to raise our concerns about human rights, including on human rights defenders, in private and in public. We have expressed significant concerns about reports of continuing arrests and arbitrary detentions of human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia, including women's rights activists. We have also expressed concern over lack of legal representation for the women's rights defenders, the use of solitary confinement, and pressed for due process. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September noting our concerns in Saudi Arabia and calling for the release of all political detainees. We continue to raise concerns at all levels and we are monitoring the ongoing situation closely.

## ■ USA: Police

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[101012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his US counterpart on the use of excessive force by US law enforcement agencies on people protesting the killing of black people by the US police.

**Wendy Morton:**

We've been clear that people must be allowed to protest peacefully. Our Embassy in the US has raised the issue of the protests with the US Administration and have explained the very strong interest in this issue among the British public. However, domestic security policy is ultimately a matter for the US.

## ■ Yemen: Military Intervention

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[99581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the conclusion of the September 2020 report of the UN Group of Eminent Experts alleging that Saudi-led coalition airstrikes in Yemen violate international humanitarian law.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK supports the UN Group of Eminent Experts (GEE), which is an important mechanism for ensuring accountability and supporting the promotion and protection of human rights in Yemen. The UK is deeply concerned by the allegations in the GEE's latest report. The UK calls on all the parties to the conflict to engage constructively with the GEE, investigate these allegations, protect human rights and comply with their obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Clinical Commissioning Groups**

**Sir Desmond Swayne:** [\[98143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will pause the mergers of clinical commissioning groups until the covid-19 outbreak has abated.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 6 October 2020]:* NHS England has been clear that, to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) need to streamline their commissioning arrangements. In many places, this means encouraging CCGs to merge, so they better align with integrated care systems.

We recognise that COVID-19 is adding pressure to the system – however, allowing CCGs to merge will produce a stronger commissioning voice, better able to support the National Health Service to respond to COVID-19, as well as supporting transformation and the delivery of the Long Term Plan.

**■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

**Sarah Owen:** [\[92901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the covid-19 contact-tracing app due to be launched on 24 September 2020 will have full functionality to (a) trace and (b) contact people who have been in close contact with people who have had a positive covid-19 test.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* The NHS COVID-19 App will have functionality to trace and contact people who have been in close contact with a confirmed coronavirus case.

England's NHS Test and Trace programme has worked extensively with tech companies, international partners, scientists, privacy and medical experts and at-risk communities – and learned from the trials – to develop an app that is secure, simple to use and will help keep our country safe.

**Sarah Owen:** [\[96197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many downloads there have been of the NHS covid-19 app to date.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* As of 10am on 29 September, there had been over 13 million downloads of the NHS COVID-19 app.

**Layla Moran:** [\[97017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide access to the NHS COVID-19 app for people with phones that are unable to use the current software.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* We have always known that some people's phones would not be able to support the app. This is the same in all countries with apps using the Google and Apple exposure notification API for contact tracing. However, the app works on the vast majority of handsets – approximately nine out of 10 in the United Kingdom and this proportion will increase as people upgrade their handsets. We recognise that not everyone has a smartphone or is in a position to upgrade they handset. The NHS COVID-19 app is only one part of the wider NHS Test and Trace system and for those who cannot use the app, advice is available via NHS 119 and the phone-based contact tracing system.

**■ Coronavirus Self-isolation Payment Scheme****Dan Jarvis:**[\[91760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure applicants to the Government's covid-19 self-isolating payment scheme who are unable to provide the required evidence due to testing delays receive payment.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 23 September 2020]:* Anyone who meets the eligibility criteria and is asked to self-isolate on or after 28 September will be entitled to the Test and Trace Support Payment, even if their local authority has not yet established the scheme.

Individuals will be able to apply to receive payment within two weeks of their period of self-isolation ending, for the duration of the scheme. Where necessary, payments will be backdated from 28 September 2020.

**■ Coronavirus Self-isolation Payment Scheme: Immigrants****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[92861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people with no recourse to public funds will be eligible for the Government's recently announced covid-19 self-isolation payment.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme came into effect on 28 September and will run until 31 January 2021. To be eligible for the Support Payment an individual must be currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

For individuals that do not qualify for the Test and Trace Support Payment but require corresponding financial support to self-isolate, there will be a discretionary fund in place. Further guidance on this will be shared with local authorities shortly.

## ■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[96043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) commission and (b) resource local authorities to conduct covid -19 test, track and trace programmes.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* The Government wants as many people as possible to live their lives as close to normally as possible, in a way which is as fair and as safe as possible. In order to achieve this, we need both national and local support for communities.

We have given local authorities powers to act quickly in response to local outbreaks and the ability to take enforcement measures if necessary. Local authorities and Directors of Public Health have postcode level data on people who have tested positive in their areas to help in detecting a rise in cases, clusters or outbreaks.

## ■ Coronavirus: Drugs

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[98182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of the 46 products in 53 presentations for which his Department held a tender and procurement exercise for the Supply of Supportive Medicines for a UK Stockpile of Medicines for Covid-19 Preparedness, in August 2020; and what volumes of each of those 46 products was held in UK stockpiles on (a) 1 October 2019 and (b) 1 October 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government continues to hold stockpiles of medicines to cope with a range of scenarios, and robust contingency planning continues to ensure that the country is prepared for a possible second peak of COVID-19 infections.

The Department has recently undertaken a tender exercise to source critical COVID-19 supportive medicines and a second tender exercise is currently live. Details of the tender exercises can be found at the following links:

<https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:355937-2020:HTML:EN:HTML&tabId=1&tabLang=en#id4-VI>

[https://health-family-contract-search.secure.force.com/ProSpend\\_CS\\_ContractPage?SearchType=projects&uid=a074J000007F1WRQA0&searchStr=&sortStr=Recently+Published&page=1&filters=](https://health-family-contract-search.secure.force.com/ProSpend_CS_ContractPage?SearchType=projects&uid=a074J000007F1WRQA0&searchStr=&sortStr=Recently+Published&page=1&filters=)

This is a new stockpile and we are currently in the process of awarding contracts and taking and arranging for the delivery of supplies of some of these medicines.

Other United Kingdom stockpiles hold medicines that will be included in the COVID-19 supportive medicines stockpile. Volumes of relevant medicines held in the Essential Medicines Buffer Stock (EMBS) for the requested dates are shown in the following table, by way of example. It is important to recognise that stockholdings of these medicines will change following completion of the tender exercises.

PRESENTATION	EMBS PRESENTATION	EMBS VOLUMES AS AT 01 OCTOBER 2019 (SINGLES)	EMBS VOLUMES AS AT 01 OCTOBER 2020 (SINGLES)
Adrenaline (base) 1mg/10ml (1 in 10,000) dilute solution for injection ampoules	Adrenaline 1:10000 100mcg/ml - 1mL pfs injection	-	154,651
Doxycycline 100mg capsules	doxycycline_100mg_Caps / Tabs8	10,510,440	-
Fentanyl 500micrograms/10ml solution for injection ampoules	fentanyl_50mcg/mL 10mL_injection5-10	818,914	-
Levomepromazine 25mg/1ml solution for injection ampoules	levomepromazine_25mg/mL 1mL_injection10	84,565	-
Magnesium Sulphate 20mmol/100ml bag	magnesium sulphate_50% 10mL_injection10	81,405	81,410
Meropenem 1g powder for solution for injection vials	meropenem_1g_injection10	508,540	112,270
Midazolam 10mg/2ml solution for injection ampoules	midazolam_5mg/mL 2mL_injection10	504,831	-
Morphine sulfate 10mg/1ml solution for injection ampoules	morphine_10mg/mL 1mL_injection10	1,115,656	-
Morphine sulfate 10mg/5ml oral solution 300ml	Morphine 10mg/5ml liquid 300ml	94,805	94,812
Paracetamol 500mg tablets	paracetamol_500mg_Caps / Tabs32-100	706,072,175	296,550,300

PRESENTATION	EMBS PRESENTATION	EMBS VOLUMES AS AT 01 OCTOBER 2019 (SINGLES)	EMBS VOLUMES AS AT 01 OCTOBER 2020 (SINGLES)
Suxamethonium chloride 100mg/2ml solution for injection ampoules	Suxamethonium 50mg/mL 2mL injection	40,595	40,600
Tinzaparin sodium 4,500units/0.45ml solution for injection pre-filled syringes	tinzaparin_4500unit_injection	10 595,739	595,739

### ■ Coronavirus: Portsmouth

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[87635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the number of people unable to access covid-19 tests in Portsmouth on the ability to accurately assess the degree to which the pandemic is affecting Portsmouth.

**Helen Whately:**

National Health Service Test and Trace is working and our capacity is the highest it has ever been. As of 21 September, we have processed more than 18.7 million tests across pillars 1 and 2 and have capacity to test over 250,000 people a day. Demand for testing is increasing and as such some test sites will have reductions of testing capacity, so we can keep maximum capacity in highest risk areas.

We have also seen a rise in the number of people not eligible for testing coming forward. This is limiting the opportunity for symptomatic people to book a test. We are introducing improved messaging in all our channels and at sites that testing is for those who have symptoms, or who have been specifically told to get a test to take part in a pilot or elective surgery or have been invited by local councils.

### ■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

**Philip Davies:**

[\[86605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people who quarantined after returning to England since July 2020 from each country previously classed as an exempted destination have subsequently (a) tested positive for covid-19, (b) been hospitalised as a result of covid-19 and (c) died from covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 September 2020]:* The Department does not hold this information.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[88302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of increased covid-19 testing on case numbers; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

Between 17 September and 23 September, 31,373 people tested positive for the first time, continuing the steep upward trend in positive cases seen in recent weeks.

There were four times as many positive cases identified in the most recent week compared to the end of August.

Since Test and Trace launched, 153,597 people have tested positive for COVID-19 at least once; 83.0% of these positive cases were tested under pillar 2 in comparison to 17.0% under pillar 15. Between 17 September and 23 September, the number of positive cases under pillar 1 is over seven times higher compared to the end of August. The number of positive cases under pillar 2 is now nearly four times higher over the same period.

The number of people tested for the first time has increased by 32% since the end of August but has remained similar for the past three weeks.

## ■ Coronavirus: Suffolk

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[90106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of drive-in covid-19 tests at test centre sites in Suffolk to ensure that people do not have to travel excessive distances to receive a test.

