



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 19 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 19 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Criminal Proceedings

Peter Kyle:[\[101295\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2020 to Question 95701, if she will publish the number of cases pursued by the Crown Prosecution Service that resulted in unsuccessful outcomes due to victim issues by offence type in each quarter since the third quarter of the 2018-19 financial year.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains a central record of the outcomes of completed prosecutions, as a count of the number of defendants finalised, and collates the data collected by quarter. Each non-conviction (or 'unsuccessful') outcome is allocated a reason, indicating the principal reason the defendant was not convicted. The CPS also collects data which reports the number of prosecuted defendants allocated to twelve Principal Offence Categories.

The table below shows the number of non-convictions due to victim issues by Principal Offence Category in each quarter from Q3 2018-19 (October to December 2018) to Q4 2019-20 (January to March 2020).

	18/19-Q3	18/19-Q4	19/20-Q1	19/20-Q2	19/20-Q3	19/20-Q4
Homicide	2	2	2	3	1	3
Offences Against The Person	2,770	2,687	2,419	2,520	1,997	1,992
Sexual Offences	96	65	47	49	59	49
Burglary	55	58	44	49	31	73
Robbery	59	81	49	86	68	62
Theft And Handling	106	104	112	100	84	98
Fraud And Forgery	22	23	22	16	26	15
Criminal Damage	237	218	189	199	162	159
Drugs	7	5	6	14	8	9

	18/19-Q3	18/19-Q4	19/20-Q1	19/20-Q2	19/20-Q3	19/20-Q4
Fraud And Forgery	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Criminal Damage	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Drugs Offences	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Order Offences	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Motoring Offences	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Other (No Category Allocated)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Non-Convictions due to Victim Issues as a percentage of all prosecutions	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Munira Wilson:

[\[103630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to allow recipients of funding from the Bounce Back Loan scheme to reapply for the scheme in the event that they did not use the full amount on offer for their first loan.

Paul Scully:

Under the terms of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), each business and any wider group of which it is part, defined by having a holding company at the top of their structure, is only eligible to receive one BBLs facility.

Businesses are not currently permitted to go back and 'top up' a BBLs facility if they borrowed less than the maximum. However, they are allowed to refinance the loan using the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILs) facility, allowing them to borrow more money whilst only having one active facility supported by a Government guarantee.

Carbon Emissions**Alan Brown:****[103573]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish a response to the Committee on Climate Change report entitled, Reducing UK Emissions Progress Report to Parliament, published in June 2020.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government response to the Committee on Climate Change's report Reducing UK Emissions Progress Report to Parliament was laid in Parliament on 15 October. A copy of the response can be found online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committee-on-climate-changes-2020-progress-report-government-response>.

Digital Technology and Internet: Advertising**Damian Collins:****[101264]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish a response to the Competition and Markets Authority's final report of their market study into online platforms and digital advertising, published on 1 July 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Government is currently considering the recommendations of the Competition and Market Authority's market study and will respond in due course.

Electricity: Carbon Emissions**Ben Lake:****[101303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of grid capacity required for electrification to deliver net zero by 2050.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As we move towards Net Zero in 2050, an increase in electricity demand is anticipated, in part due to the electrification of transport and heat. The electricity system will need increased generation capacity to meet higher peak demand and, ensure security of supply. National Grid Electricity System Operator, in their 2020

Future Energy Scenarios (FES)[1], estimate that peak demand will increase from 59GW in 2019 to 76 – 96GW by 2050. In order to meet this peak demand, they estimate that total installed generation capacity will have to increase from 112GW in 2019, to 224 – 334GW in 2050[2].

These changes will also require upgrades to grid capacity. Electricity networks are regulated by the independent regulator, Ofgem, through the price control, which provides the framework for network investment. Ofgem is working to set the next price control to enable investment for Net Zero.

[1] <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/future-energy-scenarios/fes-2020-documents>

[2] *Total installed capacity and total storage capacity including vehicle-to-grid. Includes all network connected generation.*

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Bill Wiggin: [\[103443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons people eligible for the Green Homes Grant scheme have not been able to receive their vouchers before the start of November 2020.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Applications for Green Homes Grant scheme vouchers are subject to thorough checks, to help protect against malpractice. These checks may take some time to complete but are vital to ensuring value for money and consumer protection. The first vouchers will be approved and issued shortly.

Bill Wiggin: [\[103444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to increase the number of local contractors participating in the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Green Homes Grant scheme will support tens of thousands of jobs, and we are working closely with industry to ensure there are enough installers to meet demand. More than 1,000 companies have signed up so far with more registering every day, including many businesses that operate nationally with substantial capacity to carry out work across the country.

We have also made £6.9m available via the Green Homes Grant Skills Training competition to fund training to increase the number of installers available.

Bill Wiggin: [\[103445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of people eligible for the Green Homes Grant scheme who will be unable to use that scheme due to inadequate numbers of qualified installers in their area.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is working closely with industry to ensure there are enough installers to meet demand. More than 1,000 companies are registered with TrustMark and are able to carry out measures under the Green Homes Grant Scheme, with more registering every day. We have changed the way the Simple Energy Advice website displays installers so that consumers can find increased numbers of registered tradespeople that can deliver work in their area.

Officials are working actively with TrustMark scheme providers and certification bodies to support installers to get certified as quickly as possible. The Department also recently launched a £6.9m skills competition to provide training opportunities for the energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains to deliver works and scale up to meet additional consumer demand.

Bill Wiggin:[\[103446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to extend the deadline of the Green Homes Grant scheme after 31 March 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The time-limited nature of the scheme is determined by the nature of the funding. Any potential funding allocations for future years will be determined in the next Government spending review.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Environment Protection**Marco Longhi:**[\[101324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support environmentally-friendly industry and manufacturing in Dudley North constituency.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In April 2020, a consortium led by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was awarded funding from UK Research and Innovation through the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge. The LEP was invited to compete for a total of up to £8 million in phase two of the competition, to develop plans for decarbonising the local industrial cluster through the 'Repowering the Black Country' project.

This project aims to agree a roadmap for the Black Country's industry to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040. The roadmap will provide a framework for securing significant commercial funding and investment to support clean industrial growth within the region.

In July 2020, the Government announced plans to publish an Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy in Spring 2021. The Strategy will set out the Government's vision for a prosperous, low carbon UK industrial sector by 2050. The Government is also investing £147 million towards the Manufacturing Made Smarter challenge, which is open to firms across the UK. This competition will support innovation in

industrial digital technology that will accelerate the drive to net zero, raise productivity by 30%, and create thousands of new highly-skilled jobs.

■ Wind Power

Alan Brown:

[\[103572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) grid infrastructure upgrades required to facilitate the planned deployment of 40GW of offshore wind by 2030 and (b) effect of Ofgem's interim decision on RIIO 2 on the required upgrades; and will he make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In July, the Government launched the Offshore Transmission Network Review to assess the approach to delivering connections for offshore wind. As part of this review, National Grid ESO is consulting on their cost-benefit analysis of a more coordinated approach to offshore transmission and an initial assessment of technical considerations for a more integrated offshore network. The Review will consider these consultations and we will publish an update in due course.

The next price control for onshore electricity transmission networks, RIIO 2, is a matter for Ofgem the independent regulator. Ofgem's Draft Determinations were announced in July and have been open to consultation with stakeholders. The Final Determinations expected at the end of this year will set out Ofgem's views on the upgrades proposed for the transmission network and whether, when and how these investments should be funded.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Fireworks: Injuries

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[102958\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many fatalities have been recorded in hospitals in England for injuries related to firework displays in each year since 2010.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ102958 [PQ102958.pdf]

■ Health Education: Advertising

Daisy Cooper:

[\[102184\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether photographs used in Government public health adverts in newspapers are required to reflect the diversity of the communities in which those adverts are placed.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government's public health advertising is reflective of the UK's diverse communities. We work with marketing agencies to address barriers by targeting audiences with bespoke communications, including providing translations of core campaign materials. This ensures our public health messaging reaches as many people as possible.

Housing: East Hampshire**Damian Hinds:**[\[100935\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on the (a) residence-based and (b) workplace-based house price to income ratios for (i) East Hampshire parliamentary constituency and (ii) East Hampshire district local authority area disaggregated by the area (A) inside and (B) outside the South Downs National Park in all years where data is available.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ100935 [PQ100935.pdf]

Marriage: Coronavirus**Esther McVey:**[\[100986\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the attendance restrictions on weddings will be reviewed.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government continues to work closely with stakeholders in the wedding industry, to enable weddings and civil partnerships to continue to take place.

We recognise that the limit on attendees may be disappointing for those planning such events. By their nature, weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are events that bring families and friends together from across the country and sometimes across the world, making them particularly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19. We do not wish to keep restrictions in place for any longer than we have to, and it will be kept under review in line with the changing situation. For further information, please refer to the guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

UK Trade with EU**Chi Onwurah:**[\[102800\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his oral contribution of 23 September 2020, Official Report, column 978,

whether the updated Border Operating Model document has (a) been published and (b) includes each IT system with which a business will have to interface to trade with the EU.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government published the updated Border Operating Model on 8 October. The document outlines the processes and systems required to move goods between GB and the EU from 1 January onwards, as well as the changes due in April and July of 2021 respectively.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Working Conditions

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[103442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to review the outcomes achieved by the Defence Safety Authority in providing safe working environments for the armed forces.

Jeremy Quin:

As detailed in the Defence Safety Authority (DSA) Charter, the Director General DSA prepares and submits an Annual Assurance Report for consideration by the Permanent Secretary, as chair of the Defence Health, Safety and Environment Protection (HS&EP) Committee, prior to consideration by the Defence Board and final approval by the Secretary of State for Defence. This yearly report provides the Secretary of State for Defence with independent assurance that Defence policy for HS&EP is being promoted and implemented. In addition, an independent audit of the DSA is planned for 2023 to provide assurance of the continuing effectiveness of the DSA.

■ Army Foundation College: Abuse and Violence

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[103539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many formal complaints of violent or abusive behaviour by staff at the Army Foundation College have been made by (a) Junior Soldiers or (b) their parents/guardians since 2014.

Johnny Mercer:

The number of Service Complaints made by Junior Soldiers at the Army Foundation College (Harrogate) since 2014 is so low that to supply actual numbers would be considered disclosive. For this reason, the figure has been suppressed in order to preserve anonymity.

I can confirm that fewer than five Service Complaints have been received from Junior Soldiers attending the College since 2014.

All Serving or former members of the UK Armed Forces can make a Service Complaint if they feel they have been wronged on a matter that arises when they are subject to service law. A Service Complaint cannot be raised on behalf of another

individual, therefore figures can only be provided in response to part (a) of the hon. Member's question.

However, any allegation of unacceptable behaviour raised locally to the Chain of Command, either by serving personnel or from a parent/guardian is investigated accordingly. There are robust procedures in place to ensure all forms of unacceptable behaviour are handled appropriately.

■ **Army: Recruitment**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[103588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to Answer of 7 October to Questions 98730, 98731, 98732, if he will provide the information requested by the financial year of inflow.

James Heappey:

The information requested by the hon. Member can be found in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. 103588 - Under 18 Phase II Training Outflow [103588 - Liz Saville Roberts - U18_Ph2_Outflow.docx]

■ **Iraq: Detainees**

John Healey:

[\[103427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 70307 on Ministry of Defence: Iraq Detainees, how much his Department has agreed to pay to date in relation to those outstanding 414 civil claims.

Johnny Mercer:

Details of 330 of the 1,000 civil claims where an agreement with the claimant in terms of damages to be paid to the claimant, notwithstanding the legal costs that may not yet have been agreed and paid, are already in the public domain following responses provided to FOI requests received and the High Court judgment of December 2017 relating to the trials of the four lead claims in the Iraqi Civilian Litigation (ICL). Discussions between the claimants' solicitors and departmental officials with regard to the resolution of the outstanding remaining claims in the ICL have continued since early 2018, but the terms of these discussions and any outcomes remain the subject of a confidentiality agreement and we are therefore unable to provide a detailed and complete response to this question at this time. However, although the confidentiality agreement remains extant, it is hoped that we will be in a position to provide further information in relation to the remaining outstanding claims in the ICL in the near future.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Equality**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[102765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons his Department is advertising for a Diversity and Inclusion Director.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[102766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the appointment of a Diversity and Inclusion Director in his Department contributes to his Department's strategic objectives.

Johnny Mercer:

The senior leadership of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), military and civilian, is committed to improving Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) across the Department. We know we are not sufficiently diverse, not yet reflecting the society we defend and serve, and we are determined to deliver tangible progress at pace. The Department has recently set Levels of Ambition for D&I, backed by action plans that will be regularly assured and reported on. There is a palpable energy for change, from across Defence personnel, and to harness this and create real momentum we have directed that D&I will be a high-priority programme, taken forward on a sustained and enduring basis, across the whole of Defence. To lead this exciting agenda, we are seeking to appoint a senior D&I professional as Director and Senior Responsible Officer.

Defence strongly believes that Diversity and Inclusion is critical to Defence achieving its mission; if we are to safeguard the security, stability and prosperity of our nation, we must recruit and retain the best people drawn from the broadest diversity of thought, skills and background. A more representative workforce mitigates against the risks that a lack of diversity and inclusivity can create.

The successful candidate for the role of Director D&I will develop and deliver the Department's D&I Plan and will hold our Executive Committee to account, putting the Department's D&I work on a programmatic footing in order to make an enduring step change in momentum and drive actions at all levels to bring about substantive improvements for the whole MOD workforce, both Service and civilian. They will set D&I policy, refresh D&I strategy and assure delivery against actions plans by Defence, Top Level Budgets, Chiefs and Director Generals, together supporting around 240,000 personnel.

■ Type 31 Frigates

Gill Furniss:

[\[103595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to progress the Type 31 Frigate ships project.

Jeremy Quin:

The Type 31 frigate programme is progressing to schedule and to cost. The current key outputs for the programme are focused on design, shipyard infrastructure development and supply chain mobilisation.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband****Esther McVey:****[100989]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made in upgrading broadband infrastructure in the UK.

Matt Warman:

According to Thinkbroadband (<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/>), coverage at UK premises for different broadband speeds is currently:

- Superfast (30Mbps) = 96.48%
- Ultrafast (100Mbps) = 63.02%
- Gigabit (1,000Mbps) = 27.22%
- Full Fibre (Gigabit+) = 17.12%

Virgin Media are in the process of activating gigabit services across their entire network by the end of 2021, and this currently covers over 52% of the UK. BT Openreach and CityFibre also have multi-billion pound fibre rollout programmes underway so a leap in gigabit coverage during 2021 is anticipated. This planned build predominantly covers urban areas so DCMS's focus is on stimulating build in the more rural and disadvantaged areas of the UK where the commercial market will not build unaided.

The government has invested significant amounts in digital infrastructure over the last decade. The DCMS portfolio of active projects is currently c.£4 billion (detailed below) and in the Spring Budget, a further £5 billion of investment was announced for the hardest to reach areas of the UK. More details regarding the programme will follow in the Autumn Spending Review.

Current and future programmes are as follows:

- The Building Digital UK (BDUK) Superfast Broadband Programme is investing over £1.9 billion of public money (much of this match funded on top of this figure by local bodies, EU funds and suppliers) to ensure over 96.4% of UK premises have access to superfast broadband.
- The Local Full Fibre Networks Programme (LFFN) is investing £278 million to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre networks in both rural and urban locations across the whole of the UK. Currently 17% of UK premises have access to a full fibre connection, up from 0.9% in 2016. 27.2% of UK premises have access to gigabit-capable broadband.
- The Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme (RGC) is investing up to £200 million on gigabit broadband connections in rural areas. This includes a rural voucher scheme where up to £3,500 is available to rural SMEs and up to £1,500 for rural premises is available to support the installation of gigabit-capable broadband when part of a group scheme. To date, the programme has issued vouchers to the value

of £33.5 million. Top-up schemes are also operating across the UK where Local Authorities / Devolved Administrations provide their own funding on top of our values.

- The Shared Rural Network Programme (SRN) is investing £500 million of public funding with a further £500 million of match funding from industry to improve rural 4G coverage across the UK. The programme has just started but has already seen the first handful of new 4G sites go live.
- The 700MHz Spectrum Clearance Programme is investing up to £400 million on reconfiguring the use of the airwave in the UK to make more capacity available for 5G broadband. That programme completed its airwave clearance activity in August 2020.
- The 5G Trials and Testbeds Programme is investing c.£250 million in a number of 5G projects across the UK.
- We are in the process of mobilising our new £5 billion UK Gigabit Programme which was announced in the Spring Budget. Procurements will commence in early 2021.

Chi Onwurah:

[102804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of trends in changes to broadband download speeds (a) regionally and (b) between urban and rural areas since 23 March 2020.

Matt Warman:

The Ofcom Connected Nations report is published every 6 months. From this data we can see that as of May, 14.5% of the UK currently have full fibre broadband available. 15% of urban properties have full fibre broadband available. 12.4% of rural properties have full fibre broadband available.

Currently Thinkbroadband (<http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/uk>) shows that 27.2% of premises across the UK have access to Gigabit capable broadband, however it does not provide a urban/rural split. This is up from 18% in March 2020.

A breakdown of Full Fibre service by region is as follows:

	JAN 2020	MAY 2020
East Midlands	8.7	10.1
East of England	6.6	8.6
London	15.4	18.5
North East	4.1	5.2
North West	10.2	12.0
Northern Ireland	39.5	47.4

	JAN 2020	MAY 2020
Scotland	10.2	12.8
South East	9.3	10.8
South West	14.2	16.8
Wales	13.3	15.3
West Midlands	11.8	13.7
Yorkshire and The Humber	19.5	22.0

■ Cineworld Group: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[102709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he had had with (a) Cineworld and (b) trade unions on financial support for staff affected by the planned partial closure of that company's cinemas.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[102710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the planned partial closure of Cineworld's cinemas during the covid-19 outbreak, what plans his Department has to work with HM Treasury to provide further financial support to the film and screen industry.

Caroline Dinéage:

The government deeply regrets the unfortunate news of Cineworld's temporary closure and is in direct and regular contact with the screen industry, including distributors and exhibitors, as well as through the BFI Screen Sector Task Force.

The government has supported cinemas through the VAT cut on tickets and concessions, business rates holiday and Bounce back loans. Independent cinemas are also eligible for a share of £30m from our unprecedented £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund, and funding has started to be allocated already.

We recognise that cinemas need an incoming stream of new releases to show and we are supporting production by establishing a £500 million in a UK-wide Film and TV Production Restart Scheme to help get productions back up and running again. This will support the creation of new content which can be released into cinemas of all sizes.

Unless subject to local restrictions, cinemas are open for business and Covid secure. We urge the British public to support their local cinema and save jobs by visiting and enjoying a film in accordance with the guidance.

■ Commonwealth Games 2022: Bromsgrove**Sajid Javid:**[\[100930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham on business opportunities for businesses in Bromsgrove District.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government, along with Birmingham City Council and its partners, is investing £778 million to deliver the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. The Games will be about far more than 11 days of sport and Government's significant investment will provide legacy opportunities such as job creation, community and sports facilities and a timely boost to businesses for the whole of the West Midlands, including Bromsgrove District. The additional investment of £24 million from the Government and the West Midlands Combined Authority to create a Trade, Tourism, and Investment Programme for the Games will also ensure the West Midlands can fully maximise the national and international economic opportunities of hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

■ Conferences and Events Industry: Coronavirus**Fleur Anderson:**[\[103637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the planned timescale is for allowing (a) conferences and (b) exhibitions to be held during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the events industry's disappointment at the delayed reopening of large business conferences and exhibitions.

We have always been clear that our roadmap to recovery is dependent on continued progress against the virus. Due to the sharp rise in cases over recent weeks, we needed to pause the planned 1st October reopening of business conferences and exhibitions.

Meetings of up to 30 for training, education and work purposes can still take place in permitted venues, as per the Covid-19 Secure guidance for the visitor economy. Since 11 July, a range of outdoor events have been able to take place, although again this is subject to COVID-secure guidelines.

We are also aware that many in the sector support the notion of a publishing a timescale for reopening events. We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to assess how we can best support the sector's safe reopening. The business events pilots we carried out in September will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help larger events reopen when it is safe to do so.

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Tracy Brabin:

[\[102894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date applicants to the Arts Council England administered Cultural Recovery Fund who applied for less than £250,000 in support will receive detailed explanation for the reasons that their application was unsuccessful.

Caroline Dinenge:

Each arms length body, in this case Arts Council England, has the delegated authority over allocating grant funding.

Their decision-making processes have been designed to balance limited resource with the urgent need to award funds, and process a very high number of applications, as soon as possible. This means that they do not have the resources to provide tailored feedback to applicants who applied for grants of under £250k. These applications were assessed and considered within area-based panel meetings, with recommendations passed on to a National Investment Panel for final decision.

We know that some applicants will be disappointed with the outcome and both the Arts Council and DCMS will continue to do all we can to support creativity and culture in England. Arts Council have published resources on their website both for organisations and individuals which include alternative sources of support and wellbeing resources.

■ Culture: Finance

Ben Everitt:

[\[103656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding his Department plans to make available from the public purse for arts and culture venues that were unsuccessful in obtaining funds from the Culture Recovery Fund.

Caroline Dinenge:

The Culture Recovery Fund will provide a vital lifeline to thousands of organisations but we have always been clear that this funding would not be enough to help every organisation. This is public money and it is important that there was a robust criteria that applicants had to meet. This included applicants being able to show that they have a sustainable, viable plan, and that this funding would help them to continue trading.

While this means not everyone who applied could be supported, we have provided funding to almost 2000 organisations already - providing a vital life line and protecting them for future generations. Organisations unsuccessful in obtaining funds from the Culture Recovery Fund can still apply to the government's other support measures including the job support scheme, the bounce back loans scheme and the VAT reduction.

In addition, Arts Council England recently reopened the National Lottery Project Fund programme with a budget of £77.9 million which will be available until April 2021. This

programme will support independent organisations, creative practitioners and freelancers.

■ Data Protection: EU law

Sarah Olney:

[\[103597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the decision of the European Court of Justice of 6 October 2020 on the UK's retention of data, what steps he is taking to secure a data-sharing agreement with the EU after the end of the transition period.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The European Court of Justice issued a ruling on 6 October on the UK's bulk communications data regime operated by the UK's intelligence services and its use for protecting national security.

The ruling relates to a previous power (in the Telecommunications Act 1984) that has since been replaced by provisions in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

The ruling has no immediate direct impact on the work of our security and intelligence agencies as it will now be referred back to the UK courts (the Investigatory Powers Tribunal) for them to consider its effect on the UK's current bulk communications data regime.

Talks with the EU on our future data sharing relationship ("adequacy decisions") continue and the process is moving forward. If agreed, these will permit the continued free flow of personal data from the EU/EEA to the UK.

The adequacy process involves the European Commission assessing the UK's data protection framework to assure that we are at least "essentially equivalent" to EU standards. We are considering any implications of the ruling on this process.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Advertising

Seema Malhotra:

[\[103538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department allocated funding to the Fatima's Next Job Could be in Cyber advert.

Oliver Dowden:

The CyberFirst recruitment campaign is delivered by skills provider QA with funding allocated through the National Cyber Security Programme.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Pay

Philip Davies:

[\[100322\]](#)

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

Mr John Whittingdale:

The biggest pay rise given to a member of staff in DCMS in the last 12 months was £20,035.00 which was an increase of 59.95%. This was a member of staff being promoted from close to the old band B minimum (£33,107) to the new band A floor (£51,729), plus a Recruitment & Retention Allowance to retain specialist skills within the organisation. The average pay increase as part of the pay award across the workforce was 2.5%.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus**Esther McVey:**[\[100983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will provide a timeframe for the lifting of covid-19 restrictions on the events industry.

Esther McVey:[\[100984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will allow the events industry to reopen under similar restrictions to other businesses that have been allowed operate during the covid-19 outbreak.

Peter Kyle:[\[102130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will put in place a staged roadmap for the return of business events similar to that which he put in place for the return of the performing arts.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the events industry's disappointment at the delayed reopening of large business conferences and exhibitions.

We have always been clear that our roadmap to recovery is dependent on continued progress against the virus. Due to the sharp rise in cases over recent weeks, we needed to pause the planned 1st October reopening of business conferences and exhibitions.

Meetings of up to 30 for training, education and work purposes can still take place in permitted venues, as per the Covid-19 Secure guidance for the visitor economy. Since 11 July, a range of outdoor events have been able to take place, although again this is subject to COVID secure guidelines.

We are also aware that many in the sector support the notion of an events reopening roadmap. We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to assess how we can best support the sector's safe reopening. The business events pilots we carried out in September will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help larger events reopen when it is safe to do so.

■ Fairgrounds: Coronavirus**Alberto Costa:****[101039]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of enabling the safe reopening of fun fairs during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department has held a number of meetings with representatives of the outdoor events industry to discuss guidance and next steps to reopening the sector. DCMS officials have met regularly with the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, most recently on 8 October, and have also spoken to representatives of the Amusement Device Safety Council.

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

Guidance developed by the Events Industry Forum in collaboration with DCMS outlines the Covid-secure measures that a Local Authority should assess have been put in place by event organisers.

■ Football: Coronavirus**Grahame Morris:****[102758]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish guidance on the conditions required to facilitate the safe return of fans to football league grounds.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are committed to getting spectators back into stadiums as soon as it is safe to do so. The evidence we received from the Chief Medical Officer was very clear that at a time of rapidly rising infections, and when we were considering restrictions elsewhere, it was not the right time to undertake any further easements.

We will continue to work closely with a whole range of sports, including football, to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes the creation of a new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this. This will supplement the draft government guidance, and the SGSA supplementary guidance to their Green Guide, which has been internationally welcomed.

We will take the earliest opportunity to look again at getting spectators safely back into stadiums but this must clearly be very carefully judged against the prevailing health conditions. When these conditions are right, we will revisit our draft guidance in this area.

Julie Elliott:

[\[103513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the English Football League on the pilots of fans attending football matches during the covid-19 outbreak.

Julie Elliott:

[\[103514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the English Football League pilots of fans attending football matches during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are committed to getting spectators back into stadia as soon as it is safe to do so. The 12 pilot spectator events were crucial in trialling the concept, but unfortunately rising infection rates across the country meant that the Government had to act and we could not proceed with a wider reopening on the 1 October.

We will continue to work closely with a whole range of sporting bodies, including the English Football League, to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes the creation of a new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this.

We will take the earliest opportunity to look again at getting spectators safely back into stadia but this must clearly be very carefully judged against the prevailing health conditions.

■ Housing: Broadband

Kate Griffiths:

[\[102185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress he has made on ensuring developers provide new homes with gigabit broadband.

Matt Warman:

Ensuring that every new home is built with fast, reliable and resilient broadband is a priority for my Department. The Government announced in March 2020 that we will amend Building Regulations 2010 to require housing developers to:

- Provide a gigabit-capable connection unless the cost exceeds £2,000, or the network operator declines to provide a connection;
- Install the next fastest broadband connection which can be installed below a cost of £2,000, where a gigabit-capable connection cannot be installed below a cost of £2,000; and
- Install the physical infrastructure necessary for gigabit-capable connections even where a gigabit-capable connection exceeds the cost cap.

We are working closely with stakeholders to develop the regulations and statutory guidance and will publish a technical consultation this winter, laying the amendments to regulations in spring 2021.

The Government has also secured commitments from the CEOs of Openreach, Virgin and Gigaclear to work with housing developers to provide gigabit-capable connectivity to all new build developments across the UK, including contributing to the costs of connection.

■ Internet: Safety

Stuart Anderson:

[\[102929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to improve online safety (a) in general and (b) for people in protected characteristic groups.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place to be online. Under the new online harms legislation, companies will need to have robust systems and processes in place to keep their users safe, including those in protected characteristic groups.

Further details will be included in the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation, which we will publish later this year.

■ Local Broadcasting: Radio

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[102693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will hold discussions with OFCOM on the need to retain FM licences for locally-based community radio stations where there is a demand.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Ofcom has recently completed its fourth round of community radio licensing and awarded 24 licences to new community stations between November 2019 and April 2020. A total of 302 community radio stations are currently on air across the UK.

During 2019, Ofcom also agreed to improve the quality of the coverage of 63 community radio stations, and extend the coverage of 33, enabling community radio to reach a wider audience than ever.

Decisions on whether to offer new FM community radio licences are a matter for Ofcom to determine.

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Ben Bradley:

[\[99726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure costs incurred by local authorities as a result of the covid-19 outbreak do not lead to reductions in the provision of (a) youth work, (b) youth services and (c) other non-statutory services.

Mr John Whittingdale:

This government has provided local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, including over £4.8bn in funding for spending pressures. On Monday 12 October, the Prime Minister confirmed around £1bn of new funding will be made available to councils across England to support them during this unprecedented time.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure youth services to young people under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the government expects them to fulfil that duty.

Public Libraries: Finance**Gill Furniss:**[\[103596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the financial sustainability of libraries.

Caroline Dinenage:

My department has not undertaken a recent assessment of the financial sustainability of public libraries in England.

The most recent assessment was the National Audit Office report published in 2018 on the Financial sustainability of local authorities for the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-2018.pdf>

The Government is providing local councils with unprecedented support during the pandemic with a £4.3 billion package, including £3.7 billion which is not ringfenced and £600 million to support social care providers. This is part of a wider package of almost £28 billion which the Government has committed to support local areas, with funding going to councils, businesses and communities. The 2020 Spending Review will look at pressures facing the sector and provide them with the certainty they need to aid financial planning.

Sports: Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[102095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to provide financial support to professional (a) football, (b) rugby and (c) cricket clubs during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises the impact that Covid-19 is having on the sporting sector, and has 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 safety and security of players and spectators remains of paramount importance.

The government recognises that fans will be disappointed that sports pilot events were paused and that spectators were not able to be admitted to stadia from 1 October. The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is working with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what can be done to provide further support. The Department will also continue to work with colleagues across Whitehall to support the sector.

■ **Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus**

Jane Stevenson:

[\[102934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will delegate the decision on when to allow spectators into sports stadia during the covid-19 outbreak to local directors of public health.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government continues to engage and consult with health officials as necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic, including the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Chief Scientific Officer (CSA) and local directors of public health

The safety and security of players and spectators remains of paramount importance.

We fully understand the decision not to reopen stadia on October 1 is frustrating for sports fans. But in the face of rising infections and further restrictions it would not have been possible. The decision was taken on advice from the CMO and CSA and takes into account travelling to and from games held in stadia, where there may be further social interaction and the risk of virus spread.

Work continues at pace to find solutions that will allow crowds safely back into stadia as soon as possible and will allow local authorities and stakeholders retain their regulatory and advisory roles that support the running of spectator events.

■ **Television Licences: Non-payment**

Elliot Colburn:

[\[102938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish the Government's response to its consultation on decriminalising TV licence evasion.

Mr John Whittingdale:

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

In February 2020, the Government launched a public consultation on decriminalising TV licence evasion. The consultation closed in April after receiving over 150,000 responses. We will listen carefully to those that have responded before setting out our next steps.

EDUCATION

■ **Adult Education: Finance**

Karin Smyth:

[\[102108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Education and Skills Funding Agency plans to clawback any unspent adult education budget funding from the 2020-21 financial year from further education providers.

Gillian Keegan:

We fully appreciate the steps being taken by further education providers to continue to support adult learners and acknowledge their achievements in responding to the challenge posed by COVID-19.

We know that many providers have been able to continue delivery very successfully during the COVID-19 outbreak, including remotely, and would expect that all providers should now be able to function adequately under the current restrictions.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding and performance management rules for academic year 2020/21 (covering the period 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021) set out the funding arrangements for ESFA AEB providers, including the criteria for clawback of funds in cases of under-delivery. At present, we are not planning to further amend the ESFA AEB funding and performance rules for academic year 2020/21, but this will be kept under review.

Currently, approximately 50% of the AEB is devolved to 7 Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Mayor of London, acting where appropriate through the Greater London Authority (GLA). These authorities are now responsible for the provision of AEB-funded adult education for their residents and allocation of the AEB to providers. MCAs and the GLA are responsible for considering any flexibilities to their funding rules, in their respective areas.

■ **After School Clubs: Coronavirus**

Marco Longhi:

[\[101322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what after-school services are available to children of parents that have returned to work during the covid-19 outbreak in (a) the UK and (b) Dudley North constituency.

Vicky Ford:

We recognise that after-school provision is an important source of additional childcare for working parents and carers.

As of 4 July, all providers offering wraparound childcare and out-of-school activities to children have been able to operate with safety measures in place, both nationally and in Dudley North specifically. The department has updated the guidance for providers who run before and after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings for children to support them to operate as safely as possible now that all children have returned to school. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Schools should be working towards resuming any breakfast and after-school provision, as outlined in the guidance for the full opening of schools. Schools should also be working closely with any external wraparound childcare providers, which their pupils may use, to ensure parents can continue to work. The guidance for the full opening of schools is available here:

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

■ Apprentices

Kate Green:

[102788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to re-open the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

Gillian Keegan:

The decision to close the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers from midnight on 15 April 2020 was made as part of the implementation of the unprecedented response necessary across all of education and children's social care to support the government's response to COVID-19. These arrangements include the redeployment of Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) staff resources to priority areas, and the date of any re-opening of the register is being kept under review. The ESFA is currently looking into when and how to re-open the register in a way that continues to offer the right level of high-quality training. The ESFA are currently working through options and will provide an update in due course.

However, the ESFA are keen to ensure that levy-paying employers delivering services critical to the COVID-19 response, such as police forces and the NHS, are able to provide the apprenticeship training that their organisation needs. Levy-payers that employ critical workers, as defined by the department's guidance, have been permitted to apply to the employer provider route by exception whilst the register has been closed. More details on this guidance are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>.

■ Apprentices: Coronavirus

Yasmin Qureshi:

[102739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made the number of apprentices that have been (a) made redundant and (b) furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

We do not publish data on redundant or furloughed apprentices.

We know that almost 600 apprentices since 1 August have either contacted us for advice through our new redundancy support service or have registered for our vacancy sharing service. Over 750 employers have signed up to offer opportunities to redundant apprentices, including Bupa Dental and Taylor Wimpey.

The support service provides advice and guidance to apprentices who have been made redundant, or are at risk of redundancy, on their options and next steps. It also supports apprentices to identify new apprenticeship and employment opportunities with employers looking to recruit. In addition, we are changing the law to enable more apprentices to complete their apprenticeship in the event of redundancy.

Childcare: Coronavirus**Karin Smyth:****[100458]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of (a) the level of childcare provision available during the covid-19 outbreak; and what assessment she has made of the effect of available childcare on the number of mothers taking redundancy since March 2020 to date.

Vicky Ford:

Since April 2020, we have been collecting weekly data from all English local authorities to monitor the availability of early years childcare. We collect and publish information on the number of open and closed early years providers as well as the number of children attending. This information contributes to our regular publication, 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak', which is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Term-time attendance at early years settings has been increasing since September. On a typical day in the autumn term, we estimate attendance to be around 887,000 children, due to different and part-time patterns of childcare during the week. We estimate that 753,000 children attended early years settings on 8 October, which is approximately 85% of the usual daily level, and an increase of almost 340,000 from at the end of the summer term. 80% of early years settings were estimated to be open on 8 October.

From 4 July, wraparound childcare providers and other providers of out-of-school activities have been able to care for all children, with protective measures in place. We have published further updated guidance for providers who run before and after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings for children on the protective measures that should be put in place to ensure they are operating as safely as possible. This is also to ensure that with the introduction of our new local COVID-19 alert levels, that wraparound childcare is able to remain open, to support parents to continue to work. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

We also know that many schools operate their own breakfast and after school clubs, and they should be working to resume this provision, if they have not already. As part of our guidance to schools on full opening, we have provided schools with guidance to support them in reopening this valuable provision. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The department does not hold information on the reasons for redundancy. However, the poll of 1000 parents of 0-4 year old children in May 2020 showed only 7% of critical worker families disagree that 'the hours their child(ren) can access childcare or school at the time of the poll fits with the working hours of the adults in the household'. Of all parents surveyed who previously used childcare and were not intending to return to formal childcare after the wider reopening on 1 June, only 6% said this was because their usual provider or school was remaining closed and 4% stated their child's usual provider is only open for some children and their child is not eligible. More details on the poll are available here: <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/parents-0-4-year-olds-and-childcare-1st-june-2020>.

■ Children and Young People: Mental Health

Helen Hayes:

[103586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to implement proposals in the Transforming children and young people's mental health provision Green Paper.