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[90107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the capacity of (a) drive-in covid-19 testing centres, (b) school testing and (c) other testing centre capacity in Suffolk.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* We have improved the system for allocating regional testing slots to ensure the distance limit does not go beyond 75 miles – currently the median distance travelled is 4.3 miles and 90% of people who registered for a test travelled 20.5 miles or less. We have also introduced clear and improved messaging that testing is for those who have symptoms, or who have specifically been told to get a test by a clinician or local authority. Due to unprecedented demand, we are also targeting testing capacity solely at the areas that need it most, including those where there is an outbreak, and prioritising at-risk groups. This includes National Health Service staff and key workers.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Pay****Philip Davies:** [\[100318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the biggest pay rise given to someone in his Department was in (a) percentage and (b) cash terms in the last 12 months.

**Edward Argar:**

The largest pay rise given to someone in the Department in the last 12 months was 3% of base salary and £2,121 in cash terms.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions****Helen Hayes:** [\[93649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September to Question 85080 on Site: Coronavirus, when his Department plans to provide a response to that question.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[93652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to provide a full response to Question 85080 tabled on 4 September 2020 by the hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 25 September 2020]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 85080 on 23 September.

**■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis****Jim Shannon:** [\[98970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women have been diagnosed with endometriosis in the UK in the last 12 months.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[99606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women in each age group have been treated for endometriosis in each of the last five years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Data on the number of women who have been treated or diagnosed with endometriosis is not held centrally.

**■ Females: Health****Sarah Champion:** [\[99621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Public Health England plans to publish its Women's Reproductive Health Action plan; and whether his Department plans to use that strategy to inform his Department's women's health strategy.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Prior to COVID-19, Public Health England led the development of a Women's Reproductive Health Action Plan (WRHAP), taking a life course approach from menstruation to menopause. Publication was delayed due to COVID-19. However, many of its actions are being taken forward and the document is being revised to take account of the impact and evolving landscape in relation to COVID-19. The high-level recommendations and findings from the revised plan will form a key element of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy that is planned for publication in 2021. The WRHAP will then be published as one of the Strategy implementation documents.

**Health Education: Advertising****Alex Sobel:**[\[99103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the Government has spent on advertising campaigns promoting public health messages in each month since February 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* The Department does not hold financial data at the level requested to provide the information.

**Health Services: Standards****Jim Shannon:**[\[98219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the health service is adequately resourced after the end of the transition period.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department is working with its partners, including suppliers, the devolved nations and the health and social care system to ensure they have the resources they need after the end of the transition period. The 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review will set out the Government's spending plans for health and social care for future years. The Government will set out the results of the Spending Review in due course.

**Hospitals: Construction****James Wild:**[\[99137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement of the hospital building programme on 2 October 2020, if he will set out further details of how hospitals can bid for funding as one of the eight new hospital schemes.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* We will build 48 hospitals by 2030.

The next phase of this programme requires active engagement with the construction market to facilitate delivery of multiple projects at scale and pace – all part of our ‘Build, Back, Better’ agenda.

The bid process for the remaining eight hospitals is currently being designed, but as these schemes will be delivered in the second half of the decade, we will shape the competition process and announce it in due course and we will continue to closely work with trusts and regions to ensure when the process does take place, the criteria for selection best meets the needs of the National Health Service.

## ■ Hospitals: Food

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[100402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost to the public purse was of providing inpatient hospital food in 2019-20.

**Edward Argar:**

The information requested is not available due to delays as a result of COVID-19 and is expected to be available in the new year.

## ■ Integrated Care Systems

**Karin Smyth:** [\[100452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with local authority leaders on legislative proposals that would put Integrated Care Systems on a statutory basis.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England has set out its goal that all sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) will become integrated care systems (ICSs) by April 2021. As it stands 18 out of 42 STPs have developed into ICSs. NHS England previously made recommendations in the NHS Long Term Plan for giving ICSs a legal underpinning. These proposals were discussed in an engagement exercise, concluding in April 2019, which engaged more than 190,000 people and consulted stakeholders including the Local Government Association.

The Government is considering how to take forward the proposals put forward by NHS England. If legislative change is required to support the establishment of ICSs, we will work closely with all parts of the health and care system to achieve this, including local authorities, building on work started by NHS England with the publication of the Long Term Plan.

## ■ Maternity Services

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[98707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional (a) funding and (b) other resources he has provided to NHS Trusts to implement his Department's guidance, Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and

other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services, published 8 September 2020, while maintaining the safety of service users, staff and visitors.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[98708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's guidance entitled Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services, published 8 September 2020, whether those NHS Trusts can apply for (a) funding or (b) other resources to support the reintroduction of familial access and maintain safety.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have made it clear that they expect all trusts to now use this Framework and consider how access can be safely reintroduced as a priority. Reintroducing visits is challenging during a pandemic, and the priority must remain the safety of all service users, staff and visitors.

The published Framework recommends a stepwise approach for trusts to take, following a meaningful and documented risk assessment, so any necessary changes can be made before relaxing current stringent approaches. Risk factors for trusts to consider include the local COVID-19 transmission rate and constraints with the hospital estate, which cannot be easily solved with funding. Additional advice has been made available through various networks to support trusts in applying the Framework to their local circumstances.

#### ■ **Maternity Services: Coronavirus**

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[101005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 23 September 2020 to Questions 90184 and 89844, what steps his Department is taking where NHS trusts continue to maintain restrictions on maternity unit visitors.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* The Chief Midwifery Officer, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (England), and the National Clinical Director for Maternity and Women's Health wrote to all National Health Service Directors of Nursing and Heads of Midwifery in England on 19 September to inform those that are still working through the guidance that this must happen now so that partners are able to attend maternity units for appointments.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[98706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's guidance Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services, published on 8 September 2020, how many NHS Trusts have (a) undertaken a risk assessment to facilitate updating their visiting policies and (b) taken steps towards permitting access to women's partners, visitors or other supporters, whilst maintaining the safety of all service users, staff and visitors, as set out in that guidance.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[98709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his review of the Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services, published on 8 September 2020, if he will require each Trust to undertake (a) documented risk assessment and (b) a review of local policies.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have made it clear that they expect all trusts to now use this Framework and consider how access can be safely reintroduced as a priority. Reintroducing visits is challenging during a pandemic, and the priority must remain the safety of all service users, staff and visitors. The published Framework therefore recommends a stepwise approach for National Health Service trusts to take, following a meaningful and documented risk assessment, so any necessary changes can be made before relaxing current stringent approaches.

#### ■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[99608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of (a) the tier system in children and adolescent mental health services and (b) the use of alternative therapeutic approaches for children who have experienced trauma.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

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

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

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

#### ■ **Minor Injuries Units: Worcestershire**

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[97573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that Minor Injuries Units are signposted where appropriate to callers to the 111 service in Worcestershire.

**Edward Argar:**

Patients using the NHS 111 online service or calling NHS 111 will speak to a trained adviser, or if required a clinician, who will ask questions about the injury and any symptoms the patient is experiencing to identify the most appropriate treatment. This includes being invited to attend a face-to-face appointment at their local minor injuries unit.

**■ NHS Trusts: Publications****Jonathan Ashworth:****[100400]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the NHS Trusts Estates Returns Information Collection 2019-20 will be published.

**Jonathan Ashworth:****[100401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost to the public purse was of tackling the maintenance backlog in NHS Trusts in 2019-20.

**Edward Argar:**

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the collection and publication of the Estates Returns Information Collection 2019-20 has been delayed. Its publication date has yet to be confirmed for 2021 but the National Health Service intends to publish as soon as is practicable. This includes the level of backlog maintenance. Data for 2018-19 and previous years is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/estates-returns-information-collection>

**■ NHS: Reorganisation****Karin Smyth:****[100451]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the organisational integration of NHS England and NHS Improvement.

**Edward Argar:**

Since 2018, NHS England and NHS Improvement have been working collaboratively to enable them to work more effectively with commissioners and providers in local health systems; to speak with one voice to set clear and consistent expectations; to use collective resources more efficiently; and to remove unnecessary duplication. In 2019, the Health and Social Care Committee supported legislative proposals to merge NHS England and NHS Improvement into a single body which would be responsible for the management of the sector, making best use of its collective resources for the greatest benefit for patients. The Government is committed to supporting and enabling the National Health Service to work effectively together, and where this requires legislative change, we will bring forward proposals in due course. We are continuing to work closely with the system, building on NHS England's publication of the NHS Long Term Plan, to ensure that the NHS is best placed to deliver the best possible care to patients.

**■ NHS: Subsidiary Companies**

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the publication of changes to the guidance from NHS Improvement on the formation of subsidiary companies.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the review of the Addendum to the transactions guidance for trusts forming or changing a subsidiary will include the consideration of the role for NHS Property Services.

**Edward Argar:**

On 26 November 2018, NHS Improvement published new guidance on the creation of subsidiaries that allows providers and others to understand what would count as a sound commercial case for setting up subsidiaries.

At the time of publication, NHS England and NHS Improvement committed to a review of the proposals for implementing a subsidiary. The update to the guidance has been delayed by the prioritisation of the National Health Service's response to COVID-19. NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing to engage with a range of stakeholders and subject matter experts during this time and the approach, including consideration of the role for NHS Property Services, has not been finalised.

NHS England and NHS Improvement now anticipate that the updated guidance will be published in spring 2021.

**■ Randox Laboratories: Coronavirus**

**Nick Smith:** [\[81766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Randox covid-19 tests have been distributed to (a) care home settings and (b) individuals, and what proportion of the UK's total covid-19 tests were distributed by Randox up to 31 July 2020.

**Nick Smith:** [\[81768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Randox covid-19 tests administered by individuals prior to the recall announced on 7 August 2020.

**Nick Smith:** [\[93569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 September 2020 to Question 81767 on Randox Laboratories: Coronavirus, how many Randox sampling kits were recalled following Randox's Field Safety Notice of 7 August 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 25 September 2020]:* The recall applied to all unused Randox kits in circulation at the time the recall notice was announced; up to 750,000 kits. This figure

may be significantly less due to wastage and the majority have now been returned to Randox. We continue to work across the testing channels to remove any remaining kits from circulation. The specific data is not held in the requested format.

#### ■ **Randox Testing Services: Coronavirus**

**Justin Madders:** [\[83845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many Randox tests for covid-19 were processed (a) in total and (b) at Randox laboratories.

**Justin Madders:** [\[83846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the results of processed Randox tests for covid-19 were (a) positive, (b) negative, (c) unclear and (d) void.

**Helen Whately:**

The recall applied to all unused Randox kits in circulation at the time the recall notice was announced; up to 750,000 kits. This figure may be significantly less due to wastage and the majority have now been returned to Randox. We continue to work across the testing channels to remove any remaining kits from circulation. The specific data is not held in the format requested.

#### ■ **Stem Cells: Research**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[97578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will allocate funding for research using stem cells to prevent glaucoma.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's National Institute for Health Research welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including glaucoma; it is not usual practice to ring-fence funds for particular topics or conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ **Animal Experiments**

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[101318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2019, what types of products are included in (a) blood based products (55,024 uses) and (b) other products (97,638 uses) under routine production; and what proportion of those products were for the production of antibodies monoclonal and polyclonal.

**Victoria Atkins:**

With reference to the report entitled Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2019, published in July 2020, the types of products included in blood-based products and other products under routine production can include serum, plasma, antibodies and pathogens.

The returns of data from establishments for the production of the Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals in Great Britain has not requested specific data which would allow the calculation of the proportion of 'other products' that were for the production of monoclonal or polyclonal antibodies.

All applications for the use of animals in science are subject to a harm-benefit analysis, undertaken by the Home Office Inspectorate, to ensure that any harm that may be caused to the animals is justified by the expected benefits for humans, animals or the environment. The UK's rigorous regulatory system requires that no testing takes place if there is a validated non-animal alternative that would achieve the scientific outcomes sought. Project licence proposals for research on animals for which there is no non-animal alternative must comply fully with the principles of the 3Rs: replacement, reduction and refinement.

**■ Human Trafficking and Slavery****Sarah Champion:****[100413]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department collects data on the country of origin of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office records the nationality of potential victims of modern slavery who enter the National Referral Mechanism. The Home Office publishes quarterly and annual statistics for the National Referral Mechanism, which include nationality information. These can be found using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>

**■ Immigration: Enforcement****Ms Lyn Brown:****[98915]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many immigration enforcement staff were based at the Beckett House reporting centre prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Lyn Brown:****[98916]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the maximum detainee capacity was within the temporary holding facility at the Beckett House reporting centre prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many interview rooms for people subject to immigration enforcement were located at the Beckett House reporting centre prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many immigration enforcement staff she plans to base in the proposed reporting centre at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the maximum detainee capacity is for the planned temporary holding facility within the proposed reporting centre at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many interview rooms for people subject to immigration enforcement she plans to base within the proposed reporting centre at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[98921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to establish facilities at the proposed reporting centre at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham which were not in operation at the Beckett House reporting centre prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

Immigration Enforcement are in the process of relocating the current enforcement office which includes the reporting centre based at Becket House as the current lease elapsed in August 2019 and the landlord has stated that they are looking to redevelop this site.

The operational functionality at the time was used as a template to set out the criteria to identify a suitable location factoring in staffing numbers and requirements, secure parking, location of reporting population, transport hubs and links and public access etc. In December 2018, Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham was identified as a suitable location that fulfilled the criteria to mirror the operational capability that was available at Becket House as there was no plan to establish any facilities beyond that of Becket House and the reporting centre prior to the covid-19 outbreak. The reporting centre is a component part of Becket House working in synergy with other teams to achieve the goals and priorities of Immigration Enforcement.

Prior to the covid-19 outbreak there were 39.56 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) immigration enforcement staff based at the Becket House reporting centre. It is proposed that there will be 39.56 FTE within the reporting centre to be based at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham.

The temporary holding facility at the Becket House reporting centre has the maximum detainee capacity of 23. It is proposed that the maximum detainee capacity for the planned temporary holding facility within the reporting centre at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham is 39. Maximum detainee capacity is subject to contracted Detention Custody Officer resource availability.

Prior to the covid-19 outbreak, there was a total of 11 interview rooms available of which 3 interview rooms are designated for people subject to immigration enforcement at the Becket House reporting centre. It is proposed that there will be 14 interview rooms of which the reporting centre staff will have access to as requirements dictate for people subject to immigration enforcement within the proposed reporting centre at Warehouse K, Royal Victoria Docks, Newham.

## ■ Knives: Retail Trade

**Andy Slaughter:**

[\[100312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 85969 on Knives, what steps the Government is taking to work with retailers to promote the responsible sales of knives.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government has agreed a set of voluntary commitments with major retailers to promote the responsible sale of knives and to prevent the sale of knives to under-18s, both in stores and online. The agreement commits retailers to having robust measures in place to ensure age verification and both appropriate display and access to knives in stores.

Retailers also act to ensure customers and staff are reminded that knives are age restricted products and that all staff receive regular training. Since March 2016, 19 major retailers have joined the agreement, with some stopping the sale of single knives in their stores altogether. We are continuing to work with retailers to strengthen the agreement further in relation to the display of knives.

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 strengthens the law in relation to the preventing the online sale of knives to under 18s by requiring age verification and stopping knives being sent to residential addresses after they are bought online, unless the seller has arrangements in place with the delivery company to ensure that the product would not be delivered into the hands of a person under 18.

We have paused commencement of some of the Act's provisions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing measures that have been in place to avoid placing significant additional burdens on businesses and delivery companies to modify their sales and delivery systems and train staff over this period. We are keeping the position under review and we expect to be able to commence the provisions at the earliest opportunity.

## ■ Missing Persons

**Rehman Chishti:**

[\[100357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the Government's progress on meeting the objectives of the Missing Children and Adults Strategy 2011.

**Rehman Chishti:**

[\[100358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to update the Missing Children and Adults Strategy 2011.

**Victoria Atkins:**

People who go missing include some of the most vulnerable people in our society and the Government will do all it can to ensure those people are protected from harm.

The 2011 Missing Children and Adults Strategy provided a framework for local and national action to protect children and vulnerable adults who go missing. The Government has made significant progress in meeting the objectives of the strategy including by issuing new statutory guidance on missing children, placing new requirements on local authorities on the reporting of missing incidents, working with the College of Policing to develop new risk-based professional practice for police, and funding support for missing people and their families through charities like Missing People.

While plans to update the 2011 strategy are under consideration, we can and will go further to protect and support people who go missing. The Department for Education is working with the police, local authorities and the voluntary sector to consider how its statutory guidance is supporting local authorities and their partners to prevent children from going missing from home or care, and the Home Office is working with the national policing lead for Missing Persons and the NCA's UK Missing Persons Unit to deliver a National Register for Missing Persons (NRMP) which will provide new functionality around the reporting of missing and associated found incidents across police force boundaries.

Protecting and supporting vulnerable missing people is also a key element of our action to tackle exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse and county lines exploitation, given the clear links between people who go missing and these broader harms. This includes funding Missing People's SafeCall service, a specialist 24/7 helpline which provides advice and support to children, young people and parents/carers concerned about county lines exploitation.

**Rehman Chishti:**

[\[100359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of missing (a) adults and (b) children, were recorded as high risk in each month from 1 April 2020 to 1 September 2020.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office does not hold data on missing person incidents. Annual missing persons statistics, including analysis of age and risk category, are published by the National Crime Agency's Missing Person's Unit. The latest report is for 2018-19 and is available at <https://www.missingpersons.police.uk/en-gb/resources/downloads/missing-persons-statistical-bulletins>.

The Government recognises the importance of accurate and timely data on both current and historic missing incidents. We are working with the national policing lead for Missing Persons and the NCA's UK Missing Persons Unit through the Home Office National Law Enforcement Data Programme (NLEDP) to deliver a National Register for Missing Persons (NRMP). The NRMP will provide a snapshot of live missing incidents across police forces in England and Wales.

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ **House of Commons: Twitter****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[101251\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 98904, if the Commission will discuss (a) the decision on the House Twitter account to no longer cover Divisions, (b) other changes to that Twitter account and (c) the compatibility of those changes with (i) the objective in the Strategy for the House of Commons Service 2016-21 of involving and inspiring the public and (ii) other objectives in that strategy.

**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[101252\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 98904, what consultation the Commission has carried out with (a) hon. Members, (b) members of the public and (c) other stakeholders on the decision to stop the House of Commons Twitter service covering the results of divisions.

**Pete Wishart:**

The Commission has no plans to consider the House of Commons Twitter account. The account is managed by the House of Commons Communications Office, part of the House Service, and it is for the House Service to take any decisions about its content.

A core task of the House Service is to support the House of Commons, its committees, and individual members of all parties and their staff. As such, its commitment to, and perception of, impartiality is critical.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Building Safety Fund****Shabana Mahmood:****[99574]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many and what proportion of applications to the Building Safety Fund were successful; and how much of that £1 billion fund was allocated to those applications.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building Safety Fund and published registration statistics on 30 September, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics>.

**■ Buildings: Insulation****Rebecca Long Bailey:****[99643]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to help ensure that leaseholders are supported with the costs of (a) remediating non-compliant cladding on buildings and (b) other fire safety measures; and if he will increase the Building Safety Fund to ensure that all buildings are remediated at no cost to leaseholders.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is making £1.6 billion available to support the remediation of unsafe cladding. This will deal with some of the highest risk and highest cost safety defects in our existing high rise stock, protecting leaseholders from the vast majority of these costs. However, government funding is not the only means of funding remediation. The Government expects building owners to meet costs without passing them on to leaseholders wherever possible, through their own resources or by recovering costs from applicable warranty schemes or from the developers or contractors who were responsible for the installation of installed unsafe cladding, as has happened with more than half of the private sector buildings with Aluminium Composite Material cladding. In parallel, Government adviser Michael Wade, is developing a financing solution that will help protect leaseholders from unaffordable remediation costs while making sure these do not fall to the taxpayer.

**■ European Social Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund****Stephen Farry:****[101071]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to (a) replace and (b) administer a replacement to the European Social Fund; and what his policy is on the future of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Luke Hall:**

The Government understands the importance of local growth funding to places and people and is committed to creating the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to succeed

European structural funds, providing vital investment in local economies, cutting out bureaucracy and levelling up those parts of the UK whose economies are furthest behind.

Furthermore, the 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to targeting the UK Shared Prosperity Fund at the UK's specific needs, at a minimum matching the size of European structural funds in each nation and ensuring that £500 million of the Fund is used to give disadvantaged people the skills they need to make a success of life.

The Government has engaged with key stakeholders on the design and priorities of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, including holding a series of engagement events across the UK. As we approach the transition from European Social Fund to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we will continue to engage with partners in order to aid policy development.

Final decisions on the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will need to be made through a cross-Government Spending Review, and we will set out further plans for the fund in due course.

#### ■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

**Bob Blackman:**

[\[99597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on local authorities' finances.