Vicky Ford:

Access to mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS mental health services remain open and the government has recently provided over £9 million to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. NHS mental health trusts have also provided 24/7 access to crisis telephone lines to support people of all ages. Additionally, the Department for Education, with health partners, have launched the £8 million Wellbeing for Education programme, further supporting pupil and student, parent and carer, and staff wellbeing, resilience and recovery in light of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The department remains committed, with health partners, to implementing the long term improvements to support children and young people's mental health, as set out in the government's response to its Green Paper and the NHS Long Term Plan. We have continued to work jointly with health partners to adapt and roll-out new Mental Health Support Teams during the COVID-19 outbreak, aiming to reach a fifth to a quarter of schools and colleges across the country by the 2023/24 academic year.

We are also now offering Link Programme training to all schools and colleges, helping to improve joint working locally between education and NHS children and young people's mental health services. This has been adapted and moved online in the short term to help meet the immediate needs of schools and colleges and local areas.

We also remain committed to training a senior mental health lead in every state school and college in the country, equipping them to implement effective whole school and college approaches to mental health and wellbeing, including processes for ensuring pupils and students with mental health issues receive appropriate support. We are currently reviewing the needs of school and college mental health leads, how, and when we deliver that training in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Children in Care: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[\[103585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the number of children in care who do not have access to (a) digital devices or (b) data in order to access remote support from social services in the event they or their social worker are required to self-isolate; and what steps is he taking to improve access.

Vicky Ford:

During the summer term, the department delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers to disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access, as part of over £160 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care.

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

The department is now supplementing this support by making an additional 250,000 laptops and tablets available to schools in the event that face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions and children become reliant on remote education.

We are also working with the major telecommunications companies to improve internet connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable families who rely on a mobile internet connection. We are piloting an approach where mobile network operators are providing temporary access to free additional data offering families more flexibility to access the resources that they need the most.

■ Crime: Children**Peter Kyle:****[102886]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to strengthen legal obligations on local authorities to share information relating to children at risk of criminal exploitation.

Vicky Ford:

The statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' is clear that effective sharing of information between practitioners and local organisations and agencies is essential to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children. In July 2018, the government published updated guidance 'Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (2018)'. The guidance sets out the golden rules and key principles to sharing information and includes a myth-busting guide aimed at dispelling common myths that prevent the effective sharing of information. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>.

We are clear that that local authorities hold legal duties for protecting children in their areas and for developing policies, including on information sharing, to fulfil those functions. Guidance therefore seeks not to overly prescribe practice but allows for professional judgement to be used within the local framework in the best interest of children.

■ Further Education: Redundancy**Yasmin Qureshi:****[102740]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of further education college staff who have been made redundant in 2020.

Gillian Keegan:

Further education (FE) colleges are independent of the government and responsible for managing their own workforce. The department does not hold data on the number of FE college staff who have been made redundant in 2020.

For information regarding Education and Skills Funding Agency financial management, the latest publication of the college accounts is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/esfa-financial-management-college-accounts>.

The government is investing in FE, and we have announced a 16-19 funding increase of £400 million for 2020-21, which is the biggest injection of new money into 16-19 education in a single year since 2010. This includes a 4.7% increase in the 16-19 base rate of funding and a further £24 million for FE workforce development.

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum:

[\[99754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of (a) the potential for job losses in the higher education sector in the event that institutes close as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and (b) the potential effect of those job losses on the higher education sector.

Michelle Donelan:

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on both students and higher education (HE) providers, and we welcome the resilience, innovation and dedication from staff and students over these months.

It is our aim for HE providers to continue to deliver HE provision and support the needs of students, both on and off campus. We have also committed to work with HE providers to help them access the range of measures on offer to support jobs and financial sustainability.

The government is clear that we do not want to see any students miss out on the opportunity to benefit from our excellent HE system as a result of COVID-19. We expect that access to the business support schemes and the reprofiling of public funding should help stabilise most providers' finances, and that should certainly be the first port of call for providers.

The department provided sector-specific guidance in April to help providers understand and access the range of government support on offer. This guidance confirmed that HE providers could access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to help safeguard jobs.

Furthermore, on 4 May, we announced a package of measures to give further support to HE providers at this time of financial pressure. This included pulling forward an estimated £2.6 billion worth of forecast tuition fee payments to ease cashflow pressures and bringing forward quality-related research funding for HE providers in England in the current academic year by £100 million.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced further information about the Higher Education Restructuring Regime on 16 July. This may be deployed as a last resort, if a decision has been made to support a provider in England, when other steps to preserve a provider's viability and mitigate the risks of financial failure have not proved sufficient. The overarching objectives, which will guide the department's assessment of cases, will be protecting the welfare of current students, preserving the sector's internationally outstanding science base and supporting the role that HE providers play in regional and local economies, through the provision of high-quality courses aligned with economic and societal needs.

We will consider HE providers' circumstances on a case-by-case basis, supported by expert advice, to ensure there is a robust value-for-money case for intervention, with support for restructuring in the form of repayable loans coming from public funds as a

last resort, and with strict conditions attached that align with wider government objectives.

On 24 September, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced additional government support to provide certainty to businesses and workers impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. This package includes the new Job Support Scheme (JSS). This is designed to protect viable jobs in businesses which are facing lower demand over the winter months due to COVID-19. Like the CJRS, the government expects that the JSS will not be used by many public sector organisations. Where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, we expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion. This also applies to non-public sector employers that receive public funding for staff costs.

However, regardless of the unprecedented levels of government support available, HE providers are autonomous of government and they are ultimately responsible for their own staffing decisions, which we expect them to make according to their own operational needs.

■ Higher Education: Staff

Apsana Begum:

[\[99749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that jobs involving recruiting, retaining and supporting students in their studies are protected in higher education.

Michelle Donelan:

During and after the COVID-19 outbreak, our aim is for higher education (HE) providers to continue to deliver HE provision and support the needs of students, both on and off campus.

Since my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced this government's unprecedented package of support to help keep staff employed and support businesses, the department has provided guidance for HE providers so that they are aware of the support that is available to them. This includes guidance on how they may access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

On 24 September the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced additional government support to provide certainty to businesses and workers impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. This package includes the new Job Support Scheme (JSS). This is designed to protect viable jobs in businesses which are facing lower demand over the winter months due to COVID-19. Like the CJRS, the government expects that the JSS will not be used by many public sector organisations. Where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, we expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion. This also applies to non-public sector employers that receive public funding for staff costs.

We recognise that many students are facing additional challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Protecting students'

health and wellbeing is a priority and we expect providers to ensure that students are well looked after by staff with the right skills and experience to deliver the support they need. This includes the cleaning and security staff keeping campus safe and the catering staff providing meals, particularly for students self-isolating in halls, as well as staff providing mental health, wellbeing and pastoral support. However, HE providers are independent institutions and are responsible for their own decisions on staffing and employment issues. They should make employment decisions according to their own operational needs and the needs of their wider staff and student community.

■ Respite Care

Alexander Stafford:

[\[101328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of whether local authorities are adequately funded to enable short breaks for respite for disabled children and their families.

Vicky Ford:

Short breaks (or 'respite care') are funded opportunities for disabled children and young people to be cared for away from the family homes, which local authorities have a statutory duty to provide.

Supporting the most vulnerable children and young people is a priority for us, especially at this time. We know that this period is particularly hard for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND), their families and those who support them.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has made an additional £3.7 billion available to local authorities. This can support local authorities to deliver their respite offers (in line with their existing duties) and to address increased costs. This money is un-ringfenced, as local authorities are best placed to understand the needs of their area and to commission provision appropriately. My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has also just announced a further £1 billion of funding for local authorities.

We have also committed this year £37.3 million (including £10 million in response to the COVID-19 outbreak) to the Family Fund, which provides grants to low income families caring for disabled children or seriously ill children, including for family breaks.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Matt Western:

[\[102902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an (a) assessment of the potential merits of and (b) estimate of the capital investment requirements for installing or improving ventilation systems in school buildings to reduce potential transmission of covid-19 during cold weather.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has made no such assessment.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has advised that ventilation is in some circumstances an important factor in mitigating against the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The Department has therefore been working closely with a range of partners, including other government departments, school workforce unions, the Health and Safety Executive and the Chartered Institute of Building Services, as well as SAGE, to develop ventilation guidance for schools during the outbreak.

The guidance is expected to be published in the autumn term and will highlight the importance of balancing well ventilated spaces with comfortable environments. This can be achieved through a variety of measures including natural ventilation.

■ Skills Toolkit

Anneliese Dodds: [\[102155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much money from the public purse has been spent on The Skills Toolkit online learning platform in each year since the beginning of that platform.

Gillian Keegan:

The Skills Toolkit was announced in April 2020 and the cost of developing the platform in this financial year is £798,700. This includes the launch and the two subsequent expansions of the platform. A further £325,700 has been spent on communications activities to promote the platform.

As of 4 October there have been a total of 118,011 starts of the courses on the platform and 19,564 course completions. As of 11 October, the platform had 1.2 million page views.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[102701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will publish data on the number of university students living in campus accommodation who have tested positive for covid-19 in each local authority area in England.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities are currently reporting to us on the number of positive student cases in their institutions and the numbers they are aware of that are self-isolating, and these are currently not broken down by local authority campus zones. From next week, the Office for Students will be gathering data on COVID-19 outbreaks and we will consider how best to report that information in line with data sharing protocols.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[102702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many University of Hull students have tested positive for covid-19 since the academic year began on 14 September 2020.

Michelle Donelan:

In order to balance the need for accurate information with reducing data burdens on universities, we have asked for additional information only from universities with cumulative outbreaks of 25 or more positive student COVID-19 cases. We have received no response from the University of Hull and external sources indicate that there have been fewer than 25 positive student cases at the university so far.

From the week commencing 19 October 2020, the Office for Students will be gathering data on COVID-19 outbreaks, and we will consider how best to report that information in line with data-sharing protocols.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[102741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure university students have access to digital and online learning during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has been working closely with the Office for Students (OfS), the regulator of registered higher education (HE) providers in England, so that HE providers can draw upon existing funding to provide hardship funds and to support disadvantaged students affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

As a result of this flexibility, providers were able to use OfS student premium funding worth around £23 million per month between April to July this year. From August, providers have also been able to use £256 million for the current academic year towards student hardship funds, including for the purchase of IT equipment. We have also invested over £100 million to help provide laptops and devices for disadvantaged children and young people so they can access education and social care services remotely. As part of this, we have provided devices for care leavers, including those who are studying at university.

As I set out in a letter to MPs on 9 October, the government's expectation is that quality and academic standards must be maintained. The OfS has made it clear that all HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and that standards are protected. They have also set out that HE providers must continue to provide sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The OfS has published information and guidance for HE providers and students. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has also published a series of guides to support HE providers to secure academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The OfS are taking very seriously the potential impacts on teaching and learning, and ensuring they have a clear picture of what students are receiving. They published a statement on 9 October about how they are monitoring the quality of online provision given by HE providers.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State of Education, has also commissioned Sir Michael Barber, the Chair of the OfS, to lead a review to consider how to enhance the quality of digital teaching and learning and the opportunities that digital education presents for universities in the medium and long term. The review, which is expected to report in spring 2021, will also explore how HE providers can ensure that all students have access to a high-quality digital teaching and learning experience.

■ **Vetting: Overseas Students**

Steve McCabe:

[\[98871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing an immigration checking service for Student Finance to check student eligibility similar to that of the employer checking service.

Michelle Donelan:

Where necessary, the Student Loans Company (SLC) seeks information from the Home Office to establish whether an individual meets the personal eligibility requirements for student support. The information that the SLC requires from the Home Office varies, but often includes the individual's immigration status (including the date of the grant) and confirmation that they have been ordinarily (lawfully) resident in the UK and Islands during a specified period. In some circumstances, a more extensive immigration history is requested.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Fisheries**

Andrew Griffith:

[\[101329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to regulate which vessels can fish in UK waters after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

At the end of the transition period, the UK will become an independent coastal state under international law. We will automatically take back control of our waters, and others' right to fish in them. Access by non-UK vessels to fish in UK waters will be a matter for negotiation. Any foreign vessels we agree may fish in UK waters will be required to have a licence issued by the UK's Single Issuing Authority. They will also be obliged to abide by the same rules as UK vessels when fishing in our waters, including those on sustainability.

■ **Landfill**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[101265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of dilute and disperse landfill sites that were in use for waste disposal before the 1980s in England and Wales.

Rebecca Pow:

Dilute and disperse landfill sites were used up to the 1990s before containment engineering was introduced.

The Environment Agency's (EA) historic landfill dataset is a map and dataset of landfill sites from the 1900s onwards. It uses data collected from local authorities, the former Department of the Environment and the British Geological Society.

Using this dataset, in England and Wales, up to 31 Dec 1979, the total number of landfills recorded is 13,510.

In addition, up to 1990, a search of the database identifies just over 15,000 landfill sites in England and Wales.

The quality of the records vary as they are based on information provided to the EA at the time.

■ National Parks: Pollution Control**Andrew Griffith:**[\[101332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with National Park Authorities on strengthening protections against light pollution.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is engaging with National Park Authorities on a range of matters including the delivery of the 25-year Environment Plan and the Landscapes Review recommendations. There have been no recent discussions with National Park Authorities on the specific issue of strengthening protections against light pollution.

The government has put in place a range of measures to ensure that light pollution is effectively managed through controls in the planning system; the statutory nuisance regime, and when improvements are made to street lighting.

My department has worked with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Transport to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework policies include consideration of the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation, including where there may be impacts on wildlife and eco-systems.

We strongly welcome the designation of the South Downs National Park as an International Dark Sky Reserve, one of only 16 in the world. As a result of this designation the South Downs National Park Local Plan, adopted on 2 July 2019, has incorporated local policies to protect dark skies. We welcome the adoption of local policies for dark sky protection and understand their extension to other National Parks is under consideration.

■ Neonicotinoids

Damian Hinds:

[\[100349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what impact assessment he has undertaken on the introduction of the ban on neonicotinoids.

Victoria Prentis:

Restrictions prohibiting the outdoor use of three neonicotinoids were put in place from late 2018. The Government supported these restrictions because, based on the scientific evidence, we were not prepared to put our pollinator populations at risk. The evidence on the toxicity of these chemicals to bees and their persistence in the environment means that the clear advice of scientific advisers is that these restrictions are justified.

The Government recognises that the loss of neonicotinoids has made it harder for farmers to control certain pests in emerging crops. Some growers of crops including oilseed rape and sugar beet aphids have faced significant yield losses because of these difficulties.

The Government considered these impacts in deciding its approach, but did not carry out a formal impact assessment. This was because neither the benefits nor the costs of restrictions on neonicotinoids are amenable to precise quantification.

■ Sewage: Waste Disposal

Tim Farron:

[\[103465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of off mains drainage properties which use septic tanks in (a) England and (b) Cumbria.

Rebecca Pow:

Mains sewerage systems (operated by the Water and Sewerage Companies) cover around 95% of the population of England. Non-mains sewerage systems (including septic tanks or small private sewage treatment works) serve the remaining 5%.

The then Department of Environment conducted a study in 1994 to estimate the number of properties not on mains drainage. It estimated that there were approximately 700-750,000 such properties in England. It further estimated that approximately 85,000 to be within the North West Region. It did not account for specific numbers for Cumbria.

The Environment Agency has recently begun work to understand how many properties are likely served by private sewerage systems. We do not believe that the figures for either England or the North West Region are likely to have changed significantly in the period since the 1994 study.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Abduljalil Abdulla al-Singace****Layla Moran:****[103614]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to support Bahrain in providing urgent medical care to Dr Al-Singace in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) since 10 March 2020.

James Cleverly:

Responsibility for the provision of medical care to Dr Al-Singace lies with the Government of Bahrain, who have made clear that access to medical care for those in detention is guaranteed by the Constitution of Bahrain. We welcome these assurances from the Government of Bahrain.

■ Bahrain: Technical Assistance**Brendan O'Hara:****[102834]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 22 May 2018 to Question HL7775 on Bahrain: Technical Assistance, if he will place in the Library copies of those Government responses to freedom of information requests which contain updates on the Integrated Activity Fund programme.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 16 October 2020]: I have asked officials to deposit in the Library of the House of Commons copies of responses to freedom of information requests held by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office which contain updates on the Integrated Activity Fund programme.

■ Education: Overseas Aid**Stephen Crabb:****[100917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 94380, if he will place a copy of the findings of the 2019 assurance check on contentious education materials in the Library.

James Cleverly:

A copy of the findings of the assurance check on contentious education materials will not be placed in the Library. This is under the Freedom of Information exemption grounds pertaining to International Relations.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Reorganisation

Lisa Nandy: [\[103495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the cost has been of the merger of his Department with the Department for International Development to date.

James Duddridge:

Initial figures will be published in the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21. The merger will provide substantial opportunities for efficiencies over the longer-term.

Gender: Equality

Layla Moran: [\[103616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 101309, whether the Special Envoy for Gender Equality and the Special Envoy for Girls' Education are (a) separate posts and (b) existing posts.

Layla Moran: [\[103617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 101309, whether the Special Envoy for Girls' Education is planned to replace the Special Envoy for Gender Equality.

Wendy Morton:

As I stated in my answer on 14 October, the Prime Minister appointed Baroness Sugg as Special Envoy for Girls' Education in March 2020. This is a separate role to the Special Envoy for Gender Equality. In this role Baroness Sugg works to accelerate progress towards getting marginalised girls into schools, staying there and staying safe, and benefitting from quality learning. She works closely with international partners to encourage greater global ambition, coordination, and investment on girls' education. The UK Government continues to build on our Strategic Vision for Gender Equality alongside our National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security. Gender equality is and will continue to be a core part of the FCDO's work as a force for good in the world.

Greece: Migrant Camps

Virginia Crosbie: [\[101325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to provide support for refugees in Lesbos after the fire at the Moira refugee camp.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has responded to requests by the Greek Government to provide specific humanitarian goods for the migrants affected by the Moria fires. UK support will help nearly 2,000 vulnerable families prepare, cook and serve food, and solar lanterns will

help people to stay safe. We will work with our partners to ensure these supplies are fairly distributed and reach those most in need.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[102018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the next steps are for the Integrated Review of Security, Defense, Development and Foreign Policy; and what consultation he plans to have with civil society groups as part of that review.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO is engaging widely on the Integrated Review, and will continue to do so over the course of the Review. As part of our engagement on the Integrated Review, we have worked with the Cabinet Office to deliver six in-depth dialogues through Wilton Park, bringing together domestic and international subject-matter experts from international politics, academia, business, civil society and youth groups. In September the Government issued a Call for Evidence to help inform the Integrated Review. This received more than 450 replies from a broad range of external stakeholders including think tanks, international organisations, NGOs and religious organisations.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[102023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy includes (a) youth, peace and security and (b) the rights of children in (i) conflict and (ii) peacebuilding.

James Cleverly:

The Integrated Review will cover all aspects of international and national security policy, such as defence, diplomacy, development and national resilience. The Youth, Peace and Security agenda is an important component of the UK's work to promote human rights and support sustainable peace processes. At the UN Security Council on 14 July, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UN Resolution 2535 on the vital role of youth in preventing and resolving conflict, as well as in building and maintaining peace. We continue to prioritise preventive diplomacy and mediation through the UN and push for greater collaboration on peacebuilding amongst international organisations. At the UN Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict on 23 June, the UK reaffirmed our commitment to tackling violations against children in armed conflict and highlighted the need for a transparent and credible framework for accountability based on a standardised and evidence-backed approach to de-listing and listing of state and non-state actors for violations. We also continue to drive more concerted, coordinated and scaled-up global action across the international system to prevent gender-based violence in conflict settings. Gender equality that includes youth and children's rights will remain a core part of the

Government's mission and it is at the heart of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

■ Middle East: Technical Assistance

David Linden: [\[103612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government has provided technical assistance to (a) Saudi Arabia, (b) Kuwait, (c) UAE, (d) Oman and (e) Qatar since 2011.

James Cleverly:

The Government has provided technical assistance to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar since 2011. This technical assistance covers a broad range of non-financial support, including training and the sharing of expertise.

■ Overseas Aid

David Linden: [\[103608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the (a) spend and (b) allocated budget has been of the Integrated Activity Fund to date, by financial year, since the start of the program in 2015.

James Cleverly:

The Integrated Activity Fund was allocated £20m each year from 2016/17 to 2019/20. Actual expenditure was £10.5m in 2016/17, £13.9m in 2017/18, £17.08m in 2018/19 and £12.4m in 2019/20.

£8.4m has been allocated for 2020/21 to deliver programme activities in the Gulf.

■ Saudi Arabia: Overseas Aid

Brendan O'Hara: [\[102833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding the Government provides to (a) Saudi Arabia and (b) organisations implementing training to bodies and institutions in Saudi Arabia.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 16 October 2020]: We do not provide funding to the Saudi Arabian Government. The UK Government does implement a number of projects that involve working with organisations in Saudi Arabia. HMG completes rigorous human rights risk assessments (Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments or OSJAs) before undertaking any justice or security cooperation, to ensure all work meets our human rights obligations and our values.

The UK Government provides funding to the UK armed forces to provide advice, assistance and training to aid Saudi Arabia's efforts to protect its national security and support the Saudi military's compliance with international humanitarian law. The UK Government also pays for civilian and military programmes of advice and

assistance, which are then reimbursed by the Saudi Arabian Government at no cost to the UK taxpayer.

■ Turkey: Counter Terrorism

Chris Stephens: [\[103563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on the use of anti-terrorism legislation against (a) elected members of the People's Democratic Party and (b) other elected officials.

Chris Stephens: [\[103564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on that country's use anti-terror legislation to close down the open and democratic operations of the People's Democratic Party by the ruling Justice and Development Party and Nationalist Movement Party alliance.

Chris Stephens: [\[103565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on the issue of arrest warrants for 82 people, including former mayors and Members of the People's Democratic Party and the Party's Central Executive Board on the grounds of their having protested the siege of Kobane.

Wendy Morton:

We have made it clear to Turkey that we expect the government to undertake any legal processes or actions against opposition parties, MPs, party officials, elected mayors, human rights defenders and journalists, fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law. We will continue to engage closely with Turkey to encourage the full protection of fundamental rights of all peoples, regardless of their legitimate political affiliations, particularly in the area of freedom of expression and assembly, press freedom and the treatment of detainees. We will also continue to raise the human rights situation in Turkey in multilateral organisations, as we did at the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Turkey in January 2020.

■ Veronica Koman

Patrick Grady: [\[101287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Indonesia on the exile of human rights lawyer Veronica Koman.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of the situation of Veronica Koman. It would not be appropriate to comment on this case during the ongoing judicial process but we continue to monitor

developments. The UK respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia, which includes Papua, and within this framework we support the Indonesian Government's right to enforce the law in its own territory.

■ West Papua: Humanitarian Aid

Patrick Grady:

[\[101286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives of the (a) Pacific Islands Forum and (b) Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States on their call for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to be permitted access to West Papua by Indonesia to prepare an independent report into the humanitarian situation in the area.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign Secretary has not discussed the request with representatives of the Pacific Islands Forum or the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States regarding the UN High Commissioner. However, the then Minister for Asia and the Pacific attended the Pacific Island Forum in August 2019, noting the communique. Officials at the British Embassy in Jakarta have discussed the proposed visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and continue to encourage the Indonesian Government to agree dates as soon as possible. It is our longstanding position that we regard Papua and West Papua provinces as being part of Indonesia and consider dialogue on territorial issues in Indonesia as a matter for the Indonesian people.

■ West Papua: Indonesia

Patrick Grady:

[\[101288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Indonesia on the that country's military operations in the West Papuan regencies of Nduga, Intan Jaya and Puncak Jaya.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign Secretary has not discussed the request with representatives of the Pacific Islands Forum or the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States regarding the UN High Commissioner. The then Minister for Asia and the Pacific attended the Pacific Island Forum in August 2019, noting the communique. Officials at the British Embassy in Jakarta have discussed the proposed visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and continue to encourage the Indonesian Government to agree dates as soon as possible. It is our longstanding position that we regard Papua and West Papua provinces as being part of Indonesia and consider dialogue on territorial issues in Indonesia as a matter for the Indonesian people.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[101973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Saudi Arabian counterpart on ensuring that country (a) records and (b) retains data on the (i) locations and (ii) types of explosive ordnance they have used in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises the importance of International Humanitarian Law and of conducting thorough and conclusive investigations into alleged violations with Saudi Arabia, including at senior levels. We share UK experience of best practice for conducting air operations in accordance with acceptable international norms. This includes the provision of training to the Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT) on best practice for investigating alleged violations. We have supported the development of the JIAT's investigations into allegations and continue to urge Saudi Arabia to ensure findings from its investigations are published clearly and its recommendations, including payment of compensation and changes to procedures, are properly implemented.

■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government

Layla Moran:

[\[103613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Government of Zimbabwe on recent instability in that country.

James Duddridge:

I regularly engage with the Government of Zimbabwe to raise serious concerns about the political, economic and human rights situation in Zimbabwe. We have been clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law, safeguarding human rights, and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. This is a prerequisite for further HMG support to the Government of Zimbabwe. I delivered these messages when I last spoke to Foreign Minister Moyo on 8 June, and in a letter I wrote to the Foreign Minister on 12 August. Our Ambassador in Harare reinforced these messages when she met in person with Foreign Minister Moyo on 14 August. She also raised concerns about Zimbabwe's chronic economic problems with Zimbabwean Finance Minister Mthuli on 28 September. We will continue to speak out, both privately and in public, where we have concerns including on abuses of human rights.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Acanthamoeba Keratitis: Health Education****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[98952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to ensure that the packaging of contact lens products displays (a) clear warnings of the risks of acanthamoeba keratitis and (b) advice on how to prevent that infection.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for monitoring the safety of all healthcare products in the United Kingdom.

The MHRA has investigated acanthamoeba keratitis infections associated with water and contact lenses and has reviewed the instructions for use for all contact lenses on the UK market. While some already provide appropriate warnings and preventative advice, others require improvement. We are considering how best to achieve this under the powers being created for the new UK medical devices regulatory regime and as we address recommendations from the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

We have also worked with various stakeholders and patient representatives to provide information to the public on the risks associated with acanthamoeba keratitis infections.

This engagement has resulted in information for contact lens users being provided on the MHRA's website.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Closures**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[95705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many accident and emergency services including paediatric emergency services in hospitals in England have been closed (a) temporarily and (b) permanently in each of the last 10 years; and how many of those that closed permanently either fully or partially were initially closed on a temporary basis.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 30 September 2020]: Data is not available in the format requested.

■ Ambulance Services**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[101054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have died while waiting for an ambulance at times where demand for ambulances has exceeded their availability in the last five years.

Edward Argar:

The data requested is not held centrally.

■ Asthma: Medical Treatments

Henry Smith:

[85019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 58769, what assessment he has made of the decline to the number of patients accessing biologics therapies for severe asthma in January to March 2020, and what he has to reverse that decline.

Helen Whately:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence COVID-19 rapid guideline on severe asthma provides guidance on starting or continuing on biological treatments, for people with severe asthma during the COVID-19 outbreak. The recommendations were written in collaboration with the NHS England Severe Asthma Collaborative. In writing the guidance, particular attention was paid to streamlining the process of moving patients onto biologic therapies to compensate for any possible barriers that may have occurred as a result of changes to the National Health Service, which were made as part of the necessary response to COVID-19.

Further work is being undertaken by the collaborative to share best practice on providing care to people with severe asthma to ensure on-going provision of high-quality care and to accelerate the initiation of biologics where required.

■ Bereavement Counselling: Parents

Vicky Foxcroft:

[100488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that relevant professionals across health services receive training in the identification of psychiatric illness in parents who have experienced pregnancy and baby loss.

Helen Whately:

Training programmes for healthcare professionals must meet the standards set by the regulatory body for their profession.

Whilst not all curricula may necessarily highlight a specific condition, they all nevertheless emphasize the skills and approaches a healthcare practitioner must develop in order to ensure accurate and timely diagnoses and treatment plans for their patients.

Curricula for specialities and roles that regularly treat pregnant and post-partum patients will contain competencies relating to understanding and identifying the psychological and mental health impacts of pregnancy, birth and baby loss, and assessing the health of women.

An example is outlined in the Nursing and Midwifery Council's 'Standards for competence for registered midwives' requirement: providing care for women who have suffered pregnancy loss which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/nmc-standards-for-competence-for-registered-midwives.pdf>

Employers in the health system are responsible for ensuring that their staff are trained to the required standards to deliver appropriate treatment for patients.

■ Care Homes: Closures

Colleen Fletcher: [\[99636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of residential care homes which have closed in each year since 2010.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The data is not held in the format requested.

Colleen Fletcher: [\[99637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of home care providers which have closed since 2010.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes: [\[100495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to enable access to weekly covid-19 testing for relatives of care home residents to facilitate safe visiting.

Helen Whately:

We recognise how important it is to allow care home residents to safely meet their loved ones, especially for those at the end of their lives. We appreciate the particular challenges visiting restrictions pose for people with dementia, people with learning disabilities and autistic adults, amongst others, as well as for their loved ones.

We have provided guidance on how providers can support visiting as part of the Adult Social Care Winter Plan, setting out tightened infection prevention and control measures to enable visits to continue safely.

Further to this we are working up proposals to run a pilot for specific visitors to care homes who provide regular close personal care which is aligned to residents' needs and visit multiple times a week. We will work with clinicians and stakeholder groups to develop this with an aim to launch the pilot in early November.

■ Continuing Care

Rosie Duffield: [\[101299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS Continuing Healthcare (a) referrals, (b) reviews and (c) assessments were received by local health and social care systems between 19 March and 31 August 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 14 October 2020]: During the COVID-19 emergency period, National Health Service Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC) assessments were not required, due to changes made as part of section 14 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The sector has been asked to reintroduce CHC processes from 1 September 2020.

Data from the NHS CHC Deferred Assessments Situation Report shows that as at 1 September 2020, 37,672 referrals for NHS CHC had been received relating to the period between 19 March and 31 August 2020. This figure includes pre-COVID-19 emergency period cases that were already in progress on 19 March 2020 and which were paused due to COVID-19 pressures or provided with COVID-19 funding, as a result of the COVID-19 Act and discharge requirements.

Data for NHS CHC reviews is not collected centrally.

Statistics relating to the completion of NHS CHC assessments are published on a quarterly basis. For Quarter 1 2020/21, covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2020, this data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-chc-fnc/>

Quarter 2 2020/21 data, for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020 will be published in November 2020 and will be available at the same link.

Rosie Duffield:**[101300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the time it will take for Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities to process the NHS Continuing Healthcare referrals, reviews and assessments received between 19 March and 31 August 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 14 October 2020]: We understand that the deferred case assessments will have workload implications for clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), the wider National Health Service and local authorities. NHS Continuing Healthcare referrals, reviews and assessments should be completed as soon as is practical and CCGs are expected to carry out this activity in a timely manner.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Jack Lopresti:****[96052]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a house in multiple occupation is defined as a singular household for the purpose of the covid-19 rule of six policy.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This refers to those who people live with. To reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19, people should keep at least two metres away from those they do not live with. Social distancing is essential to stop the spread of the virus, as it is more likely to spread when people are close together.

Further information on social distancing is available at the following link:

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

■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Shabana Mahmood: [\[97526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds who have experienced symptoms related to covid-19 for longer than 28 days.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: Research into the long-term health symptoms and impacts of COVID-19 and the number of people likely to be experiencing them is ongoing. The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study (PHOSP-COVID), led by Christopher Brightling.

PHOSP-COVID aims to determine the short to long-term chronic health (and health economic) consequences of COVID-19 infection in survivors following hospitalisation, including those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. The consortium includes experts that have worked extensively with optimising inclusion and recruitment of under-represented populations, such as the BAME community, and will ensure the population recruited to the study is representative of those hospitalised with COVID-19.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitality Industry

Julian Sturdy: [\[97569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the 10pm curfew on the hospitality industry.

Anne Marie Morris: [\[97582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to review the 10.00pm restriction on hospitality businesses every three weeks.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Early data suggests that a significant proportion of exposure to the virus is seen in the hospitality sector, which is even more pronounced in younger age groups.

10pm closure seeks to strike the balance of allowing people to continue to socialise while reducing social contact and minimising negative impact on the economy. This relies on us ensuring that businesses remain COVID-secure.

We have put in place an unprecedented package of support to support impacted businesses, including over £11 billion already been paid out through the Small Business Grants Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund to

over 897,000 businesses across the country, with a further £617 million available to councils to use at their discretion to support small businesses which are not eligible for the main grant scheme.

■ **Coronavirus: Liverpool City Region**

Derek Twigg:

[\[92632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he (a) consulted Halton Borough Council or (b) received any representations from that Council or the Director of Public Health for Halton before announcing the additional covid-19 measures on Friday 18 September 2020 to be implemented for the Liverpool City Region.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 25 September 2020]: Regional teams held discussions with Directors of Public Health (DPH) for all affected areas before the consultation. No further representations were made by either the council or the DPH for Halton.

The decision was based on the strong links between all the areas for work, family and socialising, as the incidence rate continued to rise in Halton in line with the rest of the region. At 11-17 September 2020 the weekly incidence rate was 60.7 per 100,000 population, which was significantly above the national average. A further discussion was held with the collective DsPH for Merseyside and deputy for Halton post the GOLD meeting on 17 September.

■ **Disease Control: Coronavirus**

Tahir Ali:

[\[73090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advance notice he plans to give to communities, towns and cities that are to be placed in local lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The 'COVID-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers' sets out how NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre will work with local authorities, Public Health England and the public to contain and manage local COVID-19 outbreaks. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers#local-outbreak>

■ **DNACPR Decisions: Care Homes**

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[102086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with care homes that require relatives to sign Do Not Resuscitate orders (DNRs) for residents; and what steps he is taking in response to situations where people have lost their lives as a result of a DNR having been required by the care home.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 October 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement have confirmed that there has never been an instruction or directive issued by the National Health Service to put in place blanket 'Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation' (DNACPR) decisions for any group of people in hospitals or care homes.

The Department remains clear that the [blanket application of DNACPRs is unacceptable](#) and that standards and quality of care should be maintained even in pressurised circumstances. The Adult Social Care Winter Plan published on 18 September 2020 reiterates this.

The Department has asked the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to review how DNACPR decisions were used during the COVID-19 pandemic, building on concerns that the CQC reported earlier in the year. Interim findings are expected to be reported later this year with a final report in early 2021.

■ Epilepsy: Mortality Rates**Judith Cummins:****[99640]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on reducing the risk of epilepsy mortality among women with epilepsy and their unborn children of the increase in maternal deaths and increased regulation of epilepsy medications for that group of women and children.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The need to carefully assess risks of use of certain epilepsy medications in pregnancy and the factors that should be considered by patient and clinician are set out in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 'Epilepsies: diagnosis and management' guideline (originally published January 2012 and updated in February 2020). The update includes strengthened warnings about the specific risks that the anti-epileptic medicine valproate presents to unborn children. As the guideline sets out, in pregnancy valproate is contraindicated and an alternative treatment should be decided on, with appropriate specialist consultation, taking into account the individual clinical needs of the patient and the risks and benefits of particular medications and treatment approaches. The NICE guideline is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg137/resources/epilepsies-diagnosis-and-management-pdf-35109515407813>

■ Females: Mental Health Services**Cat Smith:****[100443]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that the mental health needs of girls and young women are met; and what funding has been allocated to mental health provision for girls and young women.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Supporting everyone's mental wellbeing, including girls and young women, is a priority for this Government. National Health Service mental health services have remained open for business throughout this time, including delivering support digitally and by phone. For those with severe needs or in crisis, NHS mental health providers have established all-age 24 hours per day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines.

We have launched a mental wellbeing campaign for children and young people, extending Public Health England's Every Mind Matters webpage with content specifically for young people.

Health Professions: Young People**Stuart Anderson:**[\[99732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will put incentives in place to encourage young people to pursue careers in front-line medical services.

Helen Whately:

The Government has introduced a number of initiatives to encourage demand from all sectors of society, including young people, to train to pursue careers in medical, and wider healthcare professions.

The Government has funded an additional 1,500 medical school places in England, which saw five new medical schools open as part of this expansion. One of the criteria for universities securing additional training places included the need to demonstrate that these universities were widening access and increasing social mobility.

A new financial support package of at least £5,000 has been made available from September 2020 to all eligible pre-registration nursing, midwifery and most allied health students, and most allied health students, at English universities.

Health Services: Coronavirus**Kate Osamor:**[\[96970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking following the results of the recent audit of calls to the covid-19 clinical assessment service in August 2020.