**Luke Hall:**

Councils across the country are supporting communities, protecting the most vulnerable and helping the NHS in our efforts to combat Covid-19. In order to meet these additional cost pressures, the Government has continued to support local authorities by delivering an unprecedented package of measures. So far, we have provided over £4.8 billion in funding for spending pressures, including £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and £1.1 billion to help stop the spread of the virus in care homes. This underlines Government's commitment to ensuring adult social care has the resources it needs to keep residents and staff safe. In addition, the Prime Minister has announced a further £1 billion of funding for local authorities, details of which will be announced shortly. In total, over £28 billion has already been committed to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities across government. This comprehensive package of support includes direct financial support and cashflow measures for councils, bus and tram services, support for the homeless and both grants and rates reliefs for businesses. We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on local government.

## ■ Local Government: Disability

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[99761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has issued guidance to local authorities on engagement with disability organisations on matters relevant to their interests.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Whilst no specific guidance has been issued to local authorities on engagement with disability organisations, all local authorities are required to uphold the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This requires that public bodies, including local authorities, pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics include disability. Local authorities therefore have a legal obligation to consider the potential impact of their policies, services and decisions on people with protected characteristics.

## ■ Local Government: Property

**Bob Blackman:** [\[99595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made a recent assessment of the effectiveness of commercial property investments made by local authorities in the UK.

**Bob Blackman:** [\[99596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made a recent assessment of the effectiveness of the borrowing undertaken by local authorities to fund investments in commercial property.

**Luke Hall:**

Local authorities borrow and invest under the Prudential Framework (the Framework) which is designed to ensure that the capital plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, while giving councils the freedom to set their own capital strategies. Government is responsible for ensuring the Framework remains effective in driving sound decision making, and collects appropriate data to monitor trends and identify risks, including from commercial investment activity. Government does not routinely undertake any assessment of the effectiveness of local decisions to borrow and invest; local authorities remain accountable to their electorate for managing their own investment strategies and meeting their best value duty. However, councils have to appropriately comply with the Framework's statutory guidance, including the requirement to report performance against a set of metrics designed to demonstrate the objectives of the Framework are being met, and to publish an investment strategy.

Government is aware of recent trends where some local authorities are taking on high levels of debt to invest for commercial income, rather than for providing the functions of a council. We are clear that borrowing to invest for yield is not in keeping with the intent of the Framework and exposes councils and taxpayers to undue financial risk. We have already tightened our statutory guidance on investments to improve decision making, and we are now carefully considering the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee's report on local authority investment in commercial property (July 2020) and what further interventions are needed.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Department for International Trade: Corporate Hospitality

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[98907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether officials in her Department attended the world premiere of the motion picture Downton Abbey in Leicester Square on 9 September 2019.

**Greg Hands:**

Information relating to attendance at such events is published in line with the usual Transparency requirements, and can be viewed on gov.uk.

### ■ Trade Agreements

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[100553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had on a future trade deal with her (a) Australian, (b) Canadian and (c) New Zealand counterparts.

**Greg Hands:**

Strengthening and enhancing our bilateral trading relationships with Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, are key priorities for the Government's trade negotiations programme.

The Department for International Trade is committed to negotiating and securing ambitious free trade deals with Australia and New Zealand as soon as possible, harnessing the opportunity to negotiate a high-quality agreement with like-minded, liberal trading nations. Officials have just closed the second round of negotiations with Australia, with the third expected to take place in November, and they will open the second round of negotiations with New Zealand on 19<sup>th</sup> October.

Similarly, both the United Kingdom and Canada agree on the importance of protecting and strengthening our trading relationship, now that we have left the European Union. Our shared goal with the Government of Canada is a seamless transition of our trading relationship beyond 1st January 2020, so that British and Canadian businesses and consumers can continue to benefit. Officials have been in

regular contact to discuss this since trade talks recommenced in August, with technical discussions taking place on a rolling basis.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Commonwealth

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[99772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in agreeing trade deals with the UK's Commonwealth partners.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

We are committed to working with our friends and allies in the Commonwealth to remove barriers and liberalise the global trading environment. The Commonwealth has a large and diverse membership, with countries at all stages of development, and this is reflected in the trade relationship we have with them.

Through the Taxation (Cross-Border Trade) Act, the United Kingdom has provided for duty-free quota free access for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and put in place a trade preference scheme for other developing countries. In addition, we have agreed four Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the Southern African Customs Union and Mozambique; Eastern and other Southern African (ESA) states; Pacific states; and CARIFORUM states.

My Hon. Friend will know that we are committed to negotiating and securing ambitious free trade deals with Australia and New Zealand as soon as possible too, harnessing the opportunity to negotiate a high-quality agreement with like-minded, liberal trading nations. Similarly, both the United Kingdom and Canada agree on the importance of protecting and strengthening our trading relationship and we are engaging constructively with HM Government of Canada on a seamless transition of our trading relationship beyond 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Japan

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[101072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the differences are between the UK-Japan and EU-Japan trade deals with regards to the effect on goods imported to and exported from Northern Ireland.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-Japan CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) applies to the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland stands to benefit and build upon its strong exports to Japan, with Northern Ireland's agri-food sector potentially benefiting from reduced export burdens. Last year Northern Ireland's exports of agri-food to Japan were worth £6.5m.

**JUSTICE****■ Crime: Victims****Peter Kyle:**[\[99057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to prevent victims of crime from becoming offenders.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Justice is committed to ensuring victims receive the right support at the right time, to help them cope and recover in the aftermath of crime, and to break the cycles of both victimisation and offending. We recognise that many individuals may have experience as both a victim and an offender and are working to better address this.

For example, we have included a requirement for reachable moment interventions within the Homicide Service. Reachable moments are events or circumstances in an individual's life which can lead to positive behavioural change. These moments of intense crisis, in this instance the trauma of being bereaved by homicide, can act as a catalyst for change. This provides a cue for services to act, to address underlying vulnerabilities, to support individuals to cope and recover, and reduce the risk of involvement in serious violence going forward. We are also piloting an extension of the service to those that witness murder or manslaughter in London, to address the trauma they have experienced. We know that unresolved trauma can have a huge impact on victim and witnesses' lives, who may go on to offend, repeating this cycle.

The MoJ has also committed to a number of other pilots to address this issue, including support for young people with experience of victimisation in a youth offending institution, in order to address the underlying complex needs they face, and to divert them away from re-offending upon release. Also, piloting a victim pathway for female offenders who are victims of crime, supporting them to cope and recover, to again reduce re-offending.

**■ Prisons: Coronavirus****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[99568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on reoffending rates of slower progression through indeterminate sentences by prisoners as a result of limited access to (a) legal support, (b) offender managers, (c) release on temporary license and (d) offending behaviour programmes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[99569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on future public spending on (a) prisons and (b) probation of slower progression through indeterminate sentences by prisoners as a result of limited access to (i) legal support, (ii) offender managers, (iii) release on temporary license and (iv) offending behaviour programmes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[99570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on future overcrowding within prisons of slower progression through indeterminate sentences by prisoners as a result of limited access to (a) legal support, (b) offender managers, (c) release on temporary license and (d) offending behaviour programmes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[99571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on future (a) order, (b) self-harm, (c) suicide and (d) violence against staff within prisons of slower progression through indeterminate sentences by prisoners as a result of limited access to (i) legal support, (ii) offender managers, (iii) release on temporary license and (iv) offending behaviour programmes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We are doing everything we can to minimise the impact of the pandemic across all responsibilities of our prisons, including on the progression of Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners (ISPs). Whilst some changes to prison regimes have been necessary due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no evidence that the progression of ISPs has been significantly impaired. Consequently, it would be entirely premature to posit any effect on reoffending rates or future public spending on prisons and probation or overcrowding within prisons. We recognise that anxieties regarding COVID-19 and the regime restrictions required for infection control may increase the risk of self-harm and violence for some prisoners, and we will continue to work to mitigate this risk as far as possible.

Despite necessary restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, legal visits have been prioritised to ensure that ISPs maintain meaningful contact with their legal representatives.

The Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) Model continues to make transformational improvements in the way we support and manage prisoners through their sentence plan. A joint prison and probation Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM) was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure key offender management tasks were completed in line with the regime level of the prison, whilst upholding the ethos of the OMiC Model.

As to be expected, most Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) was suspended in March 2020 to help tackle the threat from Covid-19; however, we have been working with Public Health authorities to support prisons to re-introduce ROTL where it is safe and practicable to do so.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is reviewing the reduced provision of offending behaviour programmes (OBPs), in order to prioritise access to such opportunities on those who present the highest risk of reoffending on release. When it comes to the parole reviews of ISPs, the Parole Board is presented with a wide range

of evidence, not just completion of OBPs, in order to assess whether a prisoner's risk has been reduced to the point where s/he might be safely release on licence.

The HMPPS Safety Team has produced a range of products to support Governors in devising and implementing local safety and welfare plans designed to mitigate risks during the pandemic of disorder, self-harm, suicide and violence. The Team has issued guidance on operating the key safety systems (such the case management models for self-harm and suicide and violence), whilst complying with infection control measures and in the context of staff shortfalls and/or the absence of trained staff. This guidance includes materials to support wellbeing at this particularly difficult time, including a range of in-cell activities.

Finally, I would like to be clear that our primary responsibility is to protect the public. We do not want to keep ISPs in custody any longer than is necessary, but we have a duty to ensure that they are progressed in a safe manner. It remains the case that prisoners serving indeterminate 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.

#### ■ Prisons: Disclosure of Information

**Gordon Henderson:** [\[99603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76674, Prisons: Disclosure of Information, what progress his Department has made with the review of the whistleblowing process for prison staff.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The existing Ministry of Justice whistleblowing policy is being reviewed and updated by the Ministry of Justice HR Policy team. Drafts of the updated policy and supporting guidance documents are currently with trade unions, as part of a wider consultation exercise. We are aiming to launch the new policy following the consultation exercise.

#### ■ Prisons: Education

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[99566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when prisoner education data on (a) participation and (b) outcomes for the April 2018 to March 2019 period of the Offender Learning and Skills Service contracts will be published.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The data from the Offender Learning and Skills Service contracts is being provided to the Ministry of Justice and work has been undertaken to prepare the data for publication. A date has not yet been agreed for publication.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[99567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when prisoner education data on (a) participation and (b) outcomes for the April 2019 to March 2020 period of the Prison Education Framework contracts will be published.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Data from the Prison Education Framework contracts is being collected. Once the quality and coverage of the data has been confirmed, a statistical publication will be pre-announced on the GOV.UK website.