Edward Argar:

A recent audit of the COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Service (CCAS) indicated a need to provide focused training for nurses and allied health professionals. The Coronavirus Response Service Board and NHS 111 senior leaders made the decision to support these staff with further training on the NHS Pathways triage system to enable them to work as clinical advisors in the core NHS 111 service rather than the CCAS.

The CCAS is currently operated by general practitioners who are regularly audited to ensure patients receive high-quality clinical advice.

Kate Osamor: [96971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the required experience was in August 2020 for covid-19 clinical assessment service call handlers.

Kate Osamor: [96972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the guidance issued to new call handlers recruited to the covid-19 Clinical Assessment Service in August 2020.

Kate Osamor: [99683]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what training was given to Covid-19 Clinical Assessment Service call handlers prior to the commencement of their roles, as of August 2020.

Edward Argar:

The COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Service does not employ call handlers. It is staffed by general practitioners who assess and provide clinical advice to patients with COVID-19 symptoms.

Mr Gregory Campbell: [97475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of (a) domestic abuse, (b) personal mental ill health and (c) excessive alcohol consumption.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: Domestic abuse helplines have reported significant increases in calls during lockdown and the police have also reported an increase in reported domestic abuse incidents based on provisional data, a 6% increase in the four weeks up to 5 July compared to the same period last year.

We are working with the National Health Service, Public Health England and other key partners to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, and plan for how to support mental health and wellbeing throughout the 'recovery' phase.

Public Health England has published an online monitoring tool to track behavioural changes, including alcohol consumption. The findings on alcohol consumption throughout the COVID-19 pandemic are that intake across the population as a whole remained about the same during lockdown. Those aged 18 to 34 were more likely to report consuming less alcohol each week than before and those aged 35 to 54 were more likely to report an increase. There was an increase in the proportion of 'high risk' drinking between February and June 2020. The monitoring tool is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wider-impacts-of-covid-19-on-health-monitoring-tool>

■ Hearing Impairment: Coronavirus

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[99144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to encourage awareness of the unique problems faced by deaf people and those with hearing loss during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 October 2020]: The Government recognises the extra challenges faced by deaf people and those with hearing loss during the pandemic. We have taken several steps to address these and to raise awareness.

This includes making a clear exemption from wearing face coverings and a communications campaign to raise awareness of such exemptions. We have also made exemption documents available.

Government guidance on face coverings and exemptions was distributed to businesses and customer-facing organisations.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have procured 250,000 transparent facemasks from the company ClearMask which will be helpful for people who need to lip read.

The Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre provides a wide range of free materials to download and share on Government advice and guidance.

■ Hospitals: Parking

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[99710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2020 to Question 91129, whether he plans to maintain free on-street car parking for hospital workers after the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The COVID-19 parking pass entitles on-duty National Health Service staff members, health or social care workers, or NHS Volunteer Responders, to free parking in local authority-owned off-street car parks and on-street bays in England.

We are grateful to councils for continuing with this offer and have no plans to remove the guidance.

■ Hospitals: Private Sector

Lucy Allan:

[\[100431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much has been paid to private hospitals to be on standby for use by the NHS for patients with covid-19 since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

National Health Service patients are benefitting from an unprecedented partnership with private hospitals as we battle the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department and NHS

England and NHS Improvement have worked with the independent sector to secure all appropriate inpatient capacity and other resource across England.

It is currently not possible to estimate the cost to the public purse on how much has been paid to private hospitals to be on standby for use by the NHS for patients with COVID-19 since March 2020.

■ **Medicine: Education**

Philip Davies:

[100313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will support the introduction of additional medical schools.

Helen Whately:

The Government has expanded the number of places available in medical schools in England and there are now an extra 1,500 student doctors who entered training over the past three years. As part of this expansion, five new medical schools have been opened around England.

■ **Mental Health Services: Gender Recognition**

Nadia Whittome:

[95261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the level of availability of specialist mental health support services for transgender people.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement published a service specification for adult gender dysphoria services in July 2019 that describes the psychological and psychotherapeutic therapies that must be available for individuals with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. This includes a specialist multi-disciplinary team of professionals, with a mix of skills, experience and expertise including in mental health care needs that are specific to individuals with gender dysphoria. The service specification is available at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/publication/service-specification-gender-identity-services-for-adults-non-surgical-interventions/

In September 2020, the Government announced the establishment of three new gender dysphoria clinics in England, each of which will work to the national service specification.

The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24 sets out the National Health Service priorities for improving mental health care and widening access to mental health services by 2023/24.

■ Mental Health Services: Internet

Cat Smith:

[\[100447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October 2020 to Question 94459 on Mental Health Services: Children and Young People, how many people on average have accessed the new Every Mind Matters website each day.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Public Health England and NHS England follow the Information Commissioner's Office's guidance whereby website visitors are opted out from being tracked unless they accept the analytics cookie set on the NHS.UK domain which delivers the Better Health-Every Mind Matters website. In the absence of a clear picture from web analytics data, the number of website visits can be estimated based on paid media reports. These indicate 208,020 visits or an average of 6,303 per day since the launch of the new Every Mind Matters parent and youth focused-content on 8 September 2020.

Since the launch of Every Mind Matters the site has received 7.15 million visits (subject to the above caveat around data opt in) and 2.4 million mental health action plans have been completed.

■ NHS 111

Kate Osamor:

[\[99682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any private contractors have been asked to deliver any part of the NHS 111 service since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

The core NHS 111 service is run by a mix of private, social enterprise and National Health Service providers across England.

The Coronavirus Response Service is run on behalf of NHS 111 by private providers, with clinical oversight and governance provided by South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

■ NHS 111: Training

Kate Osamor:

[\[99681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS 111 call handlers recruited in response to the covid-19 outbreak were given the NHS Pathways 6-week training course.

Edward Argar:

Call handlers in the core NHS 111 service receive 10 weeks of training.

The Coronavirus Response Service specifically recruited call handlers to answer COVID-related calls only, therefore they received training that mirrored the core NHS 111 training but was specific to COVID-19 only.

Call handlers were supported by clinicians and received face-to-face training in a classroom setting. All call handlers were audited to ensure they had reached the required competencies to deliver a high-quality service for patients.

■ NHS Trusts: VAT

Karin Smyth: [\[100454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will pause proposals for NHS trusts to (a) form or (b) make changes to subsidiary companies until after the Government has concluded its assessment of its proposals to reform VAT refund rules.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 October 2020]: The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established a level playing-field in which any qualified provider can provide National Health Service-funded services to encourage greater diversity of supply and improve patient choice. As such, it is vital that all providers, be they NHS or private sector, operate within existing VAT legislation as applicable to their particular entity.

Initial responses to the HM Treasury consultation on changes to S41 of the 1994 VAT Act are due by 19 November 2020. There are no plans to pause proposals for NHS trusts to form or make changes to subsidiary companies.

■ NHS: Capital Investment

Karin Smyth: [\[100453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the £325million capital funding that he announced in July 2017 at the Kings Fund for local projects to support transformation of patient care and modernisation of the NHS has been received by successful bidders.

Edward Argar:

Delivering capital investment is a complex process and it takes time to be done thoroughly and professionally, alongside delivering the everyday healthcare services. There is a necessary process of assurance to ensure the outcome is as intended i.e. it transforms services for the benefit of patients. This process is led by the trust, and includes a number of business case checkpoints. Funding is usually provided when the Full Business Case has been approved.

Since the original announcement in July 2017, additional funding has been allocated to the first wave of sustainability and transformation partnerships schemes. The total allocation for these schemes is £445 million, subject to relevant business case approvals. Of the total allocation, 21% has been received by trusts as of 12 October 2020.

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

■ NHS: Nurses**Karin Smyth:** [\[100456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of nurses the NHS needed to be able to safely meet demand and (b) the specialisms requiring additional nurses.

Helen Whately:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ NHS: Waiting Lists**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[101999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average NHS waiting times for (a) hospital appointments, (b) elective surgeries, (c) semi-elective surgeries and (d) non-elective surgeries have been during the covid-19 outbreak to date.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 15 October 2020]: Data is not available in the format requested.

■ Nurses: Labour Turnover**Karin Smyth:** [\[100457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on nursing staff retention of the Public Accounts Committee's report entitled, NHS Nursing Workforce, Eighteenth Report of Session 2019–21, HC408.

Helen Whately:

The Department will respond to the Public Accounts Committee with regards to the National Health Service nursing workforce: Eighteenth Report of Session 2019-21 in line with the formal Treasury Minute process. The Treasury Minute is due to be published on 16 November 2020.

Nursing staff retention is a priority for this Government and a key aspect of the 50,000 nurses commitment.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Retention Programme supports local delivery and launched a large-scale pathfinder programme across three regions in September to explore further how staff can be empowered and supported to remain part of the workforce. This programme has an initial focus on nursing but will encompass the entire NHS workforce.

■ Patients: Monitoring**Robert Halfon:** [\[98940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 81811 on Patients: Monitoring, whether he has had

discussions with the Israeli company EarlySense on the NHS Long Term Plan and remote monitoring solutions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 October 2020]: No discussions have been held with EarlySense to discuss the NHS Long Term Plan or remote monitoring solutions.

■ **Pregnancy: Screening**

Mary Glendon:

[\[102813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of advice from healthcare professionals following prenatal disability diagnoses on the decision of a pregnant women to (a) continue or (b) terminate their pregnancy.

Helen Whately:

The Department has not made a recent assessment on the effect of advice from healthcare professionals following prenatal disability diagnoses on the decision of pregnant women to continue or terminate their pregnancy.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has published guidance on Termination of Pregnancy for Fetal Abnormality in England, Scotland and Wales. The guidance sets out that all staff involved in the care of a woman or couple facing a possible termination of pregnancy must adopt a non-directive, non-judgemental and supportive approach.

■ **Schools: Ambulance Services**

Ian Lavery:

[\[101020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ambulances have attended schools in Wansbeck constituency since their reopening in September 2020.

Edward Argar:

The data requested is not held centrally.

■ **Suicide**

Rehman Chishti:

[\[100360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have died by suicide in each month from 1 April 2020 to 1 September 2020; and how many of those people had been reported missing prior to their death.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Supported Housing: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[\[100494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of weekly covid-19 testing for staff and residents in supported living settings.

Helen Whately:

We are rolling out national testing to all extra care and supported living settings that meet the following criteria:

- A closed community with substantial facilities shared between multiple people; and
- Where most residents receive the kind of personal care that is Care Quality Commission-regulated (rather than help with cooking, cleaning and shopping).

We will use the data from this initial round of testing to inform our retesting approach in extra care and supported living and will continue to review our social care testing strategy in light of the latest evidence and available capacity.

If a supported living or extra care setting has a suspected outbreak, they should contact their local health protection team immediately who will undertake an initial risk assessment, provide advice on outbreak management and decide what testing is needed.

■ Surgery

Dawn Butler:

[\[101991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that minor and major operations take place within his Department's target times for those operations; and how many (a) minor and (b) major operations have missed those target times since 16 March 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 15 October 2020]: Data is not available in the format requested.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[102706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of cancellations of elective surgeries in (a) England and (b) Hull; and what steps his Department is taking to develop post-covid-19 plans to reduce waiting times for elective surgeries.

Edward Argar:

Data is not available in the format requested.

■ Surgery: Liverpool

Paula Barker:

[\[100557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the backlog is of elective care procedures in Liverpool CCG.

Edward Argar:

At the end of August 2020, there were 31,404 people on the elective waiting list for Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group.

■ Surgery: Waiting Lists**Paula Barker:**[\[100558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to (a) clear the backlog of and (b) reduce the size of waiting lists for elective care procedures.

Edward Argar:

Local providers have been asked to produce plans for how they will meet the key actions outlined in the phase 3 guidance issued by NHS England at the end of July. The ambition is to recover elective services in October to 90% of last year's levels for admissions and 100% for outpatients. In September, the National Health Service carried out 80% of the planned hospital inpatient procedures which it delivered last year, as well as 96% of last year's level of computerized tomography (CT) scans and 86% of MRI scans.

We will do everything possible to tackle waiting lists between now and winter, but this must be done in a safe and managed way ensuring that we maintain the capacity for any further surge in COVID-19 activity.

■ Surgical Mesh Implants**Emma Hardy:**[\[97696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Baroness Cumberlege's Review on the Safety of Certain Medicines and Medical Devices, what plans he has to establish a data registry to log every complication resulting from mesh surgery.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS Digital has put together a programme of work to establish an information system to collect surgical implants and devices data from all National Health Service and private provider organisations starting with mesh-related procedures.

It is currently in the pilot stage and once completed will be followed by establishing a Medical Device Information System (MDIS). MDIS will be used to support surveillance of all medical devices including mesh-related procedures and will enable patients to be identified and contacted where safety concerns are identified. NHS Digital hopes to move to full rollout in January 2021.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Coronavirus****Paul Blomfield:**[\[102061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the covid-19 risks of her Department resuming its requirement for asylum seekers to attend reporting centres.

Chris Philp:

Immigration Enforcement recommenced face to face reporting in July and August for limited, priority cohorts of people. We have implemented Safe Systems of Working (SSOW) and Risk Assessments in all our Reporting Centres where we have put in place robust social distancing measures; health screening questions are asked as a person enters; face masks are offered to those who have travelled without them; and sanitiser stations are placed throughout our buildings. We continue to review our current reporting arrangements in line with any new local and national COVID restrictions that are put in place.

Before inviting individuals into reporting, case owners will make an assessment based on the harm that those who are Foreign National Offenders may pose to the public, as well as the vulnerability and personal circumstances of all of those we ask to report. We continue to keep in contact with the overall reporting population by telephone to update individuals on the current reporting position. An SMS text or email/letter is sent to those required to recommence reporting informing them of the date and time they should report, along with relevant advice on COVID. We have also updated the reporting pages on GOV.UK for those who report and their representatives. This information includes how to travel most safely by public transport, avoiding both busy transport hubs and traveling at peak times; advice on reporting alone where possible; and what to do if those reporting have symptoms or are shielding.

Paul Blomfield:[\[102062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the need for vulnerable asylum seekers to travel for appointments and reporting requirements during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office takes the wellbeing of asylum seekers extremely seriously and has already put in place a range of measures to support asylum applicants affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

In line with the Home Office' commitment to protect the health and wellbeing of its staff and applicants as a top priority, we have introduced regional intake units to allow asylum claims to be registered in a safe way that adheres to social distancing guidance and minimises travel.

Peter Kyle: [\[99677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to commence covid-secure face-to-face substantive asylum interviews.

Peter Kyle: [\[99678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many video conference interviews her Department has conducted with unaccompanied asylum seeking children since August 2020.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office takes the wellbeing of asylum seekers extremely seriously and has put in place a range of measures to support asylum seekers affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Asylum Operations have been clear it would not restart substantive asylum interviews until it was safe to do so. We are now able to ensure safe social distancing of our staff and customers and restarted remote video interviewing for adults from 17th July 2020.

On 21st September 2020, we recommenced with face to face substantive interviews for adults. On the same date, we also commenced remote video interviewing for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

We are focused on increasing the number of interviews at pace and working towards returning back to pre-COVID-19 levels as soon as we are able.

Information on video conference interviews with UASCS is not routinely published.

■ **Asylum: Kent**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[103553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what provision she is making for the education, health and mental welfare of unaccompanied asylum seekers detained in the Kent Intake Unit.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office takes its responsibility for the welfare of children seriously and we have very stringent statutory and policy safeguards in place. We have seen record numbers of arrivals on the south coast in recent weeks and are working hard to make sure every unaccompanied child receives appropriate support.

Unaccompanied children arriving in Dover are cared for in the Kent Intake Unit (KIU) before being placed in appropriate social services care. Those claiming asylum are only in the KIU whilst their claims are registered; it is not an immigration removal centre.

Children are always prioritised and supported there for as short a period as possible. The KIU also includes a non-detained waiting area where children can await the arrival of local authority social workers. Support is also provided on-site by the

Refugee Council. Once a child is in the care of a local authority, they are afforded the same rights as all other looked-after children

■ **Asylum: Temporary Accommodation**

Ed Davey:

[\[102660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees being housed (a) in temporary hotel accommodation and (b) at temporary Ministry of Defence sites.

Chris Philp:

We take the welfare of the asylum seekers we accommodate very seriously. We work closely with our service providers, local health teams and the voluntary sector to ensure that support is provided to vulnerable asylum seekers.

Service providers have welfare officers on hand at temporary accommodation sites and asylum seekers are encouraged to speak to them if they are concerned for their (or anybody else's) welfare.

Anyone receiving asylum support can contact the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility service, operated by Migrant Help 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if they need help, advice or guidance or are experiencing difficulties.

■ **Crime: Coronavirus**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[102840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of crime during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kit Malthouse:

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) reported on its website on 30 September 2020 that provisional data from police forces in England and Wales showed a reduction in crime during the months of strict lockdown measures but that levels are now returning to pre-Covid-19 levels.

■ **Immigrants: Finance**

Stephen Timms:

[\[103406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to recommendation 6 of her Department's Policy Equality Statement of 17 April 2020, when she plans to reissue that Policy Equality Statement on No Recourse to Public Funds so that it addresses the point relating to the impact on British citizen children.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office has published its policy equality statement on the impact of the No Recourse to Public Fund (NRPF) policy on migrants on the 10-year human rights route and specifically addresses the point relating to the impact on British children. It can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-change-of-conditions-of-leave-to-allow-access-to-public-funds-if-your-circumstances-change>

The NRPF policy is based on the well-established principle that migrants coming to the UK are expected to maintain and support themselves and their families without posing a burden on the UK's welfare system. Access to benefits and other publicly funded services reflects the strength of a migrant's connections to the UK and is normally linked to indefinite leave to remain.

Individuals with leave under the family or private life routes, including those with British children, can apply for the restriction on accessing public funds to be lifted or not imposed if they are at risk of destitution or where there are concerns about the welfare of their child.

■ Immigration: Artificial Intelligence

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[102174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what algorithms her Department uses in the immigration process.

Kevin Foster:

All of the technology used by the Department in the immigration process will contain computer code which meets the definition of an "algorithm".

It would be of disproportionate cost to the Department to set all of these out.

■ Immigration: Children

Neil Coyle:

[\[102823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of children who need support to apply for Settled Status and who do not have a parent to complete the process for them.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office made some broad initial estimates of the numbers of children in care and care leavers who may be eligible for status under the EU Settlement Scheme. In the absence of local authority data on the nationality of children coming into care, these were based on a range of input from interested parties such as Department for Education, MHCLG, LGA and representations from the devolved administrations, but broadly based on data from the Office for National Statistics. The resulting figures – of around 5,000 children in care and 4,000 care leavers – provided a reasonably generous basis for the new burdens' assessment, from which additional funding was provided to relevant local authorities.

The Home Office has recently conducted a survey of local authorities across the UK as part of the support it is offering to them with this important work. With over 90% of local authorities having so far responded to the survey, the emerging picture is actual volumes of eligible cases are significantly lower than the overall estimate of 9,000.

Returns to date have so far identified fewer than 4,000 children in care and care leavers eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Neil Coyle:

[\[102819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many additional staff her Department has appointed to manage the EU Settlement Scheme caseload.

Kevin Foster:

There are currently 1,510 full time equivalent staff employed to work on the EU Settlement Scheme.

Neil Coyle:

[\[102820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how long on average her Department takes to process an EU Settlement Scheme application.

Kevin Foster:

Our aim is to process all applications to the EU Settlement Scheme as expeditiously as possible. Complete applications are usually processed in around five working days.

More information about processing times for applications under the scheme is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-application-processing-times/eu-settlement-scheme-pilot-current-expected-processing-times-for-applications>.

Neil Coyle:

[\[102822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people identified as being in a vulnerable group with citizenship from an EU member state have been contacted and supported with funding from her Department to make an application to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

In April 2019 the Home Office awarded £9 million of funding to 57 UK voluntary and community sector organisations to support vulnerable EEA citizens and their family members with additional help when applying for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

In March 2020, the Home Office announced a further £8 million of funding to be awarded to continue supporting vulnerable and hard to reach EEA citizens applying to the EUSS.

72 UK organisations are now providing support with this funding, which has been used to support over 200,000 vulnerable citizens applying to the EUSS so far.

■ Refugees: Resettlement**Neil Coyle:**[\[99627\]](#)

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

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. However, the Home Office does not publish the data that is being requested.

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) related restrictions and pressures, both overseas and in the UK, it is not currently possible to undertake any refugee resettlement activity. This has inevitably impacted both the processing of refugees through the system and their resettlement to the UK. However, refugees who have been accepted for resettlement remain eligible and we are working with our international partners to ensure they are able to access any additional support they may need during the pause. We will resume resettlement arrivals to the UK as soon as safe to do so.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Correspondence**Steve McCabe:**[\[102663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the current average response time is to enquiries sent by hon. Members to UK Visas and Immigration.

Kevin Foster:

UK Visas and Immigration work to a target of responding to 95% of Ministerial correspondence within 20 days. We ensure urgent cases raised by Members are prioritised.

We do not hold data on average response times.

■ Visas: British National (Overseas)**Owen Thompson:**[\[103578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the likely number of applicants for the bespoke British Nationals (Overseas) visa from Hong Kong; when she plans to publish the full details of that scheme; what steps she is taking to ensure that people convicted of offences related to participation in pro-democracy protests will not be prevented from accessing that scheme; and what arrangements she plans to put in place to welcome, integrate and support people who access that scheme.

Kevin Foster:

Further details of the new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) Visa route will be put before Parliament shortly when the Immigration Rules are laid. Estimates of the potential number of applicants will also be made available in due course.

Consistent with the Immigration Rules we will be able to refuse applicants who have serious criminal convictions or have been otherwise engaged in behaviour which the UK Government deems not conducive to the public good, or are subject to other general grounds for refusal. However, where convictions are related to free speech or peaceful protest, which would not be considered offences under UK law, we would apply discretion as appropriate.

We are working closely with other government departments, including the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, to ensure BN(O) citizens coming into the UK are able to integrate and contribute to the betterment of society across our United Kingdom.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Housing: Construction

Thangam Debonnaire:

[\[103555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government's Affordable Homes programme and his Department's Guidance: Apply for affordable housing funding, published on 10 September 2020, whether affordable rent level grants for social rented homes will apply to (a) all areas or (b) only areas assessed as not having high affordability.

Christopher Pincher:

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

■ Commonhold and Leasehold: Reform

Daisy Cooper:

[\[103629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 6 March 2020 to Question 22054, what his timetable is for bringing forward legislative proposals on leasehold and commonhold reform.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market. In January this year the Law Commission published the first of four reports, on the valuation aspects of enfranchisement, and on 21 July on the remaining aspects of enfranchisement as well as Commonhold and Right to Manage. We will consider all their recommendations carefully and respond in due course. Details can be found here:

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/residential-leasehold-and-commonhold/>. Given

the impact of Covid-19 on the legislative agenda, we will bring forward leasehold legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

■ Derelict Land

Andrew Griffith:

[\[101330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support development on brownfield sites.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework expects local authorities to prioritise brownfield land for development wherever possible. Local authorities are best placed to assess individual sites: each authority is required to publish a register of its developable brownfield suitable for new homes. My Department will shortly issue a national map of the land identified in these registers. We also provide significant practical support for the take-up of brownfield, such as:

- The £400 million Brownfield Fund for seven Mayoral Combined Authorities - West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, North of Tyne, and Tees Valley - that will enable around 26,000 new homes on brownfield land.
- The £5 billion Home Building Fund, providing loans for new housing in two ways: the £2 billion long-term fund supports delivery of larger sites, mostly brownfield, through loans for infrastructure and site preparation; the £3 billion short-term loan fund supports small and medium enterprises, custom builders and construction innovators to build housing, including some on brownfield.
- Revision of Permitted Development and Use Class rules to encourage re-use of previously developed land by allowing two new storeys for new homes on top of purpose-built blocks of flats; new space on top of houses in certain circumstances; and conversion or replacement of disused commercial, industrial and other buildings with residential, if well-designed and sustainably located.
- The Housing Infrastructure Fund, which has allocated nearly £4.1 billion for provision of infrastructure for housing projects, including some on brownfield.
- The £10 billion Single Housing Infrastructure Fund, to help with provision of roads, schools and other infrastructure for housing schemes, which may include some on brownfield.
- Land Remediation Relief, which cuts tax for companies cleaning up contaminated land.

■ Emergency Services: Infrastructure

Andrew Lewer:

[\[101310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Planning Act to include the infrastructural requirements of the emergency services.

Christopher Pincher:

Emergency services infrastructure is usually consented under the relevant town and country planning legislation. My Department is currently consulting on a new vision for the planning system, which proposes significant changes to the planning process, aiming to offer greater certainty and speed to those who use the planning system, including emergency services.

The Planning Act 2008 established the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects planning regime. This is a separate consenting regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects in the fields of energy, transport, water, waste water and waste.

■ Letting Agents: Prosecutions**Sarah Olney:**[\[103598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many successful prosecutions of letting agents there have been under the Energy Performance of Buildings (England & Wales) Regulations 2012 since those regulations come into force.

Christopher Pincher:

There is no requirement on Local Weights and Measures Authorities (LWMAs) to separately record how many successful prosecutions of letting agents there have been under the Energy Performance of Buildings (England & Wales) Regulations 2012 since those regulations came into force. Therefore, the Department does not hold this information centrally, but it may be available from individual LWMAs.

■ Local Government Finance**Helen Hayes:**[\[103584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on the local authority finance settlement.

Luke Hall:

MHCLG Ministers and officials have regular contact with local authorities and their representative bodies, such as the LGA, on the approach to the annual local government finance settlement and related matters. All decisions on local government funding will be taken as part of the current Spending Review.

■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus**Helen Hayes:**[\[103582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the reductions in the levels of local government funding due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

We are providing local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, including over £4.8 billion in funding for spending pressures, comprising of £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and over £1.1 billion for the Infection Control Fund. In total, over £28 billion has been committed to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities across government. This comprehensive package of support includes direct financial support and cashflow measures for councils, bus and tram services, support for the homeless and both grants and rates reliefs for businesses, as well as several other grants. We have also introduced measures to address lost income, including:

- A co-payment scheme to cover irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income in 20/21 with the Government covering 75 per cent of losses beyond 5 per cent of planned income
- Phased repayment of Collection Fund deficits over the next 3 years
- A commitment to support the sector through an apportionment of irrecoverable Council Tax and Business Rates losses, to be agreed at the Spending Review

The funding will support the pressures councils have reported and the crucial role they play in helping the country tackle this crisis, such as their work re-opening the country including working with businesses and shops to enforce social distancing.

Furthermore, on Monday 12 October, the Prime Minister confirmed around £1 billion of additional funding will be made available to councils across England to support them during this unprecedented time. We will publish further information shortly.

Motorcycles: Coronavirus**Andrea Leadsom:**[\[103497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that motorbike scrambling is subject to covid-19 legislation with no change in planning permission.

Christopher Pincher:

All activities are subject to the relevant Covid restrictions. To support businesses and communities during this time we have provided a further 14 days during which time land can temporarily be used for motorsports until 31 December 2020. This is in addition to the existing allowance of 14 days.

Temporary Accommodation**Zarah Sultana:**[\[103635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the availability of emergency accommodation for people with nowhere safe to stay in the next 12 months.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Government has taken significant steps, backed by substantial funding to bring forward support and accommodation for rough sleepers. 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. This work was supported by the £4.8 billion that Government has given to local authorities to respond to the challenges of COVID-19, which includes their work on rough sleeping.

Additionally, we launched the £266 million Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). This makes available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent these people from returning to the streets. The NSAP is made up of two parts, the first part which funds immediate support to ensure people and the rest to bring forward long-term accommodation and move-on support.

On 17 September we announced local authority allocations for the short-term funding aspect of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. £91.5 million was allocated to 274 councils in England to help vulnerable people housed during the pandemic.

Applications are now being considered for the rest of the fund which is intended to provide over 3,300 additional supported homes this year for those sleeping rough or currently housed in emergency accommodation. The bidding has now closed and details on successful bids will be announced in due course. This is part of broader support to provide 6,000 such homes over four years.

Finally, on 13 October, the Government announced additional support for rough sleepers this winter, giving local areas the tools they need to protect people from life-threatening cold weather and the risks posed by COVID-19.

This additional support builds on the existing package of support and funding, and includes: a new £10 million Cold Weather Fund for local areas to bring forward self-contained and COVID-secure accommodation; a new £2 million Transformation Fund for the faith, communities and voluntary sector to move away from their traditional communal models; and comprehensive guidance to the sector, produced with Public Health England and Homeless Link, to help them open shelters more safely, as a last resort and where not doing so would endanger lives.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Film and Television: UK Trade with EU****Paul Blomfield:****[102057]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure continued export of (a) satellite TV signals licensed in the UK to the countries of the EU

and (b) the continued export of UK television programmes and films to the EU after the transition period.

Graham Stuart:

After the transition period, the UK will continue to be a signatory to the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (ECTT). This means that the 22 countries that are co-signatories must allow freedom of reception of services under UK jurisdiction.

However, UK-based audio-visual media service providers may need to comply with the rules of a Member State to have access to the EU market in which they would want to provide their services. Similarly, EU providers wishing to supply services in the United Kingdom may need to abide by UK rules.

Broadcasters and on-demand programme services providers have been encouraged to seek legal advice and contact EU media regulators to check whether their current licence will continue to be accepted in the EU countries where the service is available, or if a separate licence or authorisation will be required.

Europe remains the second biggest territory for UK TV exports worth an estimated £470m in 2018/19. The UK's European Works (EW) status is valued by our Audio-Visual sector and our European partners who value access to the UK's world class content on their screens.

As a signatory to the ECTT framework, UK content will continue to hold the status of EW with guaranteed access to the EW quota within the EU. The government is implementing the recent updates to the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) in our domestic regime, which will extend quotas for EW to on-demand content, underlining the government's ongoing commitment to the EW framework for film and television.

■ **Trade Agreements: Food**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[103639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that child health is prioritised when discussing food standards during negotiations on future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Child Health is an extremely important matter for HM Government.

Our manifesto is clear that we will not compromise on our high food safety standards. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 transfers all existing EU food safety provisions, onto the United Kingdom's statute book.

Our food standards agencies will continue to make sure that all food imports comply with the United Kingdom's high safety standards, and that consumers are protected from foods that do not meet our standards.

■ Trade Agreements: Ghana and Kenya

Gareth Thomas:

[\[102656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on the retail supply chain for (a) food and (b) flowers in the event that a continuity trade deal is not agreed with (i) Ghana and (ii) Kenya by 31 December 2020; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The government is working with partner governments to secure continuity trade agreements. If the relevant EU-partner country trading arrangement has not yet been transitioned into a UK-partner country trade agreement, low and lower-middle income countries will be able to get trade preferences through the UK Generalised Scheme of Preferences from 31 December 2020.

Under the General Framework of the UK Generalised Scheme of Preferences, Ghana and Kenya are eligible to receive preferential access on some product lines.

Under the Enhance Framework of the UK Generalised Scheme of Preferences, further tariff reductions are available to countries that are considered economically vulnerable and low level of integration with the international systems. These countries are required to ratify and effectively implement 27 international conventions on human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance.

■ Trade Agreements: Gibraltar

Bob Stewart:

[\[102736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in ensuring that Gibraltar is subject to the same arrangements as the UK in future trade deals.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government is seeking trade outcomes that support all Overseas Territories' economic interests, and which reflect their unique characteristics.

Of course, our Overseas Territories have varied interests and may not always want to take on the obligations of an entire free trade agreement.

■ Trade Agreements: Kenya

Gareth Thomas:

[\[102657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of providing Kenya with duty and quota free access to the UK on the same terms as least developed countries under the EU's Everything but Arms trade scheme; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Everything But Arms Framework is for countries that are classified by the United Nations (UN) as Least Developed Countries. Kenya is not eligible as it is not currently classified as a Least Developed Country.

The UK fully recognises the impact that a loss of duty and quota free access to UK markets after the transition period could have on Kenya and is engaging with Kenya and other East African Community states to secure a trade agreement that will provide this duty and quota free access.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[103449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of a UK-Kenya free trade agreement on the East African Community's Common External Tariff.

Greg Hands:

The United Kingdom is pursuing a trade agreement with the East African Community (EAC), and we recognise the impact that a loss of duty and quota free access to UK markets after the transition period could have on Kenya if an agreement is not in place.

We are engaging with Kenya and all EAC States to secure a trade agreement that will provide this duty and quota free access, and provide lasting certainty for EAC and UK businesses in our trading arrangements.

JUSTICE**■ Prisons: Drugs****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[103441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide an estimate of the volume of the reduction of illegal drugs smuggled into prisons he expects to be delivered through the implementation of the National Prison Drugs Strategy.

Lucy Frazer:

By its very nature, drug trafficking is intended to be a clandestine activity. It is therefore not possible to estimate a volume reduction in drugs being smuggled into prisons. However, we are taking a number of steps to strengthen our prisons' defences against this type of criminality.

To support the 'reducing supply' strand of the National Prison Drugs Strategy, we are taking decisive action to improve security. This will make it much harder for illicit items to be smuggled in by prisoners, staff and visitors; strengthen staff resilience to corruption; and target organised criminals who exploit prisons as a lucrative illicit market. This package of measures is being funded through the £100m investment to tackle crime behind bars, announced by the Prime Minister last summer. This is funding tough new measures including X-ray body scanners to detect items smuggled inside prisoners' bodies. Our ability to tackle drugs supply is also

supported by efforts to reduce demand for drugs. This is why the National Drugs Strategy takes a three-pronged approach and focusses on tackling supply, reducing demand and building recovery from substance misuse.

A planned evaluation of the £100m investment will consider the wider benefits and outcomes for the safety and security of prisons as measures of success. It will use a range of both quantitative and qualitative measures to assess whether delivery of the investment has successfully reduced drug trafficking into prisons through the targeted supply routes.

■ Youth Justice: Coronavirus

Peter Kyle:

[103580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to manage the delivery of youth court hearings during a second wave of covid-19.

Chris Philp:

In consultation with Public Health England, and Public Health Wales, HMCTS has put in place arrangements for social distancing and mitigation of the risks associated with the pandemic. [COVID-19: Update on the HMCTS response for Criminal Courts in England and Wales](#).

These arrangements have, since July, enabled youth courts to conclude more cases every week than have been received, with the safety of all those involved in these hearings being paramount.

We do not currently envisage that it will be necessary to revert to any contingency listing arrangements during a second wave of covid-19. The position will be kept under review.

■ Youth Rehabilitation Orders

Peter Kyle:

[103581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the number of interventions mandated by Youth Rehabilitation Orders that are being delivered.

Lucy Frazer:

Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YROs) can be imposed in any case where the mandatory referral order conditions do not apply. It provides the court with a menu of 18 requirements to choose from (such as education, activity or curfew requirements).

Youth Offending Teams supervise young people serving a community sentence and figures on the delivery of requirements that have been given to children who received a YRO are not held centrally. Youth Justice Statistics are published annually, including the number of requirements that have been given to children who received a YRO. In the year ending March 2019 this was as follows:

Table: Types of requirements given to children receiving a Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO), year ending March 2019 ⁽¹⁾

REQUIREMENT	NUMBER OF REQUIREMENTS	SHARE
Supervision	3,655	32%
Activity	2,138	19%
Electronic Monitoring	1,556	14%
Curfew	1,478	13%
Programme	930	8%
Unpaid Work	434	4%
Prohibited Activity	418	4%
Attendance Centre	330	3%
Exclusion	290	3%
Education	108	1%
Residence	74	1%
Local Authority Residence	54	0%
Drug Treatment	24	0%
Drug Testing	13	0%
Mental Health Treatment	12	0%
Intoxicating Substance Treatment	11	0%
Total	11,525	100%

(1) In the year ending March 2019 according to Youth Justice Application Framework (YJJAF) there were 5,075 YROs given to 3,883 children. These YROs had 11,525 requirements attached to them. For 1,240 of 5,075 YROs given no requirement type was recorded.

Source: Youth Justice statistics: 2018 to 2019 supplementary tables, Chapter 5 – Sentencing of Children, Table 5.7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/youth-justice-statistics>

TRANSPORT**■ Motorway Service Areas: Leasehold**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[103488\]](#)

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

Lilian Greenwood: [\[103489\]](#)

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

Lilian Greenwood: [\[103490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of renewing or extending the leases at state-owned motorway service areas on levels of private sector investment in (a) electric vehicle charging infrastructure, (b) HGV parking and (c) site improvements.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[103491\]](#)

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

Rachel Maclean:

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

In September this year, Baroness Vere met Roadchef, to hear their current proposals for lease renewal. Topics discussed included how best to unlock investment to modernise the ageing sites, including the upgrades to electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, provision of additional HGV parking.