**TRANSPORT****■ Heathrow Airport: Railways****Luke Pollard:**[\[99729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what consultation he undertook before postponing the delivery of the Western Rail Access to Heathrow.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department has not postponed the delivery of the Western Rail Access to Heathrow. The Government has always been clear that delivery of such is subject to a satisfactory business case and agreement of acceptable terms with the Heathrow Aviation industry. Discussions between the Department and Heathrow Airport Limited to agree an appropriate funding contribution were interrupted following the Court of Appeal's judgement on the Airports National Policy Statement and the devastating impact of COVID-19, resulting in a delay. Network Rail plans to re-consult on the scheme in 2021.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[99730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when construction work will start on the Western Rail Access to Heathrow.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Construction of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow is expected to start following the granting of planning consent, with construction of the main build estimated to take approximately five years. Submission of the scheme's application for development consent, is subject to a satisfactory business case and the agreement of acceptable terms with the Heathrow Aviation industry.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[99731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the potential cost increase as a result of the two year delay to the Western Rail Access to Heathrow project.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Progress on the Western Rail Link to Heathrow is subject to a satisfactory business case and the agreement of acceptable terms with the Heathrow aviation industry. Negotiations on these terms have not yet concluded and any estimate of cost to the taxpayer is dependent on this agreement. There is also no reason why costs would increase as a result.

**■ Large Goods Vehicles: Electric Vehicles****Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[101969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the economic viability of electric Heavy Goods Vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Technologies for zero emission heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) are less developed than for cars and vans, but are now reaching the early market, making use of hydrogen fuel cell and battery electric technologies. Further innovation and development will be needed to ensure their mass adoption across all vehicle types is done in a sustainable and affordable way. In addition to the existing trials and research already completed, the Government is working with the Connected Places Catapult to assess the zero emission technologies most suitable for HGVs on the UK road network.

**■ Public Transport: Concessions****Tulip Siddiq:** [\[99698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has conducted an economic impact assessment for families affected by proposed suspension of free under-18 tube and bus travel in London.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Department officials are working with the Department for Education, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Transport for London and London Boroughs on the Equalities Impact Assessment which will be published in due course. Given the nature of this policy, the economic impact of it forms part of this assessment.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[99699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to restore free tube and bus travel in London for people aged under 18.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Currently people aged under 18 are eligible for free bus travel in London. The suspension of free travel for under 18s in London will help to reduce demand for public transport so that those who need to use it can do so safely.

The Department continues to work closely with Transport for London, The Department for Education, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and London Councils on implementation and will set out next steps in due course.

## ■ Railways: North of England

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[99765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what exploration his Department has undertaken to commence the HS3 rail project between Manchester and Leeds.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department is considering the Leeds to Manchester corridor as part of the Integrated Rail Plan, which is due to be published in December. The Integrated Rail Plan is investigating how best to integrate HS2 Phase 2b with wider transport plans in the North and Midlands and how to deliver benefits from investments more quickly.

## ■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions

**Alan Brown:**

[\[100473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on maritime decarbonisation.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department for Transport has frequent discussions with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in relation to maritime decarbonisation and climate change matters.

DfT and BEIS officials meet regularly to discuss the decarbonisation of both the domestic and international maritime sectors, and in relation to wider decarbonisation issues including the maritime aspects of offshore renewable energy, the role of advanced fuels including hydrogen in the UK economy, and the resulting opportunities for green growth.

**Alan Brown:**

[\[100474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the economic effect of investing in maritime decarbonisation.

**Robert Courts:**

In 2015, the Department published the Maritime Growth Study, which considered all aspects of the maritime sector and identified where action could be taken to generate growth<sup>[1]</sup>. Following the publication of Maritime 2050 in 2019, which builds on the findings of the Maritime Growth Study, the Department published the Clean Maritime Plan, which identified the potential for clean economic growth in the UK as a result of the transition to zero emission shipping<sup>[2]</sup>.

Alongside the Plan, the Department published an assessment of the value of potential economic opportunities from low and zero emission shipping. This review provided a framework for assessing the scale of the opportunity generated by emission reduction technologies, including a mapping of the relevant supply chain, an assessment of the global uptake of these technologies, the economic footprint of the UK firms in the supply chain and the UK's share of global export of these technologies<sup>[3]</sup>.

<sup>[1]</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maritime-growth-study>

<sup>[2]</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/815664/clean-maritime-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815664/clean-maritime-plan.pdf)

<sup>[3]</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/815666/economic-opportunities-low-zero-emission-shipping.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815666/economic-opportunities-low-zero-emission-shipping.pdf)

**Alan Brown:**

**[100475]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of jobs that could be created as a result of investment in maritime decarbonisation.

**Robert Courts:**

In 2019, the Department published the Clean Maritime Plan, which noted the potential for clean economic growth in the UK as a result of the transition to zero emission shipping.

Alongside the Plan, the Department published an assessment of the potential economic opportunities from low and zero emission shipping. While this does not estimate the number of potential new jobs that could be created through the decarbonisation of the maritime sector, it identifies a large potential global market for the elements of alternative maritime fuel production technologies in which the UK has a particular competitive advantage (for example, upfront design), which could result in economic benefits to the UK of around £360–£510 million per year by the middle of the century.

Maritime UK has published its views that investment in maritime decarbonisation could in future create more than 15 thousand jobs as well as tens of thousands of jobs when considering the wider supply chain. Industry research estimates that in 2017 the UK maritime sector as a whole directly supported more than 220 thousand jobs for UK employees.

**Rosie Cooper:**

**[99562]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor the Exchequer on the provision of Government funding for the maritime industry to support the decarbonisation of that industry.

**Robert Courts:**

My Department has undertaken extensive research considering the level of investment required for the UK's domestic maritime sector to achieve net zero by 2050. This research comprises a range of scenarios assessing different policy options, including both costs and benefits, and has been published in support of the Clean Maritime Plan on GOV.UK.

## ■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[99560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial support his Department is making available to the maritime industry to support the decarbonisation of that industry.

**Robert Courts:**

To date the Department for Transport has funded a £1.5m competition for innovation in clean maritime and provided £193,897 in grant support through the Department's Transport Technology Research Innovation Grant Programme to early stage research projects related to clean maritime.

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[99561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential economic effect of providing Government funding to support the decarbonisation of the maritime industry.

**Robert Courts:**

My Department has undertaken extensive research, in consultation with the shipping sector and other Government Departments, on the economic opportunities for the UK from the design, development and commercialisation of those technologies that are expected to be critical to achieving zero emission shipping by 2050. This research had been published in support of the Clean Maritime Plan on GOV.UK.

## ■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

**Alan Brown:**

[\[99656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allocating funding to the maritime sector to help support growth in the production of offshore wind energy.

**Robert Courts:**

Ahead of our economy-wide net zero target, Government has commissioned and published extensive work considering the options for decarbonising the maritime sector, including the role of public funding. This research suggests that maritime decarbonisation could result in economic benefits to the UK of up to £510 million per year.

The Department has not made a specific assessment of the potential merits of allocating funding to the maritime sector for the purpose of supporting the growth in the production of offshore wind energy.

**TREASURY****■ Exports: VAT****Miriam Cates:**[\[99792\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the potential cost of extending the VAT Retail Export Scheme to countries in the EU from 1 January 2021.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has announced that the VAT Retail Export Scheme (RES) will not be extended to EU visitors, and will be withdrawn for all non-EU visitors, following the end of the transition period. However, retailers will continue to be able to offer VAT-free shopping to non-EU visitors who purchase items in store and have them sent direct to their overseas addresses and this will be available to EU visitors following the end of the transition period.

In 2019 HMRC estimate that VAT RES refunds cost around £0.5billion in VAT for around 1.2million non-EU visitors. HMRC also estimate that fewer than one in ten non-EU visitors use the VAT RES.

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 final costing will be subject to scrutiny by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility and will be set out at the next forecast.

**■ Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme****Owen Thompson:**[\[99666\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will adjust the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme to ensure wider access (a) for small community organisations and (b) throughout the voluntary sector.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[99667\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to raise Gift Aid to 25 per cent over two complete tax years.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme is already available to all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs. The eligibility rules for the scheme were significantly relaxed in 2017 to simplify and increase access to the scheme, particularly for smaller and newer charities.

In response to the proposal to increase Gift Aid to 25 per cent I refer the Hon Member to the answer that I gave on 4 September to the Hon Member for Lewisham East (UIN 82365).

#### ■ **Job Support Scheme**

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[99794\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether employers who have a contractual obligation to pay 100 per cent of employees' salaries can fulfil this obligation whilst accessing the Job Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Job Support Scheme is designed to protect jobs in businesses which are facing lower demand over the winter months due to COVID-19, to help keep their employees attached to the workforce. Further guidance on eligibility will be published shortly.

#### ■ **Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus**

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[99512\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the business rates holiday to 2021-22; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

As part of the Government's package to support businesses affected by coronavirus, the Government has provided a business rates holiday for eligible properties in retail, hospitality and leisure, worth £10 billion this year.

As set out in the Call for Evidence for the fundamental review of business rates, the Government anticipates setting out preliminary conclusions from the review on the most pressing areas, including reliefs, in the autumn, ahead of final conclusions in spring 2021.

#### ■ **Public Expenditure: Wales**

**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[101296\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the Welsh Government will receive in Barnett Consequentials from the £3 billion of new funding introduced for green buildings in England as part of the Plan for Jobs.

**Steve Barclay:**

As part of the Plan for Jobs, the Chancellor announced over £3 billion of new funding for green buildings. This funding is subject to the Barnett formula. We are working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure they have the best information about likely changes in Barnett funding to facilitate their financial planning.

## ■ Red Diesel: Mining

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[99769\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the cost to the mining and quarrying industries of the withdrawal of the red diesel fuel duty rebate from April 2022; and whether that assessment includes the availability of alternative non-fossil fuel heavy plant and machinery.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that the Government will remove the entitlement to use red diesel from April 2022, except in agriculture, fish farming, rail and for non-commercial heating (including domestic heating). This change will ensure that most businesses using diesel in the UK pay the standard fuel duty rate on diesel, which more fairly reflects the harmful impact of the emissions they produce. These reforms are also designed to ensure that the tax system incentivises users of diesel to improve the energy efficiency of their vehicles and machinery, invest in cleaner alternatives or use less fuel.

The Government recognises that this will be a significant change for some businesses, including in the mining and quarrying industries. It launched a consultation in July to make sure it has not overlooked any exceptional reasons why other sectors should be allowed to continue to use red diesel beyond April 2022, and officials met with representatives from the industry on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September. As part of this, the Government has been seeking information from affected users on the expected impact of these tax changes, including on their capacity to shift to cleaner alternatives.

## ■ Remote Working: Non-domestic Rates

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[99642\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Government's call for employees to work from home where possible, if his Department will grant a 12 months' business rates holiday to the flexible workspace industry, in line with other service sectors.