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

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

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

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

■ Railways: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard: [\[101311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to support open access rail operators during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Pollard: [\[101312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the potential job losses in open access rail operators due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Unlike franchised passenger services, Open Access Operators run services without a contractual relationship with Government and there is no obligation on the Secretary of State under Section 30 of the Railways Act to run those services. Open access operators were therefore not offered Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs). However, during the COVID-19 outbreak, Open Access Operators have drawn upon business support measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Other substantial measures, including the Covid Corporate Financing Facility, have also been put in place. Government also provided support for more bespoke measures, such as applications for extensions to track access contracts and deferrals of payments to the British Transport Police. We will continue to engage closely with Open Access Operators as they respond to the current situation, including highlighting the support available through the recently announced Job Support Scheme.

TREASURY

■ Airports: Non-domestic Rates

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[103466\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 100924, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing business rate relief for airports.

Jesse Norman:

The Government keeps all tax policy under review and is conducting a fundamental review of the business rates system in England. A Call for Evidence was published on 21 July and the Government is now considering responses.

A range of measures to support all businesses, including airports, has been made available, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help firms keep people in employment, and the deferral of Value Added Tax (VAT) payments.

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

■ Amazon: Taxation

Chi Onwurah:

[\[103506\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether Amazon will be subject to the Digital Services Tax.

Jesse Norman:

The Digital Services Tax is designed to ensure that search engines, social media platforms, and online marketplaces pay UK tax that reflects the value they derive from UK users.

While the Government is unable to discuss specific businesses, a number of businesses have made public statements confirming that they expect to be subject to the tax.

The tax is a temporary measure, which will be removed once an appropriate global solution is in place.

■ Capital Gains Tax

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[103440\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has for the further roll out the comprehensive communications plan from October 2020 to the end of the 2020-21 tax year.

Jesse Norman:

It is not possible to answer this question in detail, without further information about the specific plan referred to.

The Honourable Member may wish to note that for the forthcoming Self-Assessment deadline HMRC are developing an integrated external campaign which includes direct communications, social media, press and stakeholder management. HMRC would like taxpayers to complete and file their tax return early, so they can plan and budget and ultimately pay the tax they owe. HMRC's communications will include messages to explain the support available to taxpayers who have been affected financially by COVID-19 and who cannot pay in full by the deadline.

■ Cash Dispensing: Fees and Charges

Fleur Anderson:

[\[103636\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of banks on the provision of free-to-use ATMs; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and

delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis.

The Government recognises that cash remains important to millions of people across the UK, which is why it has committed to legislate to protect access to cash and to ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable in the long term. The Government is working at pace, engaging with industry and the regulators – the Financial Conduct Authority, Payment Systems Regulator, and Bank of England – whilst designing legislation. To inform the development of this legislation, the Government published a Call for Evidence on 15 October seeking views on the key considerations associated with cash access, including deposit and withdrawal facilities, cash acceptance, and regulatory oversight of the cash system.

LINK, the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network, has existing arrangements in place to protect free-to-use ATMs that do not have another free-to-use ATM or Post Office within 1 kilometre. LINK's members have also made £5 million available to fund ATMs at the request of communities with poor access to cash.

■ **Coronavirus: Liverpool City Region**

Ian Byrne:

[\[103648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what impact assessment has been made of the potential effect of tier 3 covid-19 restrictions on the economy of the Liverpool City Region; and what further economic support he will provide to that region in response to those restrictions.

John Glen:

The government recognises that every region and community will be feeling the impact of this crisis and remains committed to helping the unemployed return to work and supporting those most vulnerable to job losses. We will continue to work closely with local areas to make sure that individuals and businesses are directed to the right support during this difficult period. To support those on low incomes throughout the outbreak, the government has created a package of temporary welfare measures, including a £20 per week increase in the Universal Credit standard allowance and an increase in the Local Housing Allowance.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme will provide businesses in England which are forced to close due to local restrictions with up to £3,000 per month, depending on their rateable value.

Additionally, and from 1 November, in line with the Jobs Support Scheme, businesses in England which have been forced to close on a national basis or which have not been able to reopen since the national lockdown was introduced in March, will also be eligible for these grants.

In order to protect jobs and UK businesses, we are expanding the Job Support Scheme for businesses legally required to temporarily close their premises as a direct result of Coronavirus restrictions. The Government will provide employers with a

grant for employees unable to work, covering two thirds of their usual wages and subject to a cap. Support will be available to eligible businesses from 1 November for 6 months, with a review in January.

The Prime Minister also announced on Monday that a further £1bn will be made available to LAs in England to support them during this unprecedented time; and that up to £465m would be provided to LAs at High or Very High Alert through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. This is in addition to the more than £4.8bn of funding which has already been provided to LAs in England to help them manage the impacts of Covid.

■ **Detergents: VAT**

Patricia Gibson:

[\[103556\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with cabinet colleagues on exempting household cleaning products from VAT during the covid19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

Cleaning products are subject to the standard rate of VAT. Providing an exemption for these products would come at a considerable cost to the Exchequer and is not possible under the current legal framework. Although the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are no current plans to change the VAT treatment of these products.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

Jane Stevenson:

[\[103627\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will grant a business rates exemption to hospitality venues during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided 100 per cent business rates relief for 12 months from 1 April 2020 to eligible businesses occupying properties in England used for retail, hospitality and leisure.

■ **Job Support Scheme**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[103450\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his announcement of 9 October 2020 on the expansion of the Jobs Support Scheme, whether that expansion applies to businesses that supply businesses legally required to close their premises as a result of covid-19 restrictions.

Alex Sobel:

[\[103618\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether coach operators working in very high covid-19 alert areas will be eligible for the extended Job Support Scheme announced in October 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The scheme will cover businesses across the UK with premises that are legally required to close as a direct result of government coronavirus restrictions set by one or more of the four governments in the UK, including businesses which have premises restricted to providing delivery and collection services.

If and when new local or national sector closures are announced, new businesses will become eligible for support under the scheme if they are affected.

Businesses that are open can use the other element of the Job Support Scheme aimed at those able to open but facing lower levels of demand, available from 1 November. The Government will pay a third of hours not worked up to a cap, so that employees earn a minimum of 77 per cent of their normal wages.

In addition to the JSS, the Government has made available a comprehensive package of support for businesses to support their cashflow during the pandemic, including loan schemes and tax deferrals. As of 20 September, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILs) and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILs) had together provided £57.31bn of finance to businesses in need.

Members: Correspondence**Dave Doogan:**[\[101315\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the letters of (a) 31 July 2020, (b) 31 August 2020 and (c) 29 September 2020 from the hon. Member for Angus on financial support for dental laboratories.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury responded to the member's letter on 9 October 2020.

Mortgages: Coronavirus**Patrick Grady:**[\[103551\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of mortgage holidays taken during the covid-19 outbreak on the credit ratings of mortgage prisoners.

John Glen:

Following the Coronavirus outbreak, the Government worked quickly with lenders and financial regulators to give people access to payment holidays on their mortgages. This gives customers a much-needed respite period, where no repayments on these products are due. It was necessary to bring this temporary measure in, in order to give customers time to smooth out their finances that may have taken a hit by the pandemic.

The FCA issued guidance to all firms that engage in mortgage activities, this includes all borrowers whose mortgage is in a closed book or owned by an inactive lender.

We were clear from the start, that anyone taking a one of these payment holiday should not suffer a worsening arrears status.

■ Nature Conservation: Coronavirus

Derek Twigg:

[\[103430\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take additional fiscal steps beyond the (a) Green Recovery Challenge Fund and (b) Climate for Nature Fund to ensure that (i) nature and (ii) nature based solutions form part of the UK's green recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government remains committed to pursuing a green recovery, with concern for our environment at its heart. The £40m Green Recovery Challenge Fund opened to applications in September and will provide funding for projects across England to restore nature while creating and safeguarding up to 5,000 jobs.

■ Public Expenditure: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[\[103570\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 11 of the Written Statement of 13 October 2020, HCWS508 on High Speed Two: Update to Parliament, Autumn 2020, what level of Barnett consequential money (a) has already been allocated and (b) is still to be allocated to the Scottish Government of the £9.6 billion spend to date.

Steve Barclay:

As set out in the Treasury's Statement of Funding Policy, the Barnett formula is applied at departmental level at Spending Reviews, and at programme level at fiscal events.

Since HS2 typically receives its annual funding at Spending Reviews, the funding for HS2 cannot be associated with specific Barnett consequentials. The Scottish Government's Barnett consequentials resulting from changes in the Department for Transport's budget were £1.3 billion at Spending Review 2015 (which determined resource funding up to 2019-20 and capital funding to 2020-21), and £48 million at Spending Round 2019 (which just determined 2020-21 resource funding).

Alan Brown:

[\[103571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 11 of the Written Statement of 13 October 2020, HCWS508 on High Speed Two: Update to Parliament, Autumn 2020, what level of Barnett Consequential money is to derive to Scotland (a) in total and (b) to provide an annual profile of the projected allocation of the £11.5 billion contracted spend.

Steve Barclay:

As set out in the Treasury's Statement of Funding Policy, the Barnett formula is applied at departmental level at Spending Reviews, and at programme level at fiscal events.

Since HS2 typically receives its annual funding through the Department for Transport's settlements at Spending Reviews, the spending on HS2 cannot be associated with specific Barnett consequentials. The Scottish Government's Barnett consequentials resulting from changes in the Department for Transport's budget were £1.3 billion at Spending Review 2015 (which determined resource funding up to 2019-20 and capital funding to 2020-21), and £48 million at Spending Round 2019 (which just determined 2020-21 resource funding).

Funding for future years will be settled at the upcoming Spending Review.

■ Public Expenditure: Wales

Ben Lake: [\[102153\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Welsh Government will receive a Barnett consequential from the planned £10 million grant-in-aid funding to support National League football clubs.

Steve Barclay:

In July we announced an unprecedented guarantee that the Welsh Government would receive at least £4 billion in additional resource funding this year to help them respond to Covid-19. We have now uplifted that by £400m, to at least £4.4 billion, on top of their Spring Budget 20 funding.

This gives the Welsh Government the certainty to plan their coronavirus response in the months ahead.

It is for the Welsh Government to decide how to use this funding irrespective of how UK government provides support in England.

■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

Fay Jones: [\[102170\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative assessment he has made of the effect of VAT rates from January 2021 on the affordability of reusable menstrual underwear and other female hygiene products.

Fay Jones: [\[102171\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department devised its definition of women's sanitary products qualifying for the reduced rate of VAT from January 2021; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of including reusable menstrual underwear within that definition.

Jesse Norman:

The zero rate for women's sanitary products announced in the March 2020 Budget will apply from 1 January 2021 to those products which are currently subject to the reduced rate of 5 per cent. This covers the supply of any sanitary protection product that is designed and marketed solely for the absorption or collection of menstrual flow or lochia, whether disposable or reusable. The relief excludes dual purpose period

and incontinence products, items of clothing such as reusable menstrual underwear, or purely incontinence products.

The new zero rate will ensure that every woman needing sanitary protection during their monthly cycle will, from the start of January and for the first time, have access to a variety of zero rated sanitary protection products on which they had previously paid a 5 per cent rate of VAT.

■ **Social Enterprises: Tax Allowances**

Tracey Crouch: [\[102028\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it remains his policy to make a decision on the future of Social Investment Tax Relief in Autumn 2020.

Tracey Crouch: [\[102029\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the effectiveness of Social Investment Tax Relief in creating employment in the most deprived areas.

Tracey Crouch: [\[102755\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the potential contribution that continuing Social Investment Tax Relief beyond April 2021 could make to promoting local economic growth in the most disadvantaged communities.

Jesse Norman:

The Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) is intended to address a specific access to finance market failure for social enterprises by incentivising individuals to invest in these ventures.

The scheme is intended to support a broad range of social enterprises, with a variety of social missions and community benefits. SITR is not designed directly to encourage employment or to support particular geographical areas: qualifying social enterprises are free to use SITR wherever they are in the country in whatever way they determine is best for their growth and development.

The Government committed to a full review of SITR within two years of its expansion, and published a Call for Evidence last year on the use of the scheme to date. A Summary of Responses will be published in due course alongside a decision on the policy's future.

WALES

■ **Coronavirus: Wales**

Ruth Jones: [\[102163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the First Minister of Wales on the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Simon Hart:

I am in regular contact with Welsh Ministers, including the First Minister of Wales to discuss the UK-wide response to Coronavirus. In the last two weeks this has included a COBR meeting, the Winter Summit and a virtual meeting with the First Minister.

We will continue to work closely with all the devolved administrations to ensure the most effective measures are in place in all parts of the UK. Where there are differences in the approach between Wales and England, it is vital that the rationale is founded on robust evidence and is clearly explained to people on both sides of the border.

This is particularly important in the context of restrictions being imposed by the Welsh Government on travel into Wales by people living in areas of England with a high prevalence of Covid transmission. I have written to the First Minister to seek assurances on how these restrictions will work in practice.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Carer's Allowance****Munira Wilson:**[\[907698\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing carer's allowance.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government recognises and appreciates the vital role played by unpaid carers. Carer's Allowance was increased in April. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.25 a week, meaning nearly an additional £700 a year for carers.

In February 2020, there were around 690 carers in the Twickenham constituency that were receiving Carer's Allowance and in 2019/20 we spent approximately £2.5 million on Carer's Allowance there.

■ Children: Maintenance**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[907714\]](#)

How many Child Maintenance Service cases with pre-existing arrears have continued to accrue arrears since covid-19 lockdown restrictions were introduced in March 2020.

Mims Davies:

Whilst this information is not readily available, we can see from official statistics a gradual and steady increase in paying parent compliance (from March 15 at 56% to March 20 at 68%).

■ Children: Poverty

Kirsten Oswald: [\[103548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which Minister of the Government has responsibility for tackling child poverty.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[103549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there is a central point in the Government co-ordinating (a) policy responses and (b) financial responses to tackling child poverty.

Will Quince:

Tackling child poverty is a key priority for this Government.

We are working closely with counterparts across government, ensuring a collective approach to the policies and interventions that can make a difference to children's outcomes, now and in the future.

■ Employment: Dudley North

Marco Longhi: [\[101320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to help ensure equality of employment opportunity in Dudley North constituency.

Mims Davies:

DWP offers significant support to unemployed people across Great Britain to access employment opportunities through our network of Jobcentres. Our Work Coaches provide support on finding a job, help with retraining or skills advice, CV, job applications and access to the new vacancies we record every day, as well as signposting to our new Jobhelp website. We adopt a blended approach of channels to connect with customers, to reflect current restrictions and comply with COVID safety.

The Department is working closely with other government departments, external organisations and local partners to support people into work.

The Kickstart scheme was recently launched to help young people aged 16-24 find 6-month work places in Dudley, and we have developed Youth Hubs locally to provide outreach support. There are two Youth Hubs which can be accessed by young people in Dudley, one at The Archives in Dudley Town Centre and one at the Merry Hill Centre in Brierley Hill. We have also partnered with employers in the area to deliver Mentoring Circles and Sector-based Work Academy Programmes.

■ Government Assistance: Coronavirus

Wes Streeting: [\[907699\]](#)

What discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for people in the sectors worst affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

I am working with colleagues across Government to ensure those in sectors most vulnerable to COVID-19 can access support to pivot into sectors where jobs are available.

DWP is doubling the number of Work Coaches in Jobcentres and stands ready to provide support to Universal Credit claimants to help them move back into work, including those sectors most vulnerable to COVID-19.

DWP has designed two websites that were launched in April, Jobhelp and Employer Help, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, recognising both a radically different labour market as some sectors contract and others expand. Jobhelp offers job search advice, showcases recruiting sectors and signposts to job vacancies to help people successfully find work.

Health and Safety Laboratory: Private Finance Initiative

Alan Brown: [\[103568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 99030 on Department for Work and Pensions: Private Finance Initiative, which Department has responsibility for Health and Safety Laboratory, Buxton PFI.

Alan Brown: [\[103569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 99030 on Department for Work and Pensions: Private Finance Initiative, which Department has responsibility for New Merseyside Centre.

Mims Davies:

When answering written Parliamentary Questions concerning the Department, we do not include information on Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) or Arms-Length bodies unless it is explicitly asked for in the question.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), has responsibility for the two live Private Finance Initiatives (PFI); the Health and Safety Laboratory, Buxton and Redgrave Court, Bootle formally known as the New Merseyside Centre.

Housing Benefit: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes: [\[103583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the benefits of increasing discretionary housing payments budgets for councils during the winter 2020.

Will Quince:

We have provided £180m in Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding to Local Authorities (LAs) to support vulnerable claimants with housing costs in the private and social rented sector in England and Wales for 2020/21. This includes an extra

£40m as announced last year at the spending round. We are currently monitoring the ongoing use of, and demand for, DHPs.

■ Jobcentres: Staff

Seema Malhotra:

[\[103537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time equivalent work coaches her Department employs, (b) how many new work coaches (i) were recruited in September and (ii) have been recruited to date in October 2020 and (c) how many full-time equivalent work coaches are being trained to work specifically with young people.

Mims Davies:

All Work Coaches within DWP are trained to help individual customers with their work search activity. As part of the Youth Offer, launched earlier this year we have introduced the role of the Youth Employability Coach to support those young people in receipt of Universal Credit who are furthest away from the labour market and require support to overcome multiple barriers to work.

Our local leaders are using their place based plans to establish the resource required to deliver all elements of the Youth Offer including the 13-week intensive support programme for all young people making a new claim to UC, alongside deployment of experienced Work Coaches into our network of Youth Hubs.

At the end of September 2020 circa 15,000 Full Time Equivalent Work Coaches were employed by the Department. We are on target to recruit 4,500 Work Coaches by end of October.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[103533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will (a) produce FAQs for businesses applying to the Kickstart scheme and (b) ensure that local staff of her Department are adequately briefed on the details of the scheme.

Mims Davies:

The department is continuously improving the guidance available online, at gov.uk/kickstart for both employers and Kickstart gateways.

We are also ensuring that the department's local staff have a good understanding of the Kickstart Scheme to enable them to properly identify the most suitable claimants.

Seema Malhotra:

[\[103534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications to the Kickstart scheme from (a) employers and (b) intermediaries her Department has received from each region and nation of the UK.

Seema Malhotra: [\[103535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Kickstart scheme placements have been (a) pledged by employers and (b) made available for young universal credit claimants to apply for in each region and nation of the UK.

Mims Davies:

The department is now processing many applications from across Great Britain for Kickstart. This is currently a clerical process, so reliable management information, particularly on geographical areas, is not yet available to publish.

Seema Malhotra: [\[103536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she will take (a) to ensure that requirements for employers participating in the Kickstart scheme to deliver support and training will be assessed and monitored by her Department and (b) in the event that those requirements are not met.

Mims Davies:

The quality of the Kickstart vacancy and of the employability support will be assessed in the application process, and spot checks will also be held to identify any concerns in quality after a placement has started. Employers and Kickstart gateways commit to provide a quality placement and level of support as a part of their grant agreement with the department, and appropriate action will be taken in response to any breach of this agreement.

■ Pensioners: Housing Benefit**Stephen Timms:** [\[103410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people of state pension age received Housing Benefit for a private rented home in (a) the most recent month for which data is available and (b) the same month in 2019.

Will Quince:

The available information on the number of households of state pension age receiving Housing Benefit is published and the latest statistics to May 2020 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>

■ Social Security Benefits**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[907696\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the potential effect of reducing universal credit and working tax credit by £20 a week in April 2021 on (a) average working age and (b) levels of child poverty.

Alex Cunningham:[\[907700\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the potential effect of reducing universal credit and working tax credit by £20 a week in April 2021 on (a) average working age and (b) levels of child poverty.

Will Quince:

DWP is continuing to work with HMT and other Government Departments to monitor the evolving economic situation and identify the most effective ways to help people. There is a lot of uncertainty involved in projecting incomes and levels of poverty.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus**Rushanara Ali:**[\[103529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of families who will be newly subject to the benefit cap after the end of the current grace period.

Mims Davies:

Information relating to households who will be newly affected by the Benefit Cap at the end of their current grace period is not readily available, and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females**Rushanara Ali:**[\[103524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to investigate and rectify underpayment made in error of the state pension to retired women.

Guy Opperman:

We are aware of a number of cases where individuals have been underpaid Category BL basic State Pension. We are checking for further cases, and if any are found awards will also be reviewed and any arrears paid in accordance with the law.

As soon as any underpayments are identified the individuals affected are reimbursed and their records corrected. Any individual who believes they are being underpaid State Pension should contact the Department on the Freephone number 0800 731 0469. Further details on how to do this through the Pension Service are available on the gov.uk website.

■ Universal Credit**Chris Elmore:**[\[102142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether provisions are in place for universal credit claimants who go into arrears as a result of having to pay upfront fees when moving home before their universal credit has been paid.

Chris Elmore: [\[102143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the timing of universal credit payments on the (a) assistance that people receive and (b) costs that people incur when moving home.

Chris Elmore: [\[102144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with housing associations on the effect on universal credit claimants of upfront fees when moving home.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is assessed and paid monthly, which reflects how the majority of the UK workforce is paid and helps prepare households to budget on a monthly basis, which will ease the transition into work. It also helps households to take advantage of cheaper tariffs for essential costs such as utility bills.

A Universal Credit Change of Circumstances Advance can be made available to existing claimants that experience a change of circumstance which results in a significant increase in entitlement, where the claimant cannot wait until the end of the assessment period to receive the increase.

For those individuals who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are available. DHPs can be paid to those entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs. The payments are awarded at the discretion of the Local Authority and can provide help with on-going housing costs, or one-off expenses such as rent in advance, deposits or removal costs.

We have provided £180m in DHP funding to local authorities to support vulnerable claimants with housing costs in the private and social rented sector in England and Wales for 2020/21. This includes an extra £40m as announced last year at the spending round.

Stephen Timms: [\[103407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 96745 on Universal Credit, what the timetable is for her Department to bring forward legislative proposals to address the issues raised by the Court of Appeal.

Will Quince:

I can confirm the Department's timetable for laying legislation in response to the Court of Appeal judgment made on 22 June in the case of Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart, which concerned claimants who receive two calendar monthly payments of earnings in one Universal Credit assessment period.

I am intending to make today and lay tomorrow, secondary legislation that will allow us to reallocate a payment of earnings reported via the Real Time Information service to a different Universal Credit assessment period, either because it was reported in

the wrong assessment period or (in the case of calendar monthly paid employees) it is necessary to maintain a regular payment cycle. This will mean that claimants who are paid calendar monthly will therefore have one salary payment taken into account in each assessment period. It also means that certain claimants will also benefit from any applicable work allowance.

Stephen Timms:

[\[103408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 96745, whether the proposed legislation will be applied retrospectively to households whose Universal Credit was previously reduced by the unlawful approach to calculating their earned income.

Will Quince:

The Court of Appeal ruled that the way the Department calculated Universal Credit awards involving earnings in an assessment period was a correct application of the regulations, but that not considering the impact on the specific cases of those paid calendar monthly who are affected a 'a non-banking day salary shift' was irrational. The legislation we are making today and laying tomorrow, revises those arrangements and provides a remedy that satisfies the Court of Appeal Judgment in the case of *Johnson and Others*. It will mean that in future for cases affected by this issue, monthly earnings will be reallocated to another assessment period, which means that only one set of earnings will be taken into account rather than two, and certain claimants will be able to benefit from any applicable work allowance.

■ Universal Credit: EU Nationals

Neil Coyle:

[\[102824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claim decisions have been delayed as a result of claimants waiting for EU Settlement Scheme applications to be processed.

Justin Tomlinson:

We do not hold the data in the Department that would allow us to provide figures for this question. DWP operates a Habitual Residence Test (HRT) in order to assess whether individuals have legal right to reside for the purpose of accessing benefits and are factually habitually resident.

EU citizens who are exercising a qualifying right to reside, such as worker or self-employed, and are habitually resident in the UK will pass the Habitual Residence Test

A Universal Credit claimant can still pass the HRT without either having applied to the EUSS, or whilst waiting for their application to be processed, provided they can prove their right to reside and factual habitual residency.

■ Universal Credit: Private Rented Housing**Stephen Timms:****[103409]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Universal Credit claimants rented from a private landlord and had (a) dependent children and (b) no dependent children in (i) the most recent month for which data is available and (ii) the same month in 2019.

Will Quince:

The available information on the number of households on Universal Credit with Housing Entitlement, by Tenure and Family Type is published and the latest statistics to May 2020 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>

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Mr Clive Betts:

[74433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference his oral contribution of 7 July 2020, Official Report, column 837, in light of the decision to require face masks to be worn in shops whether is plans to issue a badge or pass for people exempted from wearing a mask in shops or on public transport.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 August 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

The Government has provided clear guidance and communications on when and how to wear a face covering and will continue to communicate this guidance to the public and stakeholders as necessary over the coming months. Messaging around exemptions is included as a key part of Government communications on when and how to wear a face covering. The Government also continues to engage with stakeholders and charities on the issue of exemptions to support these groups. In addition, the Government is running a major proactive communications campaign on face coverings to alert the public where they are now required to wear face coverings and educate the public on how to correctly wear one. We are currently looking at ways in which we can support people who would be more comfortable to show they are exempt from the requirement to wear face covering, using some form of optional visual cue. Those who are exempt from the regulations will be permitted to go into supermarkets and shops without wearing a face covering. People do not need to prove they have an exemption. Staff and employees are expected to act reasonably and not challenge people on why they are not wearing a covering.

~~Since Monday 8 June all National Health Service practices were able to start, at their own pace, seeing patients again once they have appropriate social distancing and other safety measures in place. Personal protective equipment (PPE) for dentists is being made available through their business as usual wholesalers. We have also set up new distribution routes for dentistry to ensure continuity of supply for all urgent dental care centres and have placed them on the list of priority areas to receive supplies from Local Resilience Forums. PPE for dental practices will include equipment necessary for aerosol generating procedures.~~

~~A risk assessment specifically relating to dentists using FFP2 instead of FFP3 respirators has not been made. Government guidance for dentists states that FFP3 respirators are advised for all aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) to prevent inhalation of aerosols. Some dental work is classed as AGPs. The Health and Safety~~

Executive carried out a rapid review of the evidence of the effectiveness of FFP3, FFP2 and N95 masks earlier this year. The review stated that FFP2 and N95 respirators offer protection against COVID-19 and so may be used if FFP3 respirators are not available. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/face-mask-equivalence-aprons-gowns-eye-protection-coronavirus.htm>

Daniel Kawczynski:

[74480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people with medical conditions who cannot wear a face covering will be permitted to go into supermarkets and shops from the 24 July 2020.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 August 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

The Government has provided clear guidance and communications on when and how to wear a face covering and will continue to communicate this guidance to the public and stakeholders as necessary over the coming months. Messaging around exemptions is included as a key part of Government communications on when and how to wear a face covering. The Government also continues to engage with stakeholders and charities on the issue of exemptions to support these groups. In addition, the Government is running a major proactive communications campaign on face coverings to alert the public where they are now required to wear face coverings and educate the public on how to correctly wear one. We are currently looking at ways in which we can support people who would be more comfortable to show they are exempt from the requirement to wear face covering, using some form of optional visual cue. Those who are exempt from the regulations will be permitted to go into supermarkets and shops without wearing a face covering. People do not need to prove they have an exemption. Staff and employees are expected to act reasonably and not challenge people on why they are not wearing a covering.

Since Monday 8 June all National Health Service practices were able to start, at their own pace, seeing patients again once they have appropriate social distancing and other safety measures in place. Personal protective equipment (PPE) for dentists is being made available through their business as usual wholesalers. We have also set up new distribution routes for dentistry to ensure continuity of supply for all urgent dental care centres and have placed them on the list of priority areas to receive supplies from Local Resilience Forums. PPE for dental practices will include equipment necessary for aerosol generating procedures.

A risk assessment specifically relating to dentists using FFP2 instead of FFP3 respirators has not been made. Government guidance for dentists states that FFP3 respirators are advised for all aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) to prevent inhalation of aerosols. Some dental work is classed as AGPs. The Health and Safety

Executive carried out a rapid review of the evidence of the effectiveness of FFP3, FFP2 and N95 masks earlier this year. The review stated that FFP2 and N95 respirators offer protection against COVID-19 and so may be used if FFP3 respirators are not available. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/face-mask-equivalence-aprons-gowns-eye-protection-coronavirus.htm>

Daisy Cooper:

[74748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help prevent stigmatisation of people who are exempted from wearing a face covering under covid-19 lockdown restrictions when they are (a) using public transport and (b) visiting shops.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 August 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

The Government has provided clear guidance and communications on when and how to wear a face covering and will continue to communicate this guidance to the public and stakeholders as necessary over the coming months.

Messaging around exemptions is included as a key part of Government communications on when and how to wear a face covering. The Government also continues to engage with stakeholders and charities on the issue of exemptions to support these groups. In addition, the Government is running a major proactive communications campaign on face coverings to alert the public where they are now required to wear face coverings and educate the public on how to correctly wear one.

We are currently looking at ways in which we can support people who would be more comfortable to show they are exempt from the requirement to wear face covering, using some form of optional visual cue. Those who are exempt from the regulations will be permitted to go into supermarkets and shops without wearing a face covering.

People do not need to prove they have an exemption. Staff and employees are expected to act reasonably and not challenge people on why they are not wearing a covering.

Since Monday 8 June all National Health Service practices were able to start, at their own pace, seeing patients again once they have appropriate social distancing and other safety measures in place. Personal protective equipment (PPE) for dentists is being made available through their business as usual wholesalers. We have also set up new distribution routes for dentistry to ensure continuity of supply for all urgent dental care centres and have placed them on the list of priority areas to receive

supplies from Local Resilience Forums. PPE for dental practices will include equipment necessary for aerosol generating procedures.

A risk assessment specifically relating to dentists using FFP2 instead of FFP3 respirators has not been made. Government guidance for dentists states that FFP3 respirators are advised for all aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) to prevent inhalation of aerosols. Some dental work is classed as AGPs. The Health and Safety Executive carried out a rapid review of the evidence of the effectiveness of FFP3, FFP2 and N95 masks earlier this year. The review stated that FFP2 and N95 respirators offer protection against COVID-19 and so may be used if FFP3 respirators are not available. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/face-mask-equivalence-aprons-gowns-eye-protection-coronavirus.htm>

Daisy Cooper:

[74749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will launch a public awareness campaign to tackle the stigmatisation of people who are exempted from wearing a face covering under covid-19 lockdown restrictions when they are (a) using public transport and (b) visiting shops.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 August 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

The Government has provided clear guidance and communications on when and how to wear a face covering and will continue to communicate this guidance to the public and stakeholders as necessary over the coming months. Messaging around exemptions is included as a key part of Government communications on when and how to wear a face covering. The Government also continues to engage with stakeholders and charities on the issue of exemptions to support these groups. In addition, the Government is running a major proactive communications campaign on face coverings to alert the public where they are now required to wear face coverings and educate the public on how to correctly wear one. We are currently looking at ways in which we can support people who would be more comfortable to show they are exempt from the requirement to wear face covering, using some form of optional visual cue. Those who are exempt from the regulations will be permitted to go into supermarkets and shops without wearing a face covering. People do not need to prove they have an exemption. Staff and employees are expected to act reasonably and not challenge people on why they are not wearing a covering. Since Monday 8 June all National Health Service practices were able to start, at their own pace, seeing patients again once they have appropriate social distancing and other safety measures in place. Personal protective equipment (PPE) for dentists is being made available through their business as usual wholesalers. We have also set up new distribution routes for dentistry to ensure continuity of supply for all urgent dental care centres and have placed them on the list

of priority areas to receive supplies from Local Resilience Forums. PPE for dental practices will include equipment necessary for aerosol generating procedures.

A risk assessment specifically relating to dentists using FFP2 instead of FFP3 respirators has not been made. Government guidance for dentists states that FFP3 respirators are advised for all aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) to prevent inhalation of aerosols. Some dental work is classed as AGPs. The Health and Safety Executive carried out a rapid review of the evidence of the effectiveness of FFP3, FFP2 and N95 masks earlier this year. The review stated that FFP2 and N95 respirators offer protection against COVID-19 and so may be used if FFP3 respirators are not available. Further information is available at the following link:

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WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ **Modern Slavery: 2020 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS521\]](#)

Today, I am publishing the 2020 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery. The Report covers the whole of the UK and has been drafted in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. This report sets out an assessment of the scale of modern slavery in the UK and outlines the actions that have been taken to combat it over the last year.

A copy of the report will be available on Gov.uk and placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TREASURY

■ **Future Regulatory Framework Review and Solvency II Review**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen): [\[HCWS523\]](#)

In the written statement *Financial Services Update* on 23 June [HCWS309], the Chancellor announced that the Government would commence the next stage of the Future Regulatory Framework (FRF) Review and bring forward a review of certain features of Solvency II, the prudential regulatory regime for insurance firms. The Government has today laid the first FRF consultation on the wider regulatory framework for financial services and published a call for evidence as the first stage of the Solvency II Review. These reviews reflect the Government's aim to make financial services regulation better tailored to the needs of the UK economy and its citizens, and to support the UK's world-class financial services sector.

Following the completion of Phase I of the FRF Review, which focused on improving coordination between the UK's financial services regulatory bodies, the Government is progressing with Phase II of the Review, which will examine how the wider regulatory framework for financial services should adapt now that the UK has left the EU. The important and wide-ranging issues raised by this Review, combined with the broad range of stakeholders that will be affected, make an in-depth review process appropriate. The Government will therefore consult in two stages, starting with the first consultation published today.

Leaving the EU provides an opportunity to shape our regulatory framework for financial services so that it is more coherent, agile and democratically accountable to support a stable, innovative and world leading financial services sector. The consultation proposes an overall approach that builds on the strengths of the UK's existing domestic framework by:

- Providing a clear and coherent allocation of regulatory responsibilities between Parliament, the Government and the financial services regulators.
- Setting out a legislative approach under which Government and Parliament can establish an enhanced policy framework within which the regulators must operate.
- Making the UK's expert, operationally independent regulators responsible for setting direct regulatory requirements on financial services firms and markets, according to the policy framework set by Government and Parliament.
- Reviewing accountability, scrutiny and public engagement arrangements, particularly in relation to the financial services regulators, so that these arrangements can be strengthened to reflect the regulators' expanded responsibilities.

This first consultation is intended to generate a wide-ranging debate about the UK's overall regulatory approach for financial services. The views gathered through the first consultation will then be used to develop a final package of proposals which will be set out in a second consultation during 2021.

The Government is reviewing Solvency II to ensure that the UK's prudential regulatory regime for the insurance sector is better tailored to support the unique features of the UK sector and the UK regulatory approach. The review will focus on several specific areas of Solvency II, including the risk margin, matching adjustment, and reporting requirements, but the review will not necessarily be limited to these areas.

The Solvency II Review will be guided by three objectives:

- To spur a vibrant, innovative, and internationally competitive insurance sector.
- To protect policyholders and ensure the safety and soundness of firms.
- To support insurance firms to provide long-term capital to support growth, including investment in infrastructure, venture capital and growth equity, and other long-term productive assets, as well as investment consistent with the Government's climate change objectives.

Both publications are available on www.gov.uk and will be open for responses until 19 January 2021.

The Future Regulatory Framework Review consultation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-regulatory-framework-frf-review-consultation>

Solvency II Review call for evidence

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/solvency-ii-review-call-for-evidence>

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Private Pensions: Simpler Annual Benefit Statements

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions & Financial Inclusion (Guy

Opperman):

[\[HCWS522\]](#)

The Government has published its response to the consultation on the approach to delivering simpler annual pension benefit statements.

Participation in pension saving has been transformed through the success of Automatic Enrolment. However, there is a growing likelihood that people will have a number of different jobs in their lifetime, and therefore multiple pension pots and annual pension statements.

This is why the Government's ambition is for pension benefit statements to be simpler, more consistent and jargon free. Consistency across pension benefit statements will help savers better understand their pensions and effectively plan for retirement. A standardised template will be more accessible, drive member engagement and signpost members to detailed information on costs and charges and investment strategy. It will also complement the work Government is doing with the pensions dashboard to bring pensions online to your phone or laptop.

We will focus first on Defined Contribution schemes used for Automatic Enrolment, but it remains the long term ambition to improve consistency across all schemes. We will consult later this year on draft regulations for a mandated approach to simpler statements, working with industry on the detailed design of the Regulations and associated statutory guidance.

In addition, Government will work with the pensions industry to introduce a statement season, building on the success of pensions awareness month. It will support the normalisation of workplace pension saving, provoke debate amongst the public and enable easier comparison between statements and providers.

These measures will help individuals engage with their workplace pension savings, and enable savers to achieve greater financial security in retirement.