**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 business, including the flexible workspace industry, 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.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

**Emma Hardy:** [\[99720\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what consultation he had with self-employed people before the first grant extension through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme was set at 20% of average monthly trading profits.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government engaged extensively with businesses, professional representative bodies, and the unions throughout the development of both the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The Government will continue to work with businesses, unions and representative groups as part of the Government's continuing monitoring of the economy.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Mr David Davis:** [\[99519\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of loan charge cases remained unsettled after the 30 September deadline.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[99520\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria HM Revenue and Customs use to decide whether individual Loan Charge settlement discussions can continue past the 30 September settlement deadline.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[99521\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people subject to the Loan Charge were offered settlements (a) four weeks, (b) three weeks, (c) two weeks, (d) one week and (e) less than one week before the 30 September settlement deadline.

**Jesse Norman:**

At the time of the independent review of the Loan Charge, about 12,000 employers and individuals had the opportunity to avoid the Loan Charge by concluding settlements, having provided all the relevant information to HMRC by 5 April 2019. Early indications are that as at 2 October about 60 percent of these taxpayers have either settled, informed HMRC that they had instead decided to report and pay the Loan Charge, or have been taken out of scope of the Loan Charge following the Government's changes in response to the independent review.

HMRC are continuing settlement discussions with a relatively small number of taxpayers who were prevented from meeting the 30 September deadline by exceptional circumstances beyond their control, such as recent hospitalisation. HMRC's criteria for continuing settlement discussions beyond the 30 September deadline are:

- The taxpayer had actively engaged in the settlement process until the occurrence of a factor, and
- The factor is entirely outside the control of the taxpayer, and

- The factor prevented the taxpayer from settling by 30 September, and
- Absent the factor, the taxpayer would have been able to settle by 30 September, and
- The taxpayer will be able, and agrees, to settle within a defined period of no more than 3 months after the 30 September.

HMRC do not hold aggregate data on when individual taxpayers were issued with settlement offers.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[99524\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether any recipient of Loan Charge settlement letters has received letters containing confidential information belonging to other people.

**Mr David Davis:** [\[99525\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how HM Revenue and Customs calculates loan charge settlement offers; and what processes are in place to ensure all loan charge settlement offers are calculated consistently.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC take taxpayer confidentiality seriously. Of the tens of thousands of items of communication that HMRC have sent to taxpayers in recent months about their disguised remuneration usage, HMRC are aware of fewer than 10 occasions where confidential information was sent to the wrong taxpayer in error. In these circumstances HMRC follow the necessary processes to undertake corrective action.

HMRC issue settlement calculations to those who have come forward to settle their tax affairs based on the information they provided to HMRC. The settlement offer letter explains that they can ask HMRC to reconsider the calculations if they believe the figures set out in the letter are not correct.

To maintain a consistent approach, the terms of any settlement opportunity must fall within HMRC's published Litigation and Settlement Strategy and apply equally to all those who may wish to take up the opportunity. As set out in the Litigation and Settlement Strategy, HMRC will only settle for an amount that is consistent with the law.

## ■ Tax Avoidance: Coronavirus

**Mr David Davis:** [\[99522\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what arrangements HM Revenue and Customs been put in place for people subject to the Loan Charge who are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are acutely aware of the current economic challenges facing taxpayers as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

HMRC have a strong, established approach to supporting those who are unable to pay the tax they owe in full, through payment arrangements for those who reach a settlement agreement with HMRC, and Time to Pay (TTP) arrangements which are available for those paying the Loan Charge. These are tailored to each individual's financial circumstances.

Anyone worried about their ability to pay tax owed, as a result of a change in their financial circumstances, should get in touch with HMRC as soon as possible. A TTP arrangement is designed to be flexible and is not a fixed contract. It can be amended over time in order to enable HMRC to lengthen the arrangement if expenses increase or income decreases.

HMRC are also able to refer taxpayers to an external body to provide independent advice on options available to people who are unable to pay or are in difficulty with their debts.

### ■ **Tax Avoidance: Mental Health and Suicide**

**Mr David Davis:**

[\[99523\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of his Department's decision not to extend the Loan Charge settlement deadline on the (a) mental health of and (b) risk of suicide in people subject to the Loan Charge.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government announced in December 2019 that it would extend the Loan Charge deadline from 31 January 2020 to 30 September 2020, for individuals due to pay the Loan Charge to submit their 2018/19 Self Assessment returns and pay the tax due or agree a time to pay arrangement.

The Government takes concerns over the physical and mental wellbeing of taxpayers very seriously. These cases are complex and typically involve many different factors.

HMRC have signposted the extra help available to taxpayers in correspondence and on calls. Their staff are trained to detect signs of stress, and look out for indications that a taxpayer may need extra support; and where appropriate will transfer them to an Extra Support adviser who has additional skills, knowledge and tools to help them. Where appropriate, HMRC also refer taxpayers to expert outside organisations that can provide further independent advice and support.

### ■ **Tourist Attractions: VAT**

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[99724\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a 3-year extension to the reduced VAT rate on admission charges for attractions.

**Jesse Norman:**

The reduced rate is intended to support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. The Institute for Fiscal Studies and

other commentators have suggested that the expiry of any temporary cut should be carefully timed if possible so as not to affect progress as the economy begins to pick up again.

The Chancellor announced on 24 September that the VAT reduced rate is to continue until 31 March 2021, providing continued support to over 150,000 businesses and protecting 2.4 million jobs.

## ■ Welfare Tax Credits: Debt Collection

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[101289\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has spent on private debt collection agencies in (a) fees and (b) the proportion of funds collected for the purposes of recovering tax credit debts in each financial year since 2010-11.

**Jesse Norman:**

The table below details HMRC's spending on Debt Collection Agencies between 2010/11 and 2019/20.

None of the funds collected are used for the purpose of recovering tax credits. HMRC request funding from HMT through fiscal measures.

TOTAL	% SPENT ON TC	
2010-11	£ 3.72m	0.00%
2011-12	£ 11.08m	0.00%
2012-13	£ 13.06m	0.00%
2013-14	£ 9.34m	11.61%
2014-15	£ 10.89m	19.85%
2015-16	£ 16.77m	31.59%
2016-17	£ 26.25m	24.54%
2017-18	£ 32.10m	20.50%
2018-19	£ 26.02m	28.83%
2019-20	£ 26.16m	24.03%
Total	£ 175.39m	20.16%

Further information about payments to Integrated Debt Services Ltd, who manage the contract between HMRC and the Debt Collection Agencies contracted to act on HMRC's behalf, is published on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/spending-over-25-000>.

**WALES**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Michael Fabricant:**[\[907306\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support the recovery of the Welsh (a) rural economy and (b) hospitality sector from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Simon Hart:**

The rural and hospitality sectors form the backbone of the Welsh economy. The Eat Out to Help out Scheme helped protect two million Welsh jobs. This - alongside cutting VAT, months of furlough for staff, and incentives to keep workers in jobs - demonstrates the benefits to Wales of being part of the Union.

**Mr David Jones:**[\[907312\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with local authorities in Wales on the operation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Simon Hart:**

I am advocating a strong and active role for the 22 local authorities in Wales as we make progress on the Shared Prosperity Fund. Devolution isn't simply about transferring powers to Cardiff Bay – it is about involving every region of Wales in decisions about the Fund.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ **Bullying: Schools****Anthony Mangnall:**[\[90264\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government has taken to tackle (a) homophobic, (b) biphobic and (c) transphobic bullying in schools.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

This government is clear that no child should be bullied for any reason at all. Since 2016, we have invested £4m to support schools in preventing and addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, reaching 2,250 schools in England.

We are currently evaluating this programme to increase our evidence base on what works in schools. In June, the Department for Education announced it was extending its anti-bullying programme until March next year.

■ **Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus****Shabana Mahmood:**[\[97524\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent progress the Government has made on reducing the increased risk to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities from covid-19.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is implementing significant measures to reduce the spread of the virus in all communities, especially for people who may be at higher risk. This includes ensuring that those in high-contact professions get targeted testing, issuing updated guidance on workplace safety and translating key public health messages into multiple different languages.

I am also leading work on the findings of the Public Health England Report "Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19". Following work undertaken by the scientific community, the Office for National Statistics and the Race Disparity Unit, we have made good progress in recent weeks in identifying the key drivers of these disparities and the relationships between the different risk factors for ethnic minority communities. I have also been reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by government departments and their agencies to directly lessen the disparities. I will shortly be sending the first quarterly progress report on my work to the Prime Minister.

**■ Gay Conversion Therapy****Dan Carden:**[\[95207\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals to ban LGBT conversion therapy.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

This Government is committed to tackling the abhorrent practice of conversion therapy in the UK. As the Prime Minister has reiterated, this practice has no place in civilised society.

We are considering both legislative and non-legislative options to end conversion therapy practices for good. Officials have been reviewing the current legislative framework to see how harmful and unacceptable practices referred to as conversion therapy may already be captured by existing laws and offences. Where this is the case, we will look to ensure that the law is clear and enforced. Where conversion therapy practices are not already unlawful we are looking at the best ways to end these practices without sending them underground.

The Government is working at pace on ending conversion therapy and will outline in due course how it intends to proceed with an effective and proportionate response.

**■ Gender Recognition Act 2004****Stephen Farry:**[\[96227\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to her oral contribution of 24 September 2020, Official Report, column 1137, on the Gender Recognition Act Consultation, where she stated that We have met 140 representative organisations, including LGBT and women's organisations, if she will publish a list of those organisations with whom she and the Government Equalities Office met to discuss reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

During the Gender Recognition Act consultation process, the Government met with approximately 140 organisations. The list, which was previously published via a Freedom of Information request in 2019, is provided as an annex to this answer.

**Attachments:**

1. Annex [Annex - list of organisations consulted with as part of the Gender Recognition Act consultation.pdf]

**Gender Recognition Certificates****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[98761\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to her statement of 22 September 2020, Official Report, HCWS462, that she will improve the process and experience of transgender people applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate by making it kinder and more straightforward, what the Government's timeline is for developing that new process; whether she plans to consult stakeholders on that new process; and what the new nominal fee for that certificate will be.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

We want transgender people to be free to live and to prosper in modern Britain. We have looked carefully at the issues raised in the consultation, including the impact of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 on trans people. It is the Government's view that the balance struck in this legislation is correct, in that there are proper checks and balances in the system and also support for people who want to change their legal sex.

We will make the gender recognition certificate process kinder and more straightforward. We will cut bureaucracy by enabling applications via [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and reduce the fee. We are working with the Ministry of Justice, who lead tribunal fees policy, to agree the new fee level and plan the implementation of this change. We will be consulting relevant stakeholders to ensure implementation works from an operational perspective, but will not be consulting more widely since the GRA consultation provides evidence on people's views of the fee.

**Hate Crime****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[98762\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the increase in levels of (a) transphobia and (b) misogyny.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Transphobia and misogyny are completely unacceptable and have no place in British society. We are determined that everyone in the UK should be free to live their lives and fulfil their potential regardless of their gender identity or sex.

Misogyny is not a hate crime in law, therefore no data is held about specific incidents. The Government has heard concerns about the coverage and effectiveness of existing legislation and asked the Law Commission to undertake a full review of hate

crime legislation, which is due to report in early 2021. This includes considering whether there should be additional protections against misogyny or ageism for example, and bring parity to the law by making sexual orientation and transgender hate crimes aggravated offences. We will respond in full when it is complete.

We have funded multiple projects aimed at tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime and have taken steps to bolster the police response to hate crime through supporting additional police training. We have also invested £4m to support schools to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Attendance Allowance: Scotland

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[100482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on updating the timetable for the migration of people in receipt attendance allowance to disability assistance for older people in Scotland under the (a) Scotland Act 2016 and (b) Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[100483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on updating the timetable for the migration of people in receipt of carer's allowance to carer's assistance in Scotland under the (a) Scotland Act 2016 and (b) Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[100484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Scotland Act 2016 and Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, what progress her Department has made on an updated timetable for the migration of individuals in receipt of personal independence payment to disability assistance for working age people in Scotland.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[100485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Scotland Act 2016 and Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, what progress her Department has made on an updated timetable for the migration of individuals in receipt of disability living allowance to disability assistance for children and young people in Scotland.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[100486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Scotland Act 2016 and Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, what progress her Department has made on an updated timetable for the migration of individuals in receipt of industrial injuries disablement benefit to employment injury assistance in Scotland.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

These are matters for the Scottish Government, with which my Department works closely.

## ■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Coronavirus

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[100396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to process suspended Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit cases.

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[100397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what additional resources she will make available to help manage the backlog of industrial injuries disablement benefit cases; and how her Department will prioritise the outstanding cases.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The suspension of face-to-face assessments for the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) means the majority of new claims are not being assessed at present. We are urgently exploring approaches to safely progress new IIDB claims awaiting an assessment. We will restart face to face assessments in a safe manner with adherence to the latest public health guidance as soon as we are able to. As part of this work, we will carefully consider the demands on our services to manage the cases.

For claimants with the most serious or terminal conditions, claims continue to be processed and decisions made as normal. Furthermore, reassessment case awards have been extended to ensure that payments continue unhindered on those cases. Any deteriorations which would have meant an increase in award, will be backdated once face-to-face assessments recommence, to ensure no one is left out of pocket.

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[100523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether industrial injuries disablement benefit claims will be assessed via (a) telephone, (b) video call and (c) other means during the covid-19 restrictions.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The suspension of face-to-face assessments for the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) means the majority of new claims are not being assessed at present. We are urgently exploring approaches to safely progress new IIDB claims awaiting an assessment. Due to the nature of assessment we are not currently operating telephone assessments. We will restart face to face assessments in a safe manner with adherence to the latest public health guidance as soon as we are able to.

To support existing claimants, reassessment case awards have been extended to ensure that payments continue unhindered on those cases. Any deteriorations which would have meant an increase in award, will be backdated once face-to-face assessments recommence, to ensure no one is left out of pocket.

**■ Lifetime Skills Guarantee: Children****Neil Gray:** [\[101282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Prime Minister's recent announcement of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, whether she is taking steps to increase the childcare available for single parents on universal credit with pre-school-aged children to enable those parents to gain equal access to training and upskilling opportunities.

**Neil Gray:** [\[101284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of support for single parents on universal credit with pre-school-aged children.

**Will Quince:**

The Government now provides more support than ever before to help parents with the costs of childcare, including providing 15 hours a week of free childcare in England for all 3 and 4 year olds and disadvantaged 2 year olds, and doubling free childcare available for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours a week.

Parents already have access to more generous support for childcare costs through Universal Credit than via the legacy system. Working families can claim up to 85% of their eligible childcare costs each month up to a maximum support of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 per month for two or more children.

The childcare costs element is available to all lone parents and couples who are in receipt of Universal Credit, for relevant childcare provided, when both members are in paid work, regardless of the number of hours they work within their assessment period.

Help with upfront childcare costs for starting work is available through a non-repayable Flexible Support Fund (FSF) award for eligible UC claimants up to the limits set. This does not apply for claimants already in work. We have issued guidance to Work Coaches in Jobcentres to ensure that eligible claimants, who require help with upfront childcare costs in order to start work, are directed to the governments FSF.

**■ Pension Credit****Anne McLaughlin:** [\[101290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pension credit claims there were in each of the last 12 months for which data is available; and what the outcome was of those pension credit claims over that period.

**Guy Opperman:**

The number of Pension Credit claims received in the last 12 months is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1

OCT-19	NOV-19	DEC-19	JAN-20	FEB-20	MAR-20
10,645	8,318	6,615	8,540	9,574	12,557
Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
9,567	8,613	9,004	17,087	14,865	15,054

*Extract taken from Weekly Pensions Performance Report on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020*

*Source: Weekly Data from CAM (Customer Account Manager)*

The figure includes both successful and unsuccessful Pension Credit claims.

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[\[101291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many pension credit claims there have been since the announcement on introducing means-testing for free TV licences for people aged over 75.

**Guy Opperman:**

The total number of Pension Credit Claims made since introduction of means testing for free TV licences for people aged over 75 from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 is 29,919.

*Extract taken from Weekly Pensions Performance Report on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020*

*Source: Weekly Data from CAM (Customer Account Manager)*

**Anne McLaughlin:**

[\[101292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps Department is taking to maximise uptake of pension credit.

**Guy Opperman:**

While over 1.5 million pensioners currently receive Pension Credit, the Government wants to make sure that all pensioners eligible can claim the Pension Credit to which they are rightly entitled. That is why in February this year we launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of Pension Credit and help dispel some of the misconceptions that people might have about Pension Credit eligibility.

We are also continuing to work with our stakeholders all across the UK, to help spread the key messages from the campaign because we know that often the best ways to reach eligible pensioners is through trusted stakeholders working in the local community. Our online Pension Credit toolkit (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>) has been updated with the recent awareness campaign materials to supplement the resources it already contains for those working with pensioners, such as guides to Pension Credit and information designed to help older people understand how they could get Pension Credit.

In May this year we also launched an online claim service for Pension Credit to supplement the existing telephone and postal claim services (

<https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit> ). The new online service enables pensioners to apply for Pension Credit at a time that suits them.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Chronic Illnesses and Disability

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

**[101262]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to end repeat welfare benefits assessments for people with (a) disabilities and (b) long-term health conditions.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We have introduced severe conditions guidance for Employment and Support Allowance/ Universal Credit, and ongoing awards with a light touch review at ten years for Personal Independence Payment claimants whose needs are unlikely to change. The forthcoming Health and Disability Green Paper will explore assessment reform and seek views on future changes.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

**[101263]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that people with experience of living with a disability are included in (a) her Department's planned consultation on disability benefits and (b) the cross-Government disability strategy.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The government is committed to ensuring that the Health and Disability Green Paper and the National Strategy for Disabled People reflects the issues that disabled people want us to address.

We have held a significant number of events across the country with people with lived experience of a disability and of our services and we are continuing this engagement throughout the Autumn to directly influence the Green Paper content and the National Strategy. This engagement will continue following the publication of the Green Paper.

To support the National Strategy for Disabled People the Cabinet Office Disability Unit are engaging with disabled people's organisations, including through the Regional Stakeholder Network and the recently established Disabled People's Organisations Forum, and are encouraging Government Departments to better engage with stakeholders on policies that matter to disabled people.

#### ■ Social Security Benefits: Scotland

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[100481]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions her Department has had with the Scottish Government on the devolution of non-reserved benefits under the Scotland Act 2016.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

My Department works closely with the Scottish Government to bring about the safe and secure transition to a new devolved social security system. Ministerial oversight is provided by the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare, which is supplemented as necessary by ad hoc Ministerial discussions. At senior official level, each Government has observer status on the other's monthly Devolution Programme Board. At working level, both Governments have teams dedicated to the transition to the new system, and contact at official level is constant.

**State Retirement Pensions: British Nationals Abroad****Felicity Buchan:**[\[101068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the effect of the end of the transition period on the difference between the level of state pension received by British nationals living in the EU compared to that received by people living outside the EU.

**Guy Opperman:**

The UK State Pension is payable worldwide and is up-rated where there is a legal requirement to do so, for example, where UK State Pension recipients are living in countries where there is a reciprocal agreement that provides for up-rating of the UK State Pension. Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, UK State Pension recipients living in the EEA and Switzerland by 31 December 2020 will have their state pensions up-rated for as long as they continue to live there and remain in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement. This will happen even if they claim their pension on or after 1 January 2021, provided they meet the UK State Pension qualifying conditions. For those not within scope of the Withdrawal Agreement, the rules governing up-rating are subject to the negotiations on the Future Relationship with the EU. The UK Government is seeking a reciprocal agreement with the EU which includes state pension up-rating.

**Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus****Virginia Crosbie:**[\[101327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the effect of the rate of statutory sick pay on the number of people who choose to remain at home when they experience symptoms of covid-19.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

This Government has a strong safety net that helps people who are facing hardship and are unable to support themselves financially. We have taken steps to strengthen that safety net so that people are supported to do the right thing where they are required to self-isolate. We have extended eligibility for SSP, and made it payable from day 1 – rather than day 4 – for employees who are sick or need to self-isolate because of covid-19. Employers can choose to pay more than SSP and many do.

SSP is just one part of our welfare safety net and our wider government offer to support people in times of need. Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on individual circumstances. Working people on low incomes who are required to remain at home by NHS Test and Trace to help stop the spread of the virus and cannot work from home could be eligible for a £500 payment to financially support them while self-isolating.

### Background

- SSP is paid entirely by the employer at £95.85 per week for up to 28 weeks.
- Approximately 60% of employees receive more than the statutory minimum from their employer.
- If an individual claims Universal Credit while receiving SSP their SSP will be taken into account when calculating their Universal Credit.
- We have strengthened our wider safety net by temporarily increasing the standard allowance of Universal Credit by the equivalent of £20 per week, meaning that claimants will be up to £1,040 better off for the 20/21 tax year.

### ■ Universal Credit: East Renfrewshire

**Kirsten Oswald:**

**[101032]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families with children received the £20 per week uplift in universal credit standard allowance payments, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 20 March 2020, in East Renfrewshire constituency in each month since it was introduced.

**Will Quince:**

The available information on the number of households with children with Universal Credit in payment, by parliamentary constituency, is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**The following special points should be noted:**

For 1 year from 6 April 2020, the standard allowance of Universal Credit has been increased by £20 per week from 6 April 2020 above the already announced annual uprating, raising the standard allowance from £317.82 to £409.89 per month (for claimants aged 25 and over).

**■ Universal Credit: Lone Parents****Neil Gray:****[101285]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to offer tailored support for jobseeking single parents on universal credit with pre-school-aged children.

**Will Quince:**

Universal Credit is committed to helping parents prepare for work, move into work and stay in work.

Work coaches have the ability to tailor the frequency and type of face-to-face support they offer to the needs of each lone parent or lead carer. Generally, lone parents and lead carers need to prepare for work when their youngest child reaches age 2 and will be required to look for and be available for work when their youngest child is aged 3. Additional safeguards apply during this period and any work-related expectations will be limited to a maximum of 16 hours per week because they are caring for a pre-school age child. Those expected to look for work may limit the time they can spend travelling to and from work and have additional time to attend an interview or take up work so they can make childcare arrangements.

Flexible Support Fund (FSF) is a discretionary fund available for use by Jobcentre Plus Service Leaders and work coaches.

The fund has many uses and could be used to contribute to upfront childcare costs, but it's core purpose is supporting our customers back into employment through the removal of barriers and funding innovative programmes which sit outside of our mainstream contracted provision.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ UK Participation in International Vaccines Procurement Initiative (COVAX)

**Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):**  
[\[HCWS511\]](#)

I am confirming that the United Kingdom has joined the global COVAX initiative to expedite the discovery, manufacture, and fair distribution of an effective coronavirus vaccine to one billion people globally.

The UK is a strong supporter and champion of COVAX and its mission to deliver fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines around the world. We are pleased that over 170 countries and territories have announced their intention to join COVAX. Through this initiative, countries are pooling resources to support 'at risk' investment in manufacturing and secure advance purchase agreements with manufacturers for the supply of their vaccines. COVAX will procure vaccines for both high-income and lower income countries and will distribute vaccines equitably.

The COVAX Facility is being run by the Vaccines Alliance (Gavi), with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). It has two parts:

1. a Self-Financing Facility to allow upper-middle and high-income countries to pool investments in candidates in exchange for early access to vaccines; and
2. The Advance Market Commitment (AMC) fund, to support 92 low and lower-middle income countries to buy vaccines.

We have contributed £71 million to the Self-Financing Facility. This will give us an option to buy vaccines available through COVAX for up to 20% of the UK population (13.5 million people). Any vaccines secured through COVAX will be complementary to those the UK has already secured through its agreements with vaccine developers.

The Prime Minister announced at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that the UK will allocate £500 million of ODA funding for the procurement and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in low and lower middle-income countries. This is in addition to the £48 million we allocated to the AMC at the Global Vaccine Summit in June 2020.

This new funding includes a commitment to match £1 for every \$4 committed by others, up to £250 million, encouraging other countries to fund the global effort to fairly distribute vaccines across the globe and leverage an additional \$1 billion for the AMC. Canada, Germany, Sweden and Japan have all made commitments of over \$422 million. This means we have, so far, matched almost £106 million of this funding.

In addition, the UK has worked with the World Bank to develop an ambitious \$12 billion proposal for vaccine financing, which was also announced at UNGA. The World Bank will make up to \$6 billion of its financing available to middle-income countries and

\$6 billion to low and lower-middle income countries, to help them secure access to COVID-19 vaccines.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove):** [\[HCWS514\]](#)

The next meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee will take place in London on 19 October 2020, with delegations attending in person and by video conference.

The meeting will be co-chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, and Vice President of the European Commission, Mr Maroš Šefčovič.

The agenda will include four items:

#### **1. Introduction and opening remarks from co-chairs**

##### **1.1. Stocktake of recent Specialised Committee meetings**

##### **1.2. Future Specialised Committee meetings**

#### **2. Update on Withdrawal Agreement Implementation**

##### **2.1. Citizens' rights**

###### **2.1.1. Joint Implementation Report**

###### **2.1.2. Progress on Joint Committee Decision on triangulation**

##### **2.2. Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland**

###### **2.2.1. Progress on Joint Committee Decisions foreseen by the Protocol**

###### **2.2.2. Progress on Joint Committee Decision on correction of errors and omissions**

###### **2.3. Dispute settlement – Discussion on progress on Joint Committee Decision on the establishment of a list of arbitrators**

#### **3. AOB**

#### **4. Concluding remarks**

The UK delegation will include:

- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
- The Paymaster General, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive have been invited to form part of the UK delegation.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Rough sleeping update**

**Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS510\]](#)

Today, I have announced additional support for rough sleepers this winter, giving local areas the tools they need to protect people from life-threatening cold weather and risks posed by COVID-19.

During the pandemic, we have worked closely with local authorities and the sector to offer vulnerable people safe accommodation and support. That work is ongoing and in September we had successfully supported over 29,000 people, with over 10,000 in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move on support.

These efforts have been backed by significant government support. We have given councils over £4.8 billion to help them to manage the impacts of COVID-19, which we have been clear includes their work to support rough sleepers. Over the summer we worked with every local authority to develop a local, tailored plan to support rough sleepers over the coming months. This has been supported by £91.5 million of funding from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, allocated in September.

Today's announcement further builds on this existing package of support over winter, setting out a plan that gives local areas a range of levers to support vulnerable rough sleepers as we approach winter.

Firstly, there will be a new £10 million Cold Weather Fund for local authorities to bring forward COVID-secure accommodation this winter.

Secondly, we will be working intensively with the areas in greatest need, in recognition of the particular challenges they face.

Thirdly, recognising the vital role of the faith and communities' sector, we are establishing a new £2 million Transformation Fund to ensure the voluntary sector can bring forward COVID-secure accommodation.

Finally, we are publishing comprehensive guidance to the sector, produced with Public Health England, Homeless Link (the umbrella organisation for homelessness charities) and Housing Justice, to help them open shelters more safely, where not doing so would endanger lives. We know that some night shelters are planning to re-open imminently and our operating principles and additional funding package will help shelter providers and local authorities make any additional winter provision safer from the spread of COVID-19.

Today's announcement is on top of the £112 million Rough Sleeping Initiative funding provided to local authorities in 2020/21, as well as the recently announced funding allocations to provide interim support and winter funding as part of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. We will also be bringing forward 3,300 longer term units of accommodation this year. In total, the Government is spending over £700 million pounds

to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone. We remain committed to transforming the lives of some of the most vulnerable in society, and to ending rough sleeping for good.

In addition, the Government has injected over £9 billion into the welfare system, including helping people with housing costs by increasing Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile – putting an average of £600 into people’s pockets this year. We have taken action to protect tenants and support them to stay in their homes. Most recently, we have increased notice periods to six months meaning that anyone served notice today can stay in their home until mid-March in all but the most egregious cases, such as those involving antisocial behaviour.

We will set out further detail about how local areas can access this winter funding and support imminently and I encourage all relevant partners and local authorities to consider how they can best use this funding to save lives this winter.

## PRIME MINISTER

### ■ Appointment Update

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**

[\[HCWS513\]](#)

#### **Appointment of Additional Grenfell Tower Inquiry Panel Member**

The fire in Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 was an unimaginable tragedy that should never have happened.

The Government set up the Grenfell Tower Inquiry to get to the truth about what happened and to deliver justice for victims, survivors, bereaved families and the wider community.

Ensuring that such a terrible tragedy can never happen again remains a priority for this Government.

In February this year, I announced my intention to appoint an additional panel member to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Section 7(1)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 allows me to appoint panel members to the Inquiry panel at any time during the Inquiry. In appointing a panel member, section 8(1)(a) and (b) of the Inquiries Act 2005 require me to ensure that the Inquiry panel (considered as a whole) has the necessary expertise to undertake the Inquiry, and to consider the need for balance (considered against the background of the terms of reference) in the composition of the panel.

Phase 2 of the Inquiry is the largest phase in terms of the number and range of issues to be considered, and given the diversity of issues, and the expertise already available to the Inquiry, I am pleased to appoint Ali Akbor OBE as the Inquiry’s third panel member.

Ali is currently the CEO of Unity Homes and Enterprise, a leading housing association supporting sustainable and diverse neighbourhoods in West Yorkshire. Prior to his role at Unity, Ali was finance director for the Community and Social Services Directorate at the City of Salford. In December 2019, he was awarded an OBE for services to the

community in Leeds. His knowledge of, and professional expertise in social housing, local government and community engagement are highly relevant skills and experience which will add great value to the Inquiry panel.

I am confident that Ali's appointment will ensure that the Inquiry panel has the diversity of skills and expertise necessary for the scope and complexity of issues to be addressed by Phase 2 of its work.

I wrote to the Chair of the Inquiry, Sir Martin Moore-Bick, on 12 October informing him of my decision and to seek his consent to the appointment in accordance with section 7(2)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005. Sir Martin replied on 13 October consenting to the appointment.

Ali will read into the work of the Inquiry while he formally steps back from his role at Unity and will join the Inquiry panel on 2 November for the start of module 2 of its work. It is intended that Ali will sit for the duration of the Inquiry and, alongside his two fellow panel members, will be jointly responsible for the whole of the Inquiry's Phase 2 work.

Our exchange of letters can be found on gov.uk.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Warm Home Discount Scheme 20/21 – Direct Support for Pensioners

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**

[\[HCWS512\]](#)

The Warm Home Discount Scheme (WHDS) provides up to £350m per year to tackle fuel poverty and the pressure placed by energy prices on low income households.

Around 1.2 million pensioner households who receive the guarantee element of pension credit are automatically eligible for the WHDS and will receive a £140 discount off their energy bill. Thanks to DWP IT we have data matched nearly one million eligible claimants who will receive this discount automatically.

A further 220,000 pensioners will receive a letter encouraging them to check their eligibility and apply. Pensioners can call to check their eligibility on 0800 731 0214.

Where eligible, the deduction will be taken automatically from energy bills before March 2021, with most pensioners receiving their discounts between now and January.

Up to a further 1.2m low income, working age households can also benefit from a £140 discount from their supplier. These customers must meet an individual energy supplier's criteria for the scheme to qualify, which will include being in receipt of certain means-tested benefits.

The WHDS also provides a range of initiatives to benefit fuel poor and vulnerable households, including debt assistance, benefit entitlement checks and energy advice to domestic customers in or at risk of fuel poverty.

More information on the Warm Home Discount Scheme is available at [gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](https://gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme).