



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:06 P.M., 22 October 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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#### **Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ AstraZeneca: Coronavirus

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[104731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of (a) when the not for profit price commitment made by AstraZeneca as part of the deal with Oxford University to develop a covid-19 vaccine will expire and (b) the effect of the expiration of that commitment on the affordability of that vaccine for the NHS.

**Amanda Solloway:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* The timings of the not for profit price commitment are for the two parties involved, AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford to agree.

The NHS is preparing for the initial deployment of a safe, effective COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[103435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support he is providing to businesses that are (a) closed and (b) trading with reduced capacity as a result of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has announced there will be further funding to support businesses that are required to close due to localised restrictions being put in place to manage the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant is now in place, which offers a helping hand to businesses in Very High Tier areas as they close their doors to help save lives. Businesses in these areas in England can receive up to £3,000 per month and payments will kick in after two weeks of closure. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 22<sup>nd</sup> October that further funding will be put in place to support businesses in High Local Alert Level area restrictions. Funding will be provided via local authorities to support businesses, including hospitality and leisure businesses, that have had their trade affected by the restrictions but have not been required to close.

Where government has not required that businesses close, other support has been provided to help businesses through difficult trading conditions. In addition to the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund which provided support from April to September this year, the Government has extended the deadline for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Future Fund until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

We will work with lenders and business representatives to introduce a new, successor loan guarantee scheme, set to begin in January 2021. In addition, the Job Support Scheme will run from 1<sup>st</sup> November to help support viable jobs in businesses facing lower demand in the winter months.

## ■ Business: Energy

**Matt Western:**

**[104162]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with manufacturers on energy costs for businesses.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses to ensure our economy remains strong and competitive. Details of meetings held by Ministers in the Department are recorded in our transparency data, which is published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

## ■ Employment: Coronavirus

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[105534]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the need to legislate to protect workers in workplaces in regions placed in (a) Tier 2 and (b) Tier 3 where (i) an employee could reasonably work from home but is prevented from doing so because of their employer and (ii) working from home is not an option.

**Paul Scully:**

As our Working Safely guidance states, which applies for all tiers: to help contain the virus, workers who can work effectively from home should do so over the winter. Where an employer, in consultation with their employee, judges an employee can carry out their normal duties from home they should do so.

Employers already have a legal obligation to protect the health and safety of not just their workers but also of the other people who may be affected by their business.

The decision to return to the workplace must be made in meaningful consultation with workers (including through trade unions or employee representative groups where they exist). It is vital employers engage with workers to ensure they feel safe returning to work, and they should not force anyone into an unsafe workplace.

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Bill Wiggin:**

**[103447]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people have applied for the Green Homes Grant scheme to date.



**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

As of 15:00 on 14 October, the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme had received 17,218 grant applications.

**Bill Wiggin:**[\[103448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to publish a review of the Green Homes Grant scheme after that scheme has ended.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

There will be an evaluation of the processes and outcomes of the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme, with an independent research organisation due to commence work later this year.

**Bill Wiggin:**[\[105297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to help people eligible for the Green Homes Grant to find qualified installers.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is working closely with industry to ensure there are enough installers to meet demand for the Green Homes Grant (GHG) scheme:

- We have changed the way the Simple Energy Advice (SEA) website displays installers so that consumers can find increased numbers of registered tradespeople that can deliver work in their area.
- We are working with TrustMark, scheme providers and certification bodies to support installers to get certified as quickly as possible, streamlining accreditation processes where possible.
- We are collecting feedback from installers to understand what may be limiting their participation in the scheme, so we can address these issues where possible.
- 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. The competition closed on 14 October, and the bids received are now being assessed.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[105421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which local authorities applied to the green homes grant local authority delivery scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

BEIS are in the process of agreeing grant offers for 57 successful projects under the Local Authority Delivery scheme that will upgrade the energy efficiency of around 11,000 low-income households across England. Once grant offers have been finalised with those Local Authorities, a list will be published on GOV.UK.

## ■ Health Services: Coronavirus

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[103623]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support he has made available to (a) private dental practices and (b) other healthcare providers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government's ultimate priority has been to act to reduce the high levels of Covid-19 infection and we are taking many steps to protect the long-term financial future of all businesses during the current economic emergency.

The Government has introduced an unprecedented and comprehensive package of support to help as many individuals and businesses during this difficult period. This includes the small business grants, the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the deferral of VAT and income tax payments, and more.

On 24 September, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his Winter Economy Plan, setting out how current support will evolve and adapt as we move to the next stage of our economic plan. This includes extending and amending the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes to allow businesses more time and greater flexibility to repay their loans, the extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant, and the introduction of a new Jobs Support Scheme. These new measures are in addition to those announced in the Chancellor's summer statement on 8 July, such as VAT rate cuts, the £1,000 Jobs Retention Bonus, and the Kickstart Scheme.

Businesses can also access tailored advice through our Freephone Business Support Helpline, online via the Business Support website or through their local Growth Hubs in England. Furthermore, the Recovery Advice for Business scheme, supported by the Government and hosted on the Enterprise Nation website, offers small firms access to free, one-to-one advice with an expert adviser to help them through the coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for long-term recovery. Further information can be found at: <https://www.enterprisenation.com/freesupport/>.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, businesses, business representative organisations, and the financial services sector to monitor the implementation of current support.

## ■ Hydrogen

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[103665]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Transport to co-ordinate policy on a UK hydrogen strategy.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

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

BEIS ministers and officials work across government departments, including the Department for Transport, to coordinate on hydrogen, both bilaterally and through governance arrangements at various levels.

This includes the Climate Action Implementation Cabinet Committee (CAI), chaired by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which covers issues relating to net zero and hydrogen; the Climate National Strategy Implementation Group, reporting to the Cabinet Secretary involving Directors General across Whitehall, chaired by the DG Energy Transformation & Clean Growth; and the Hydrogen Advisory Council, co-chaired by myself as Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth, and Sinead Lynch, UK Country Chair of Shell launched in July 2020.

**■ Marriage: Coronavirus****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[105298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the evidence for his decision that wedding venues cannot be made covid-secure in the same way as other hospitality venues.

**Paul Scully:**

The number of people who can attend a wedding or a wedding celebration is 15 people depending on local restrictions. Weddings remain exempt from the rule of six. We understand these guidelines may be difficult for couples and venues and are keeping them under constant review.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen****Alexander Stafford:**[\[103666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on ensuring that the roll-out of hydrogen vehicles keeps pace with the rapid growth in hydrogen fuel production.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Low carbon hydrogen is one of a handful of critical options needed to deliver net zero, given its potential to help decarbonise heavy industry and flexible deployment across heat, power, and transport. We will be setting out our approach to growing the UK hydrogen economy early next year in the UK Hydrogen Strategy.

The Department regularly engages with the Department for Transport on tackling climate change and delivering our net zero commitments.

On 30 September, it was announced that Tees Valley will be the UK's first Hydrogen Transport Hub, bringing together industry, academia, and the Government to accelerate the UK's take-up of green hydrogen. This aligns with wider plans to drive

forward transport innovation by funding 19 new hydrogen-powered refuse trucks in Glasgow and starting trials for Britain's first hydrogen-powered train. We are committed to exploring all options for low carbon hydrogen across freight, buses, trains, maritime, and aviation to ensure that the UK can lead the world in its deployment and use across the economy.

## ■ Parents: Coronavirus

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[103500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to provide additional parental pay entitlements for new parents who have recently changed or left their jobs as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

Statutory Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave, and Parental Bereavement Leave are 'day 1' rights which means that an employee will qualify for these entitlements even if they have recently changed jobs.

In order to qualify for Statutory Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave, an employee must have been continuously employed by their current employer for 26 weeks at the 'relevant date'.

In order to qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay, Adoption Pay, Paternity Pay, Shared Parental Pay and Parental Bereavement Pay, an employee must have earned at least the lower earnings level (currently £120 a week) in an 8 week reference period and worked continuously for their employer for 26 weeks at the 'relevant date'. Additional qualifying criteria attach to Paternity, Shared Parental and Parental Bereavement Pay.

The 'relevant date' differs depending on whether the employee is a 'birth parent', a bereaved parent or an 'adopter'. But in the case of Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Adoption Pay an employee will qualify for pay if they have 26 weeks continuous service at the 'relevant date' even if they subsequently leave their job or are made redundant. They will, however, cease to qualify if they end their parental leave to start working for a new employer.

Further information is on the eligibility criteria for parental leave and pay is on GOV.UK.

## ■ Paternity Leave and Pay: Public Consultation

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[103499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department is making on its consultation on parental leave and pay which closed on 29 November 2019.

**Paul Scully:**

In 2019, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay and is currently analysing the

responses it received. We separately commissioned large scale, representative, surveys of parents and employers to gather further information on the barriers and enablers to employees taking parental leave, including Paternity Leave, and data on how parental entitlements are used in practice.

Information gathered through the consultation and the evaluation of Shared Parental Leave and Pay will inform Government policy on parental leave and pay going forward – including the Manifesto commitment to make it easier for fathers to take Paternity Leave.

The findings of the evaluation and Government Response to the consultation will be published in due course.

### ■ **Paternity Leave: Fathers**

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[103498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department is making on making it easier for fathers to take paternity leave.

**Paul Scully:**

The Conservative Manifesto included a commitment to make it easier for fathers to take Paternity Leave, and the Government fully intends to deliver on this commitment.

In 2019, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay and is currently analysing the responses it received. We separately commissioned large scale, representative, surveys of parents and employers to gather further information on the barriers and enablers to employees taking parental leave, including Paternity Leave, and data on how parental entitlements are used in practice.

The results of this and our analysis of the consultation responses will inform policy developments on Paternity Leave which will be shared in due course.

### ■ **Renewable Energy: Employment**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[104013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to create jobs in renewable energy as the UK recovers from the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The UK has over 460,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains and many of the actions we need to take to reach our target of net zero emissions by 2050 will support the future growth of our economy.

In his Summer Economic Statement, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer emphasised the Government's intention to make this a green recovery with concern for our environment at its heart and announced a package of over £3

billion to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, which will support up to 140,000 green jobs.

On 6th October, the Government set out new plans to Build Back Greener by making the UK the world leader in clean wind energy. Under these plans, a target has been set to support up to double the capacity of renewable energy in the next Contracts for Difference auction; £160 million is to be made available to upgrade ports and infrastructure; and a new target was announced for floating offshore wind to deliver 1GW of energy by 2030. This will enable the sector to support up to 60,000 jobs directly and indirectly by 2030 in ports, factories and associated supply chains, manufacturing the next-generation of offshore wind turbines and delivering clean energy to the UK.

The Government will also establish a £40m Green Recovery Challenge Fund to help halt biodiversity loss and tackle climate change through local conservation projects, connecting more people to the outdoors by delivering up to 5,000 jobs.

#### ■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[103632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the increase in the level of covid-19 cases, what steps he is taking to encourage (a) supermarkets and (b) other retail stores to consider re-introducing measures to support vulnerable shoppers such as dedicated shopping hours.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government remains engaged with key stakeholders in public health, the retail industry, and trade unions to ensure the sector can continue to operate safely.

Guidance issued to employers and employees is helping them take all the necessary precautions to limit the spread of the virus in working environments including shops.

The Government welcomes efforts by supermarkets and other retail stores to ensure vulnerable groups and older people can shop safely but this is a decision for each business.

#### ■ Solar Power and Wind Power: Finance

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[103475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much Government funding has been spent on subsidising (a) offshore wind, (b) onshore wind and (c) solar for electricity generation in each of the last three years; and what volume of electricity was generated by each of those modes of generation as a result of those subsidies.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Subsidies for generating electricity from wind and solar PV are paid under three low carbon electricity schemes: the Renewables Obligation (RO), the Feed-in Tariffs (FIT), and Contracts for Difference (CfD) schemes. The Renewables Obligation does not pay a direct subsidy but instead support is provided through tradeable certificates.

The table below provides a breakdown of payments made to wind and solar PV electricity generators under the RO and CfD schemes in the last three financial years where figures are available[1].

The figures in the tables below refer to Great Britain only. CfD and FIT are not available in Northern Ireland.

**Table 1: Breakdown of payments made to offshore wind, onshore wind and solar PV electricity generators by low carbon electricity support scheme:**

	SCHEME	2017-18(£M)	2018-19(£M)	2019-20 [2] (£M)
	Offshore wind	RO2 [3]	2,009	2,221 2,212
CfD[4]	295.8	587.6	1,275.9	
	Onshore wind	RO2	1,256	1,335 1,271
CfD4	0.0	11.3	88.7	
	Solar PV	RO2	471	549 460
CfD4	0.8	0.8	1.4	

In addition, the following amounts have been spent in total on FITs. The breakdown for wind and solar PV is not available but solar PV accounts for around 79% of total FIT capacity and onshore wind accounts for around 14%[5].

**Table 2: Total spending on FITs:**

	2017-18(£M)	2018-19(£M)	2019-20(£M)
Total FIT spending – all technologies	1,375.1	1,409.0	1,414.7

The amount of electricity generated by these schemes is given in the table below.

**Table 3: Generation supported by RO, CfD and FIT for offshore wind, onshore wind and solar PV in Great Britain:**

GENERATION (GWH)		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
	Offshore wind	RO2	20,661	21,381 24,150
CfD4	2,621	5,359	9,952	

GENERATION (GWH)		2017-18	2018-19	2019- 20
FIT[6]	-	-	-	
Total	23,281	26,739	34,101	
	Onshore wind	RO2	25,409	25,379 27,599
CfD4	-	279	1,539	
FIT6	1,851	1,720	1,920	
Total	27,260	27,377	31,058	
	Solar PV	RO2	6,409	7,003 6,710
CfD4	20	28	28	
FIT6	4,407	4,983	4,952	
Total	10,836	12,015	11,689	

Total generation for all renewable technologies is published by BEIS in Energy Trends in 6.1 at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/energy-trends-section-6-renewables>

[1] Figures are not available broken down by technology for the FITs scheme.

[2] RO figures for 2019/20 are provisional as not all the certificates have been issued yet and the full notional value of each certificate is not yet known.

[3] RO figures are based on Ofgem's certificate report as at 4 August 2020 from their Renewables and CHP Register.

[4] CfD figures are taken from the Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC) CfD dashboard, which is available on LCCC's website.

[5] Taken from OFGEM's annual report: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/fit/contacts-guidance-and-resources/public-reports-and-data-fit/annual-reports>

[6] Estimated

## ■ Versarien: Loans

**Zarah Sultana:**

**[105565]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the recent loan given to Versarien PLC by Innovate UK with (a) Innovate UK's guidelines (b) the eligibility criteria for businesses



to receive funds from Innovate UK and (c) the Government's guidance on Managing public money.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Graphene has the capability to become one of the sectors that will power our economic growth – and Versarien is at a crucial phase in its development as it strives to become one of the UK's leading players in the production of graphene. Materials such as graphene can also provide a valuable contribution towards the Government's Net Zero targets and has the potential to contribute significantly to a number of national infrastructure projects. Versarien's G-SCALE project, which this loan will fund, will allow the firm to carry out later stage R&D to enable it to supply the market with commercial quantities of graphene-enhanced materials.

Similar to many companies, Versarien seeks investment from a number of sources, including private funding. Innovate UK has a good understanding of Versarien's business and has previously awarded the company several grants to support its development. Innovate's loan scheme was set up to broaden the range of innovation finance support available to businesses, so they can access funding at all stages of innovation.

In order to be eligible, a business needs to show that it can afford the interest and repayments on the loan and that they cannot obtain finance from other sources such as banks and equity investors for a particular project. It is on this basis the loan was made.

Indeed, this loan was made on Innovate's usual terms, that is an interest rate of 7.4% per annum with half of the interest deferred until the repayment period commences. Loan repayments will start 45 months after drawdown and be paid over a subsequent period of 36 months.

The loan award was made after Innovate UK's rigorous process of innovation assessment and credit evaluation – the same level of scrutiny and assessment that accompanies any loan award that Innovate UK makes.

The assessment process for awarding the loan was compatible with the key principles set out in the guidance on Managing Public Money.

■ **Warm Home Discount Scheme: Pensioners**

**Neil Gray:**

[\[105382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to maximise uptake of the Warm Home Scheme among pensioners eligible for Pension Credit but not yet claiming that benefit.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Under the Warm Home Discount, obligated energy suppliers can spend a maximum of £40 million on Industry Initiatives. This includes a range of activities that offer support to customers who are at greater risk of fuel poverty, particularly those not on benefits who may not be eligible for a £140 rebate. Support provided under Industry

Initiatives includes benefit entitlement checks and referrals for rebates, as well as energy saving advice, energy debt assistance and fuel vouchers.

The Government's Warm Home Discount website is widely signposted and used by consumer groups, charities and energy comparison websites to raise awareness of the benefits of signing up for Pension Credit Guarantee Credit and maximise uptake of the Warm Home Scheme.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Artificial Intelligence: Ministerial Responsibility

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[104187\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister is responsible for auditing the algorithms used by Government; and what steps that Minister takes to audit those algorithms.

**Julia Lopez:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to [PQ83803](#) on 10 September 2020.

### ■ Ballot Papers: Visual Impairment

**Henry Smith:** [\[104091\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the findings by the Royal National Institute of Blind People in their report entitled Turned out 2019 that 68 per cent of blind postal voters and 22 per cent of partially sighted postal voters at the December 2019 General Election had to use assistance from another person to enable them to vote, what plans he has to review the accessibility of the postal vote system.

**Liz Twist:** [\[104166\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Royal National Institute for Blind People's report entitled Turned out 2019, published October 2020, what plans he has to ensure blind and partially sighted people can receive their poll cards in preferred formats.

**Liz Twist:** [\[104167\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to publish the names of candidates and their order on the ballot paper in advance, online and in local election offices to allow blind and partially sighted people to know in advance where they wish to place their vote on the ballot paper.

**Cat Smith:** [\[104226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to ensure that blind and partially sighted people can receive their poll cards in preferred formats.

**Cat Smith:**

**[104227]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that blind and partially sighted voters are made aware of the support they can expect to receive at polling stations to allow them to vote independently and in secret.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government is committed to ensuring that elections are accessible for all those eligible to vote and has already been working with the RNIB to improve the voting process for voters with sight loss.

It is important for security purposes that a physical poll card is sent to every elector at the property where they are registered, but we have already considered how electoral information might additionally be made available in more accessible format for those who request it.

Returning Officers already publish details of candidates in the order they will appear on the ballot paper online. We will work with partners in the electoral sector to ensure this information is accessible.

The Government will continue to work with the RNIB, the Electoral Commission and other relevant organisations to make blind and partially sighted voters aware of the support available to them at the polling station, and to consider what additional support could be provided to help blind and partially sighted people to vote including by post.

## ■ **Cabinet Office: Buildings**

**Rachel Reeves:**

**[102055]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse has been of the renovations to the Cabinet Office collaboration hub.

**Rachel Reeves:**

**[102769]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the projected cost of the renovations of his Department's collaboration hub in 70 Whitehall.

**Julia Lopez:**

Details of expenditure are published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## ■ **Coronavirus: Death**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

**[105295]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 6 May 2020 to Question 41909 on Coronavirus: Death, what proportion of people that died from covid-19 were aged (a) up to 30, (b) 31 to 60 and (c) over 60 for each calendar month from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response PQ105295 [PQ105295.pdf]

**■ Drugs and Medical Treatments: Brexit****Christine Jardine:**[\[105513\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his oral contribution of 19 October 2020, Official Report, whether cross-border supply chains of medicines for the care and treatment of patients will continue without disruption after the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Government, pharmaceutical industry and NHS work closely together to help ensure patients have access to the medicines and treatments they need.

The Department for Health and Social Care is working with trade bodies, product suppliers, and the health and care system to ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products at the end of the transition period. The Government has also written to medical suppliers about what steps they need to take.

**■ Elections: Proof of Identity****Cat Smith:**[\[105426\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to carry out an equality impact assessment on the effect of Voter ID on BAME communities at a General Election, before the introduction of Voter ID.

**Chloe Smith:**

As I noted in my answer to Question 104752, the Government has taken due regard to the public sector equality duty throughout the planning for implementation. Each pilot authority implemented an equality impact assessment, and our Public Sector Equality Duty was correctly fulfilled. We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders including charities and civil society organisations to make sure that reforms are delivered in a way that is inclusive for all voters. As the legislation is brought forward the appropriate impact assessments will be provided for Parliament in the normal way.

**■ Elections: Travellers****Cat Smith:**[\[104752\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 100441 on Elections: Travellers,

if he plans to undertake an equality assessment on the potential effect of introducing voter ID on the ability of the Roma and Traveller community to vote.

**Chloe Smith:**

As I noted in my answer of 14 October, the Government has taken due regard to the public sector equality duty throughout the planning for implementation. Each pilot authority implemented an equality impact assessment, and our Public Sector Equality Duty was correctly fulfilled. We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders including charities and civil society organisations to make sure that reforms are delivered in a way that is inclusive for all voters. As the legislation is brought forward the appropriate impact assessments will be provided for Parliament in the normal way.

■ **EU Exit Operations Committee**

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[\[105615\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many times the EU Exit Operations Cabinet Committee met to discuss preparedness for the end of the transition period (a) from 1 February and 31 August 2020 and (b) since 1 September 2020.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally disclosed.

■ **Interserve: Mitie**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[105471\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed merger of Interserve and Mitie on the terms and conditions of staff employed by those firms in relation to Government contracts.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[105472\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of staff (a) employed by Interserve and Mitie on Government contracts as of 19 October 2020 and (b) who will be employed on those contracts following the proposed merger of the two firms.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[105473\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the social value which will be delivered by Interserve and Mitie on Government contracts in the event of the proposed merger of those firms.

**Helen Hayes:**

**[105474]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the total value of Government contracts which may be awarded to a single contractor in the event of the proposed merger of Interserve and Mitie.

**Helen Hayes:**

**[105475]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the financial resilience of (a) Interserve, (b) Mitie and (c) the business that will result following their proposed merger.

**Julia Lopez:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to [PQ103653](#) on 19 October.

## ■ Remembrance Day: Coronavirus

**John Spellar:**

**[97452]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if his Department will urgently co-ordinate advice on the management of services and parades on Remembrance Sunday to assist local councils, the police, the Royal British Legion and other service and uniformed organisations in organising covid-safe events.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Published guidance for local authority preparations for Remembrance Sunday can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday>

## DEFENCE

## ■ Military Bases: Coronavirus

**Alex Sobel:**

**[105526]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many US personnel at (a) USAF Lakenheath, (b) USAF Mildenhall, (c) the Joint Intelligence and Analysis Center at Molesworth, (d) USAF Croughton, (e) USAF Fairford and (f) USAF Feltwell have tested positive for covid-19 since March 2020.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence does not currently require the US authorities to share information regarding COVID-19 test results for their personnel based in the UK. There is however a requirement for any positive results to be communicated to the UK's National Testing Programme.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[105527]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) US and (b) UK personnel working at US bases in the UK have been admitted to hospital with covid-19; and how

many of those people were admitted to (i) an NHS hospital in the UK and (ii) a US hospital.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence does not require the US authorities to share information regarding COVID-19 for their personnel based in the UK. The Department has no reported instances of UK Armed Forces personnel working on US bases in the UK being hospitalised as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Private Education**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund school places (a) overseas and (b) in the UK in 2019-20; and how many school places that funding supported in total.

**Johnny Mercer:**

During Financial Year 2019-20, the cost of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) to Defence was £83.2 million which supported a total of 4,420 school places for the children of Service personnel. CEA is paid only in respect of schools in the UK.

Service personnel may select from a wide variety of schools across the UK from within the independent and state-maintained sectors. To qualify for the purposes of CEA, a school must: offer full boarding facilities; be registered with the appropriate UK education department; be subject to Ofsted inspection and, in the case of independent schools, be a member of an organisation affiliated to the Independent Schools Council or the Scottish Council for Independent Schools. Each claimant is required to contribute at least 10 per cent of the fees at independent schools.

■ **RAF Menwith Hill: Coronavirus**

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[105524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many US personnel working at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill have tested positive for covid-19 since March 2020.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence does not currently require the US authorities to share information regarding COVID-19 test results for their personnel based in the UK.

However, details of any positive cases among US personnel are shared with Public Health England, as part of UK's National Testing Programme.

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[105525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many British personnel working at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill have tested positive for covid-19 since March 2020.

**James Heappey:**

There have been no positive test results for members of the UK Armed Forces working at RAF Menwith Hill reported.

**■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Coronavirus****Jamie Stone:****[105500]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to roll-out the deployment of military fighter pilots to fly drones to deliver (a) PPE and (b) covid-19 test results to support the NHS during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence currently has no plans for the deployment or use of UK Armed Forces pilots for the purposes of flying drones to support the NHS.

**■ Yemen: Military Intervention****Emily Thornberry:****[105326]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether attacks on (a) the Al-Wehdah school and (b) other educational facilities in the city of Taz in Yemen over the last five years are listed on the Tracker database maintained by his Department to register incidents of concern in relation to the violation of international humanitarian law in that conflict.

**James Heappey:**

Based on the information provided, no attacks on the Al-Wehdah school have been recorded on the Tracker database. The Tracker database contains one record of an attack on a school in Taiz during the last five years.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Broadband****Esther McVey:****[100993]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much of the UK has one gigabit capability; and what assessment he has made of the geographical distribution of one gigabit capability in (a) towns, (b) cities and (c) rural areas.

**Matt Warman:**

Building Digital UK (BDUK) uses information collected from Ofcom's Connected Nations Report. This dataset distinguishes between urban and rural premises, and an easy to read version can be found in the Commons Library (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-broadband-coverage-and-speeds/>).

However, Connected Nations does not yet hold information on specific Gigabit connectivity and therefore we use the next best source, Thinkbroadband, which does provide gigabit statistics. According to Thinkbroadband, at this moment in time 27.2% of the UK have access to gigabit capable speeds, up from 0.9% in 2016. A full list of Gigabit availability by area can be found here: <http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/england>.



**Chi Onwurah:**

**[103502]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what criteria the Government is using to define the hardest-to-reach areas for gigabit capable rollout.

**Matt Warman:**

The hardest-to-reach areas for gigabit-capable rollout are those that are unlikely to get gigabit-capable broadband within an acceptable time frame, if at all, through commercial investment alone. We have conducted extensive analysis to identify the hardest to reach areas, based on the estimated costs for the delivery of gigabit-capable networks and the corresponding commercial value of these areas. We are engaging with Ofcom and industry to test our criteria and the underlying data. Based on this modelling, we estimate that a minority of UK households - c20% - require Government intervention to receive a gigabit-capable connection. The Government has committed to invest £5 billion in supporting gigabit-capable rollout in these areas.

## ■ **Broadband: Housing**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[104101]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the March 2020 Budget, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that new homes are built with gigabit-capable 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 the 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 connecting new homes.

## ■ Dementia: Coronavirus

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[103646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what long-term financial support his Department is offering to dementia charities during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

There are generous long-term financial measures available for the whole charity sector which include more than £1.3 billion a year in respect of Gift Aid on donations. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the government has made available short and longer-term support packages to all charities and businesses, including deferring their VAT bills, paying no business rates for their shops next year, and furloughing staff where possible. The Department for Health and Social Care provided financial support to the Race Equality Foundation and Alzheimer's Society to provide additional services to people with dementia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money is part of a UK-wide £750 million package of support for the voluntary sector announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in April.

The Government's unprecedented £750 million package of support has been made available specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has, and will continue to ensure charities and other civil society organisations, including those at risk of financial hardship, can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 outbreak.

## ■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

**[105435]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support freelance venue technicians and producers unable to access Government support.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

We recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading.

Arts Council England (ACE) has already distributed £104m through its Emergency Response Package to ensure the immediate resilience of this vital sector. The package included £80.7 million of support for cultural organisations, and £23.1 million of financial support for individuals, including freelancers. More than 9000 organisations and individuals were successful in applying for this emergency funding.

To complement Government Funding, ACE have made over £115m of funding available for individuals, including freelancers, to apply for. This includes:

- £17.1m through the Emergency Response Fund for individuals;
- £18m through their Developing Your Creative Practice fund;

- £75m through National Lottery Project Grants (available to both individuals and orgs); and
- £6m distributed by a series of Benevolent Funds focused on the self-employed.

The Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector which will benefit the live events sector by providing support to venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating. £333 million was awarded to 1973 arts organisations which had applied for grants less than £1 million from Arts Council England. Funded organisations included venues, festivals, theatres, museums and cultural organisations. Over the coming weeks further Culture Recovery Fund awards will be announced - including grants over £1 million, and the Capital Kickstart and Repayable Finance programmes.

The Chancellor has announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme come to end. We are also offering businesses who face a drop in demand for their services and possible cash flow issues generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans.

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

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

**[105436]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on further support for the live events sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

We continue to engage with the live events sector and HM Treasury to discuss the on-going challenges facing the industry. We will analyse the impact of the funds we have already announced.

The Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector which will benefit the live events sector by providing support to venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating. £333 million was awarded to 1973 arts organisations which had applied for grants less than £1 million from Arts Council England. Funded organisations included venues, festivals, theatres, museums and cultural organisations. Over the coming weeks further Culture Recovery Fund awards will be announced - including grants over £1 million, and the Capital Kickstart and Repayable Finance programmes.

The Chancellor has announced the Winter Economy Plan to protect jobs and support businesses over the coming months, once the existing Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme come to end. We are also offering businesses who face a drop in demand for their services and possible cash flow issues generous terms for the repayment of deferred taxes and government-backed loans.

We are continuing to meet with live events stakeholders to provide support and guidance for venues to re-open and stage live events.

■ **Internet: Safety**

**Daisy Cooper:** [105552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Ofcom on the role of the proposed online harms regulator to promote education and raise awareness of online safety.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with Ofcom on a variety of issues, including online media literacy education. Information about Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website. The forthcoming Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper Consultation will set out more detail about the online harms regulator's role in promoting media literacy education.

**Daisy Cooper:** [105553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government will pursue mutual recognition of regimes in respect of online harms and protections in trade negotiations with the US.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

The UK's negotiating objectives set out that our aim is to promote appropriate protections for consumers online and ensure the Government maintains its ability to protect users from emerging online harms. We will continue to carefully consider any interaction between trade policy and online harms policy.

■ **Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges**

**Drew Hendry:** [105437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with Ofcom on clarifying consumer pricing regulations in relation to mobile operators' advertised spending caps to help ensure that consumers are aware when they are being connected to a service with a network access charge not included in their spending cap.

**Matt Warman:**

Mobile bill limits were introduced by the Digital Economy Act 2017, and came into effect from October 2018. Ofcom, the independent telecoms regulator, is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this obligation. Prior to this requirement taking effect, to help consumer awareness, Ofcom published guidance on its website.

Mobile phone providers are required, under the legislation, to allow their customers to set a monthly spending cap for the services they provide, and send a notification when they are nearing limits. This means that for calls, such as to premium rate services, the 'access charge' is covered, i.e. the cost of the mobile operator to

connect the call, but not the 'service charge', the actual cost of the service. To ensure consumers are aware of this facility, mobile operators allow their customers to set bill limits when signing up to services, and some providers also allow customers to set bill limits on all services, including third party services charged to their mobile.

## ■ Music: Coronavirus

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[105568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling amateur music groups to resume rehearsals and performances during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

In Medium Local Covid Alert Level areas (Tier 1) it is against the law to gather in groups of more than 6, unless everyone is from the same household and support bubble. In High (Tier 2) and Very High (Tier 3) areas, it is against the law to gather indoors in groups which do not consist only of the same household and support bubble. A number of exemptions apply. For example, some activities - such as those organised for under-18s including education or training supervised activities provided for children, including wraparound care, youth groups and activities - are exempt.

In addition, in a COVID-secure venue or public outdoor place, non-professional performing arts activity, including choirs, orchestras or drama groups can continue to rehearse or perform together where this is planned activity in line with the performing arts guidance and if they can do so in a way that ensures that there is no interaction between separate and distinct groups of no more than 6 (In Medium areas and outdoors) or individual households (in High and Very High areas) at any time (depending on Local Covid Alert Level restrictions). If an amateur group is not able to ensure that no mingling takes place between these sub-groups (depending on Local Covid Alert Level restrictions) - including when arriving at or leaving activity or in any breaks or socialising - then such non-professional activity should not take place. Local Covid Alert Level guidance (Medium, High, Very High) provides details on group size.

We will continue to work with the Performing Arts sector to understand how the new regulations affect those engaging in activity. We have always been clear that the easing of restrictions depends on the prevalence of COVID-19.

## ■ Radio Frequencies

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[102808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the clearing of the 700MHz frequency has affected any services.

**Matt Warman:**

700 MHz Spectrum Clearance has now seen over 46 million viewers retuning their TVs. The contact centre has received over 297 thousand calls asking for advice or assistance which has resulted in over 41 thousand home support visits.

No negative impact upon the elderly has been brought to the attention of the programme. The only services that have seen a change was on Com 7/8.

## ■ Rugby: Gender Recognition

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[105501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with the England Rugby Football Union on their policy on the participation of transgender and non-binary players.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[105502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with World Rugby on the England Rugby Football Union policy on the participation of transgender and non-binary players.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[105503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussion his Department has had with Sport England on the participation of transgender and non-binary players in contact sports.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

My department has not had discussions on this topic with either World Rugby or the England Rugby Football Union. Officials in my department meet regularly with Sport England to discuss a range of issues related to diversity and inclusion in sport, including transgender and non-binary participation.

## ■ Sports: Coronavirus

**Jon Trickett:** [\[102684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will allocate adequate financial support to ensure that no professional sports club goes out of business 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.

We have been clear that we expect those in sport with the broadest shoulders - where they can at the top tiers - to support itself. The Government is focusing its support on those in the sector most in need as a result of the decision not to readmit spectators to stadia from 1 October.

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.

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[103428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will develop an action plan to support the response to the (a) community, (b) amateur and (c) professional sports funding crisis as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

We have also supported elite sports to return to "behind closed doors" competition, which enabled vital broadcast revenue, retained competitive integrity and brought joy to millions of sports fans. The Government recognises the implications for elite and professional sports clubs of not being able to admit spectators to stadia from 1 October, and are working urgently on what we can do now to support them.

The 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 to the sector.

## ■ Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[104071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to provide further financial support to organisations in the voluntary sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[104072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to provide further support to organisations in the fundraising sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The £750 million package offered unprecedented support to allow charities and social enterprises to continue their vital work in our national effort to fight coronavirus. This funding will continue to support this work over the winter.

We are not able to replace every pound of funding charities would have received this year, and many organisations will need to assess what measures they need to take. Information on the wider measures the government has made available and details on how to access the support can be found on gov.uk. The Charity Commission has



also published guidance on gov.uk, which sets out how charities can get support for their staff, advice on use of reserves, and other potential issues.

We will continue to work with the charity and social enterprise sectors to assess emerging needs and how we can best support them during the COVID-19 pandemic and through recovery.

Ensuring charities can safely begin fundraising activities will be a crucial part of the sector's recovery. DCMS has worked closely with its sectors to publish guidance relating to COVID-19. This includes practical guidance and resources from the Fundraising Regulator and Chartered Institute of Fundraising supporting charities to safeguard the public, staff and volunteers as they plan to return to fundraising activities in a safe and responsible way. This can be viewed at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-dcms-sectors-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[105391]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of apprenticeship starts, by sector; and what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of apprenticeships starts.

**Gillian Keegan:**

There have been 58,160 apprenticeship starts reported to date between 23 March to 31 July 2020. A breakdown of apprenticeship starts by sector subject area in this period can be found in the Apprenticeships and traineeships: October 2020 statistics publication, which is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/924957/october\\_2020\\_release\\_main\\_text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924957/october_2020_release_main_text.pdf). We advise against

making comparisons with previous years due to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak from March onward. The outbreak has affected provider behaviour in terms of the reporting of further education and apprenticeship learning during the affected period.

Apprenticeships will be more important than ever in helping businesses to recruit the right people and develop the skills they need to recover and grow. To help support employers to offer new apprenticeships, employers are now able to claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25, and £1,500 for those aged 25 and over until 31 January 2021. The new payment means it's a great time for employers to offer new apprenticeship opportunities and take advantage of existing flexibilities to train their apprentices in a way that suits their needs.

We also want to ensure we grow the number of small and medium-sized enterprises offering apprenticeships, supported by funding, given that they are vital to the UK



economy. We will continue to work with smaller employers to give them the confidence and support to take on new apprentices.

To expand apprenticeship opportunities further we are working with employers to make apprenticeships work better for different sectors, including those with more flexible and short-term models of employment. We will also work with employers to improve the transfer process, making it easier for them to find smaller employers to transfer levy funds to, and to enable successful Kickstart placements to turn into apprenticeships where that is the right thing for the employer and the young person.

## ■ Education: Counselling

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[103621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to fund counselling in all schools and colleges as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

**Vicky Ford:**

It is important for schools and colleges to have the freedom to decide what support to offer pupils based on their particular needs and drawing on an evidence base of effective practice. Our survey of mental health provision in schools and colleges in 2016 and 2017 found that 61% of schools and colleges (56% of primary schools, 84% of secondary schools and 93% of colleges) reported offering a counselling service for their pupils.

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

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

We know that access to mental health support has been more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. To ensure that staff were equipped to support wellbeing as children and young people returned to schools and colleges, we made it a central part of our guidance on the return to school. We supported this with a range of training and materials, including webinars which have been accessed by thousands of education staff and accelerating training on how to teach about mental health as part of the new relationships, sex and health curriculum, so that all pupils can benefit from this long-term requirement. As part of this, we are investing £8 million in the new Wellbeing for Education Return programme which is funding expert advisers who will be able to train and support schools and colleges, in every area of England, and can make links to available local authority provision, including counselling.

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

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

#### ■ Free School Meals: Immigrants

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[104190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that children from families that have no recourse to public funds can access free school meals.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[104191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that families who have no recourse to public funds can access free school meals.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[104192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 on the accessibility of free school meals for asylum-seekers.

**Vicky Ford:**

We have temporarily extended free school meal eligibility to include some children of groups of people who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). This extension includes children of families receiving support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, and is subject to a maximum income threshold of £28,500 for families outside of London and £31,200 for families inside of London.

#### ■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[104114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to extend free school meal vouchers in England to include the October 2020 half term.

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[104115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to extend the free school meal voucher program into 2021.

**Vicky Ford:**

The free school meal (FSM) provision has supported children to access a healthy, nutritious meal to help them learn, concentrate and achieve, while they are at school, for more than a century. This provision is ingrained in the fabric of everyday school life. Now that our schools are fully open, this support has returned as normal. Provision for FSM is ordinarily term time only and there is no requirement for schools to continue this provision during school holidays. Therefore the National Voucher scheme has closed.

School leaders have worked incredibly hard during the COVID-19 outbreak and it is not reasonable to also ask them to provide food when they are closed for the holidays. However, we recognise the current challenges, and that is why we have significantly strengthened the welfare safety net. The government has injected more than £9 billion into the welfare system, including an increase to Universal Credit of up to £1,040 (£20 a week) for this financial year, and putting an average of £600 into people's pockets through increases to the Local Housing Allowance. These are in addition to income protection schemes, mortgage holidays and additional support for renters.

These welfare measures sit alongside our extensive support package, including income protection schemes which have so far protected 12 million jobs and people, at a cost of almost £53 billion. Further to this, we provided an extra £63 million for local authorities to provide discretionary financial help to those in need.

## ■ GCSE: Coronavirus

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[103422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what equality impact assessment his Department has undertaken on the effect of delaying GCSE examinations by three weeks in the 2020-21 academic year due to the covid-19 outbreak on (a) disabled candidates and (b) candidates with special educational needs.

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[103423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has undertaken an equality impact assessment on the effect of delaying A levels examinations by three weeks in the 2020-21 academic year due to the covid-19 outbreak on (a) disabled candidates and (b) candidates with special educational needs.

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[103424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has undertaken an equality impact assessment on the effect of delaying Btec examinations by three weeks in the 2020-21 academic year due to the covid-19 outbreak on (a) disabled candidates and (b) candidates with special educational needs.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has considered the impact on students with particular protected characteristics, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, of a delay to the GCSE, AS and A level exam series in the summer. The additional teaching time released next year will benefit all students. There may be a particularly positive impact on those who are likely to be most affected by the disruption to education caused by COVID-19 (disadvantaged students, amongst whom students with special educational needs and disabilities are over-represented). As part of its consultation on changes to GCSE, AS and A level exams and assessments in 2021, Ofqual carried out an equalities impact assessment and did not identify specific negative impacts relating to a delay to exams next year.

Ofqual consulted on its proposed measures for academic year 2020/21 assessments of vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) – which includes BTECs. These measures could include awarding organisations delivering VTQs considering the timing of assessments. As part of its consultation, Ofqual conducted an Equalities Impact Assessment on the impact of its proposals on students and did not identify specific negative impacts relating to timing of assessments.

Decisions about the timing of qualifications, other than GCSE, AS and A levels, are for individual awarding organisations – in the case of BTECs, Pearson is the awarding organisation. Pearson is currently consulting with its customers on the timetable for its BTEC examinations and will publish the timetable in due course.

Awarding organisations must also comply with the Equality Act 2010, and so are subject to their duties under the legislation when deciding on adaptations to their qualifications.

### ■ Languages: Secondary Education

**Jim Shannon:**

**[103517]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage secondary pupils to study a foreign language.

**Nick Gibb:**

In England, languages are included in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) at Key Stage 4. Since September 2019, Ofsted's new inspection framework has placed a renewed focus on all pupils benefiting from a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum. Since the introduction of the EBacc performance measure in 2010, the proportion of GCSE entries from pupils in state-funded schools in a modern foreign language (MFL) has increased from 40% in 2010 to 47% in 2019.

The Department's £2.41 million MFL Pedagogy Pilot, run by the National Centre of Excellence in Languages Pedagogy, commenced in December 2018 with a mission to improve language curriculum design and pedagogy. The Centre has developed an open database which includes schemes of work and resources. It also runs a pilot network of 18 specialist teachers in nine lead schools, each working with four local hub schools, as well as with a wider network of a further 90 schools. The aim of this collaborative network of MFL teachers and schools is to raise standards of language teaching through the sharing of resources and good practice. In May 2020, the programme was extended to December 2021, receiving an additional £1.45 million funding.

### ■ Members: Correspondence

**Rosie Cooper:**

**[104707]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, dated 8 September 2020, ref MR/ZA53629, on a student of Runshaw College.

**Nick Gibb:**

I can confirm that a response has been sent to the letter dated 8 September 2020, from the hon. Member for West Lancashire.

**■ Music: Coronavirus****Valerie Vaz:****[105363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the refreshed National Plan for Music Education.

**Valerie Vaz:****[105365]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has provided to schools to ensure that their risk assessments do not result in reduced access to music and equipment.

**Valerie Vaz:****[105367]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that music is not removed from the curriculum during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The call for evidence on music education was launched on 9 February and closed on 13 March, the findings from which will inform the refreshed National Plan for Music Education. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the refresh of the plan is currently on hold but will be published in due course.

The Government has been clear in its intention to keep schools open throughout the COVID-19 outbreak and ensure all pupils get a high-quality education. Schools should undertake a COVID-19 risk assessment by following the advice set out in the Department's guidance for full opening of schools. The guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>. There may be an additional risk of infection in environments where singing and the playing of wind or brass instruments takes place. The guidance also includes advice on how schools can teach music safely, including on musical equipment. Guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>.

The guidance is also clear that the curriculum should remain broad so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including the arts. In Key Stages 4 and 5, the majority of GCSE and A-level students are expected to continue to study their examination subjects, including those who are due to take exams in music, to support them towards their preferred route to further study.

**■ Music: GCE A-level and GCSE****Valerie Vaz:****[105364]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he will take to accommodate students who have been unable to practice their chosen musical instrument in school during the covid -19 outbreak in forthcoming GCSE and A Level music exams.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has been clear that it is a top priority to keep schools open throughout the COVID-19 outbreak and ensure all pupils get a high quality education.

The Department's guidance for the full opening of schools for this academic year makes clear that the curriculum should remain broad so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including the arts. The guidance also states that in Key Stage 4 and 5, the majority of GCSE and A level students are expected to continue to study their examination subjects, including those due to take exams in music, to support them towards their preferred route to further study.

There may be an additional risk of infection in environments where singing, and playing of wind or brass instruments, takes place. The guidance also sets out detailed advice on how schools can teach these aspects of music safely. Schools should take the necessary steps to ensure those singing or practicing woodwind or brass instruments in school can do so safely. The Department's full guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#music-dance-and-drama-in-school>.

In August, Ofqual published decisions on subject-level changes to exams and assessments in 2021, including for GCSE and A level music, to reduce pressure on teaching time next year and respond to public health requirements. On Monday 12 October, the Government confirmed that no further subject-level changes to exams and assessments will be made for GCSEs, AS and A levels. This confirmation gives teachers, school and college leaders, and students clarity on what will be assessed in exams next summer.

**■ Pre-school Education: Finance****Daisy Cooper:****[105558]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of whether recent trends in the level of funding for early years education and childcare provision has matched (a) inflation and (b) trends in the costs incurred by providers of those services.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are planning to spend more than £3.6 billion on early education entitlements in the 2020-21 financial year. Over one million children every year are now benefitting from the government's record investment in early years entitlements.

In October 2019 we announced additional funding for our early education entitlements for the 2020-21 financial year. For the 2020-21 financial year, all local

authorities have seen an increase of 8p an hour to the hourly funding rates for the 2-year-old entitlement and an increase of 8p an hour, in the vast majority of areas, for the 3- and 4-year-old entitlement. The increase in funding rates for the 3- and 4-year-old entitlements meant that more than half of authorities have seen an increase in line with inflation (GDP deflators) of their hourly funding rate in the 2020-21 financial year.

The department carries out its own regular research on the cost of delivering childcare. The 2018 provider finances report is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provider-finances-evidence-from-early-years-providers>.

The department is due to publish a 2019 provider finances report in the Autumn.

The provider finances reports include data on the following:

- Total cost and total income of delivering childcare.
- Variation in unit costs (an approximate measure of the average cost per child per hour for all children in the setting) and staff hourly pay.
- Patterns in parent-paid hourly fees and additional charges for parents.

The 2019 Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers also includes information on the costs of providing childcare and is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/845080/SCEYP\\_2019\\_Main\\_Report\\_Nov19.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/845080/SCEYP_2019_Main_Report_Nov19.pdf).

## ■ Pupils: Coronavirus

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

**[103628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of suspending the School Attendance Order for parents who do not want their child to return to school during the covid-19 outbreak, particularly in cases where the child or a member of that child's household is considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable.

**Nick Gibb:**

Pupils in all year groups and from all types of school should now have returned to school full-time, as this is the best place for them to be for their education, development and wellbeing.

Parents have a duty to ensure that any of their children who are of compulsory school age receive a full-time education, either through regular attendance at school or through alternative arrangements, such as home schooling. A local authority will only serve a school attendance order if parents fail to satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving this.

Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable is clear that all pupils should continue to attend school at all local COVID alert levels, unless they are one of the very small number of pupils under paediatric or other specialist care and



have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend school. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>.

Schools have their own measures in place to limit the risk of transmission. If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we have recommended that schools discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Julie Elliott:**

**[105370]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the increased costs to schools of complying with covid-19 safety guidance; and what assessment he has made of the effect of those costs on schools' ability to provide high quality education.

**Nick Gibb:**

On 2 July, the Department published guidance to help schools prepare for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Schools have also continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20. As stated in our guidance, schools should be using their existing resources, including these funding increases, to support pupils to attend school this term. There are no plans at present to reimburse additional costs incurred as part of this.

On 1 October, the Department announced a package of remote education support designed to help schools and colleges build on and deliver their existing plans in the event that individuals or groups of pupils are unable to attend school because of COVID-19. Schools will be able to access a new central support hub, where resources and information on remote education will be housed. This support has been co-designed with schools and includes a range of school-led webinars and resources intended to share good practice.

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

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



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

■ **Schools: Hemsworth**

**Jon Trickett:**

**[104034]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the finding of research by Outwood Academy in Hemsworth constituency that states that between September 2019 and September 2020 the number of pupils requiring mental health safeguarding in that Academy had increased by 85 per cent as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

We know that, across society, the COVID-19 outbreak has had an impact on wellbeing and mental health, but it has had a particular impact on children and young people. Due to this, the government has made children's wellbeing and mental health a central part of our response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The department has taken action to ensure schools and colleges are equipped to support children and young people.

To ensure that staff were equipped to support the wellbeing of children and young people as they returned to school, we made available a range of training and materials, including webinars which have been accessed by thousands of education staff and by accelerating training on how to teach about mental health as part of the new relationships, sex and health curriculum.

We have worked hard to ensure that all pupils and learners were able to return to a full high-quality education programme in September. Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package, with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020-21 academic year, is supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. We are also investing £8 million in the new Wellbeing for Education Return programme which is funding expert advisers who will be able to train and support schools and colleges in every area of England and can make links to available local authority provision.

Of course, schools and colleges are not mental health professionals, so access to specialist mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. All NHS mental health trusts have ensured that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. We have also provided £9.2 million of additional funding for mental health charities, including charities such as Young Minds, to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

The government published its second annual 'State of the Nation: Children and Young People's Wellbeing' report on 10 October 2020. This year, the report focuses on publicly available data on children and young people's experiences associated with wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. The findings in the report show that many elements of wellbeing have remained stable. However, there have been

impacts in a range of areas, including friendships, worries about the future and personal finance, as well as differential impacts for some groups.

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

The NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, set out an ambition that all children and young people who need specialist support are able to access it within a decade, with a commitment to follow up the green paper 4-week waiting time pilots with a new national waiting time for specialist services. Mental health services will continue to receive an increased share of the NHS budget, growing by at least £2.3 billion a year by the 2023-24 financial year. Funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending. More details on the NHS Long Term Plan are available here: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/>.

#### ■ Students: Coronavirus

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[104004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what training is being made available to university students to help them to access their online tuition at university.

**Michelle Donelan:**

English higher education (HE) providers are autonomous institutions, which means that they have the freedom to determine the way their courses are taught, supervised, and assessed. However, providers that are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) must ensure that all students, from admission through to completion, have the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from HE. The OfS has the powers to act if there are concerns.

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. The OfS have also set out that providers must continue to provide sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Providers must continue to comply with their legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010), ensuring that education and learning is accessible to all students. When making changes to the delivery of their courses, providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. We recognise that the move to increased online provision may result in the support needs

of some students with disabilities changing, in which case suitable alternative arrangements should be made for them.

The OfS has published information and guidance for providers and students. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has also published a series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance is available here: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19>.

The OfS are taking very seriously the potential impacts on teaching and learning, 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.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for 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 is expected to report in spring 2021 and will also explore how HE providers can ensure that all students have access to a high-quality digital teaching and learning experience.

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[104005]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what compensation is available to university students who have their online tuition cancelled.

**Michelle Donelan:**

This is a difficult and uncertain time for students, but we are working with the higher education (HE) sector to make sure that all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies. We have seen some fantastic and innovative examples of high-quality online learning being delivered across the sector and are aware of a number of universities that have increased their online teaching in response to local COVID-19 outbreaks. This is in line with government guidance, which sets out 4 tiers of restrictions for education settings, and SAGE advice.

However, the majority of universities are now open for the autumn term, using a blended learning approach which combines online teaching and in-person tuition in ways that they consider appropriate to minimise risk.

Whether or not an individual student is entitled to a refund of tuition fees will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between the HE provider and student.

If students have concerns, they should first raise their concerns with their university. If their concerns remain unresolved, students at HE providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

Universities are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees within the fee caps set by the government. In deciding to keep charging full fees, universities will of course want to ensure that they can continue to deliver courses that are fit for purpose and that help students progress their qualifications.

The government has been clear that it expects universities to continue delivering a high-quality academic experience and help students to achieve qualifications that they and employers value.

**Emma Hardy:**

**[105523]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he intends to publish his plans for the safe return of students home from universities at the end of the autumn 2020 term.

**Michelle Donelan:**

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

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

#### ■ **Teachers: Recruitment**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[105309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on levels of teacher recruitment of the withdrawal of teaching bursaries for arts, English and humanities subjects.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department reviews the bursaries that we offer for initial teacher training (ITT) before the start of the annual recruitment cycle. In doing this, we take account of a number of factors including forecast economic performance, the number of graduates, and teacher supply need in each subject. Being able to change bursary amounts gives us the flexibility to respond to the need to attract new teachers and means we are spending money where it is needed most.

In academic year 2019/20 we exceeded the postgraduate ITT targets in history (127 per cent of target), geography (119 per cent of target) and English (110 per cent of target). Final recruitment figures for 2020/21 are not yet available but between February and September this year there has been a 32 per cent increase in applications for those looking to enter the classroom compared to the equivalent period last year: <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/ucas-teacher-training-statistical-releases>.

Teaching remains an attractive proposition for all graduates, including those in arts, English and humanities subjects. As a result, we have decided to focus the bursaries

we are offering for academic year 2021/22 on subjects where we expect it will be hardest to attract sufficient applicants.

## ■ Union Learning Fund

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[105353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the equity of the decision to cease funding to the Union Learning Fund.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The government's commitment to the Union Learning Fund has never been open-ended and the current funding is due to cease at the end of March 2021. We have always been clear any future funding would depend on the government's Spending Review.

The decision considered the impact on Unionlearn and their activities and was taken in light of our expanded commitment to skills development through the National Skills Fund, and Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Overall we are investing much more in adult skills retraining, and doing so through a broad offer, rather than a small dedicated fund promoted through the union network.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Air Pollution: Greater London

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[103412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of levels of air pollution in areas surrounding schools in (a) Harrow West and (b) London; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

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

Local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality and to take action where there are high levels of air pollution. Local authorities have discretionary powers to restrict car access to schools and enforce anti-idling laws outside schools.

The Government's Air Quality Grant Programme provides funding to local authorities for projects in local communities to tackle air pollution and reduce emissions which may include action targeting schools. The Government has awarded over £64 million in funding since the air quality grant started in 1997.

The Government has put in place a £3.8 billion plan to improve air quality and reduce harmful nitrogen dioxide emissions. Our Clean Air Strategy sets out measures we are taking to improve air quality and reduce emissions of pollution, improving public health.

## ■ Bees: Conservation

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[103418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what further steps his Department will take to prevent the decline in the bee population after the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Protecting pollinators is a priority for this Government. The National Pollinator Strategy is a 10-year plan published in November 2014, developed after a thorough review of the evidence base and wide consultation. It sets out how Government, conservation groups, farmers, beekeepers and researchers can work together to improve the status of pollinating insect species in England.

In 2019, alongside our research partners, we updated the evidence base supporting our action. We are therefore confident that we are focusing on the key risks to insect populations, such as habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, inappropriate pesticide use, pests and disease and climate change.

Our Agriculture Bill introduces an ambitious new land management scheme, based on the principle of “public money for public goods”, which will allow us to reward farmers and land managers who protect our environment. The scheme will provide a powerful vehicle for achieving biodiversity and other natural environment goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan, including to improve the overall status of species groups such as pollinators. Our existing agri-environment scheme packages include measures to support pollinators, which have proved popular. We are looking to build on this popularity in the design of our new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme so that many more farmers and land managers can take positive action for pollinators and other farm wildlife.

## ■ Clothing and Textiles

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[103416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage a more circular fashion and textile industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[104012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the environmental damage caused by fast fashion; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In line with the Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2018) we are taking a range of actions to tackle environmental damage and promote greater circularity in the fashion and textiles sector.

Through the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) we are supporting an industry-led voluntary agreement - the Sustainable Clothing Action Plan (SCAP)

2020. This has seen SCAP signatories reduce their water and carbon footprints by 18.1% and 13.4% respectively per tonne of clothing between 2012 and 2018. Work is currently underway to develop an ambitious new phase of the voluntary agreement for the future, focussed on enhancing the circularity of the sector.

We have committed to consult on extended producer responsibility and other policy measures for five priority waste streams, including textiles, by 2025, with two of these to be completed by 2022. We are also exploring regulatory requirements on product design and consumer information in order to support durable, repairable, and recyclable clothing and textiles. The Environment Bill includes clauses that will enable resource efficient product design and information requirements to be set through secondary legislation.

In addition, we are supporting the textiles reuse and recycling sector, which has experienced particular challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, through the WRAP-administered Resource Action Fund.

Our detailed plans to promote sustainable practices in the textiles sector will be included in a new Waste Prevention Programme, to be published for comment in the next few months.

## ■ Environment Protection

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[103477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what safeguards he plans to put in place to ensure that the interim environmental governance arrangements required before the Office for Environmental Protection becomes legally operational are independent of Government.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Interim Environmental Governance Secretariat will be hosted in Defra and will operate from the start of next year until the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) can begin its statutory functions. The interim arrangements will support the OEP Chair once the chair has been identified following a regulated public appointments process; and the interim arrangements will be under the guidance of both the Chair and the non-executive Board members once they have been confirmed in place as designates until Royal Assent. There will be staff designated to the Secretariat for this purpose and we are planning for them to work with propriety in handling public complaints that can then be handed to the OEP once it is live.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[103478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) staff resources and (b) funding he plans to make available to the interim environmental governance arrangements required before the Office for Environmental Protection becomes legally operational.



**Rebecca Pow:**

The Secretary of State has asked officials to assemble a team of staff from within Defra group, funded from the department's budget, to receive and validate complaints against the criteria for complaining to the Office for Environmental Protection.

**■ Environment Protection: Complaints****Caroline Lucas:**[\[103479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether members of the public will be able to submit complaints on potential breaches of environmental law via a complaints management system that will be operational from 1 January 2021 and operated independently from GOV.UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The interim arrangements will allow individuals to submit complaints from the end of the transition period, and we are developing a robust system to handle these complaints. We anticipate providing information about the interim arrangements and the complaints system through GOV.UK.

**■ Environment Protection: Crime****Caroline Lucas:**[\[103476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how serious breaches of environmental law will be enforced in the time period between the end of the transition period and the Office for Environmental Protection becoming legally operational.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Members of the public will be able to submit complaints about alleged failures of public authorities to comply with environmental law from the start of next year to Defra's Interim Environmental Governance Secretariat, which will be passed to the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) once established. The OEP will then be able to use its legal powers to investigate complaints reported to the interim arrangements from 1 January 2021, and could take enforcement action against serious failures if necessary. It will therefore be possible for the OEP to hold public authorities to account in relation to any failures alleged to have occurred after the end of the transition period.

The role of the interim arrangements is to provide this continuity, not take legal decisions. These will then be matters for the OEP to determine, as an independent legal entity, in accordance with its legal powers.

**■ Environment Protection: Public Consultation****Caroline Lucas:**[\[103481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the full, open public consultation on the Government's policy statement on environmental principles that his Department committed to in December 2018.



**Rebecca Pow:**

We plan to publish a draft version of the Environmental Principles Policy Statement for consultation in late 2020. We expect this consultation to last 12 weeks.

**■ Fly-tipping: Fines****Alberto Costa:**[\[103561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing fines for fly-tipping.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Fly-tipping is an unacceptable crime and we committed to increasing penalties for fly-tipping in our manifesto. We also undertook to strengthen sentences for waste crimes, including fly-tipping, in our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy. We will do this, by among other measures, working with the independent Sentencing Council to ensure that the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline is kept up to date. Our 'fly-tipping toolkit' will also cover how councils can present robust cases to the courts to secure tougher penalties.

Anyone caught fly-tipping may be prosecuted, which can lead to a fine or up to 12 months imprisonment, or both, if convicted in a Magistrates' Court. The offence can attract a fine or up to five years imprisonment, or both, if convicted in a Crown Court. The latest 2018/19 fly-tipping prosecution outcome figures showed that the value of total fines increased by 29% to £1,090,000 compared to 2017/18.

Instead of prosecuting, councils may choose to issue a fixed penalty notice (on-the-spot fine). Local authorities have the power to issue fixed penalties of up to £400 for fly-tipping offences, including to those caught fly-tipping and to householders who pass their waste to a fly-tipper. Vehicles of those suspected of committing a waste crime, including illegal dumping, can be searched and seized.

Prior to introducing the fixed penalties for those who commit a fly-tipping offence, Defra issued a call for evidence in 2015. The responses to this and further analysis undertaken when finalising the policy resulted in the maximum value of the fixed penalty notice being set at £400. Furthermore, we undertook a consultation in advance of granting local authorities the power to issue a fixed penalty notice of up to £400 to householders who fail in their duty of care in January 2019. Almost three-quarters of respondents (72%) felt that the proposed value (£200 default, maximum value of £400) was correct.

**■ Inland Waterways: Freight****Alex Sobel:**[\[105528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Canal and River Trust's recommendation for Government funding of £200m for capital works to enable more freight to be carried on inland waterways.

**Rebecca Pow:**

There have been no discussions with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Canal and River Trust's capital programme proposal for contributing towards the wider national post-Covid-19 economic recovery, which included an element of £15 million over five years for a new inland port in Leeds and associated works to support the Aire and Calder Navigation with handling increased and larger freight traffic between Leeds and the Humber.

**Office for Environmental Protection: Public Appointments****Caroline Lucas:**[\[103480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2020 Question 57161, what assessment he has made of the effect of the (a) timetable for the Environment Bill and (b) covid-19 outbreak on the public appointments timescales for the board of the proposed Office for Environmental Protection.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) Chair and Non-Executive Director (NED) campaigns have accounted for potential changes to the timetable of the Environment Bill. The published Chair candidate pack outlined that should there be a delay to Royal Assent, then the chair would be appointed to Defra as the "OEP Chair Designate." They would then transfer to the OEP as Chair upon Royal Assent. This arrangement will also be mirrored in the NED campaign pack. The Chair Designate (and subsequently NED Designates) would therefore be available to be involved in activities to support the OEP and any interim arrangements. We do not anticipate that COVID-19 will have any further impact on the OEP public appointment timescales.

**Palm Oil: Manufacturing Industries****Gareth Thomas:**[\[103420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government is taking steps to encourage manufacturers to (a) reduce and (b) end use of palm oil in their products; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is committed to tackling deforestation and supporting sustainable supply chains.

Oil palm is a very efficient crop, producing more oil per hectare than other vegetable oil crops, so we do not believe that encouraging manufacturers to end use of palm oil is the right approach. Encouraging companies to end their use of palm oil would encourage substitution with other oils (e.g. soybean, rapeseed, sunflower) which typically require significantly more land to produce, and may lead to greater deforestation, as more land is converted to agricultural use. According to a 2016 WWF report, palm oil replacements shift the problem and may make things worse.

However, the Government is strongly committed to achieving sustainably sourced palm oil, and we are working with the private sector and non-governmental organisations to create a UK market for sustainably sourced palm oil and reduce the environmental impact of palm oil production overseas. This approach has been successful in reducing the amount of unsustainably sourced palm oil imported to the UK. The UK's latest progress report shows that we achieved 77% certified sustainable palm oil in 2018, up from 16% in 2010.

The Government has also consulted on the introduction of a new law to make sure businesses are not using products grown on illegally deforested land, helping to tackle climate change and prevent biodiversity loss. Our proposal would make it illegal for larger businesses to use forest risk commodities that have not been produced in accordance with relevant local laws, and they would need to take steps (undertake due diligence) to show that they have taken proportionate action to ensure this is the case. We believe this approach would facilitate partnership with producer countries around the world to uphold forest laws, supporting a greener, more resilient and inclusive global recovery. This is just one of the measures that the Government is considering in response to the findings of the Global Resource Initiative which reported in March 2020. The 'due diligence' consultation closed on 5 October 2020, and we will publish a response to it within 12 weeks on gov.uk summarising the feedback that we have received.

As one of over 75 nations to sign up to the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, launched at the UN General Assembly in September 2020, the UK is driving action internationally as well as domestically. We will also champion sustainable supply chains as hosts of the international climate conference 'COP26' in 2021, and we are a signatory to the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership which aims to reverse forest loss by strengthening the protection of intact forests and supporting large scale forest restoration.

## ■ Plastics

**Gareth Thomas:**

**[103417]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce use of single use plastics; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Ayrshire and Arran on 8 October 2020, PQ UIN 99014.

[\[questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/99014\]](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-05/99014) ]

## ■ **Plastics: Seas and Oceans**

**Gareth Thomas:** [103413]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to take steps to reduce the amount of plastic pollution in the sea; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:** [103414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to take steps to help prevent single use personal protective equipment from (a) polluting the sea and (b) affecting marine life; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK is taking a number of steps to tackle marine litter. The Government has introduced a ban on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, and the supply of cotton buds, stirrers and plastic straws (with some exemptions). The Government's 5p plastic carrier bag charge has significantly reduced the use of these bags by 95% in the main supermarket retailers, and we have decided to increase the minimum charge to 10p and extend it to all retailers. The Resources and Waste Strategy for England, published in December 2018, sets out our plans to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste, working towards our 25 Year Environment Plan target to reduce all types of marine plastic pollution.

Marine litter is a transboundary issue that requires international cooperation. In 2018, the UK launched the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance (CCOA) alongside Vanuatu, now a community of 34 member states who have pledged action on reducing plastic pollution in the ocean. A number of programmes worth up to £70 million in total have been set up across Government to support the CCOA's ambitions. The UK has committed to establishing a £500 million Blue Planet Fund, resourced from the UK's Official Development Assistance budget, that will help eligible countries protect their marine resources from key human-generated threats, including marine pollution.

The Government has published guidance on the disposal of face coverings and other PPE during the coronavirus pandemic. This is available at:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste). We have also been circulating these messages widely on social media and urging people to not recycle or litter used PPE and instead to put it in the normal waste bin.

## ■ **Protective Clothing: Pollution Control**

**Gareth Thomas:** [103415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to encourage the public use of reusable face coverings to reduce the potential effect of disposable single-use personal protective equipment on the environment; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

While our priority is rightly to protect public health during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, this does not dilute our existing commitment to tackling single-use plastics.

We have published guidance on the GOV.UK website on how to correctly dispose of waste during the coronavirus pandemic and how to make, wash and reuse cloth face coverings to prevent and reduce waste. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>

We have also been circulating these messages widely on social media and urging people not to recycle or litter used PPE and instead to put it in the normal waste bin. We recently released a video highlighting the issue of improperly discarded face coverings and gloves, which encourages people to consider wearing a reusable face covering. This can be found at:

<https://twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1309045391724351489>

We remain committed to eliminating avoidable plastic waste and delivering the manifesto commitment to be a world leader on tackling plastic pollution.

**■ Tree Planting: Urban Areas****Gareth Thomas:****[103421]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many trees have been planted under the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (a) nationally and (b) in Harrow West constituency to date; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

To date 18,717 Government-funded trees have been planted under the Urban Tree Challenge Fund nationally, of which 93 trees have been planted in the Harrow West constituency.

The planting of a further 160,130 trees is planned under the Urban Tree Challenge Fund nationally by the end of March 2021, of which 54 are planned to be planted in the Harrow West constituency. Some may be planted by charities or private organisations.

**■ Waste Disposal: Crime****Alberto Costa:****[103562]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allowing local authorities to identify publicly people prosecuted for (a) fly-tipping and (b) hiring an unlicensed waste carrier.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Fly-tipping is unacceptable wherever it occurs, and we are committed to tackling this crime.

The naming of fly-tipping offenders is not current Government policy. The Government is committed to encouraging local solutions for local problems. This is particularly relevant in tackling fly-tipping, which requires a local approach, tailored to the characteristics of the area and the community in which the problem occurs. It is therefore not for central government to assess or promote a single approach.

In our Resources and Waste Strategy we committed to developing a web-based toolkit to tackle fly-tipping. This will include advice and guidance on how local authorities can set up and run effective fly-tipping partnerships and share intelligence. Through the establishment of effective partnerships, it will be possible for local partners to share intelligence and evidence of fly-tippers operating across administrative boundaries.

Furthermore, the Police National Computer holds details of people who are, or were, of interest to UK law enforcement agencies following a conviction for a criminal offence, or are subject to legal proceedings, including for fly-tipping offences.

We are also taking action to tackle waste crime, which includes fly-tipping, through the Environment Bill. It will enable the Government to mandate the use of electronic waste tracking; simplify the process for enforcement authorities to enter premises under a warrant; introduce a new power to search for and seize evidence of waste crime; and reduce the cost and bureaucracy when the police seize vehicles involved in waste crime on behalf of the Environment Agency.

## ■ Zoo Animals Fund

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[105377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will extend the scope of the Zoo Animals Fund to allow (a) more zoos and (b) larger zoos to access that funding.

**Victoria Prentis:**

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

31 March 2021. Zoo licence holders, including larger zoos, are already able to access the fund if they need to.

■ **Zoos: Nature Conservation**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[105378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support zoos conservation work worldwide before they reach their final financial reserves.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Darwin Initiative is a UK Government grant scheme that helps to protect biodiversity and the natural environment through locally based projects worldwide. The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund also provides support to projects around the world that are tackling the illegal wildlife trade.

The Government has also announced a doubling of the UK's contribution to International Climate Finance, to £11.6 billion from 2021-2025, including for nature-based solutions; a £220 million International Biodiversity Fund, including a new £100 million Biodiverse Landscapes Fund; significant uplifts to the Darwin Initiative and funding to tackle illegal wildlife trade; £30 million in funding to stop illegal deforestation and £9.6 million for a Just Rural Transition programme to help make farming more sustainable.

Zoos are able to apply for the full range of Covid-19 financial support that the Government has made available. The Zoo Animals Fund is an animal welfare fund, in addition to all of the other financial support being provided to zoos.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

■ **China: Embassies**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[105294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress has been made on attempting to resolve the dispute between the Chinese authorities and Belfast City Council on the unauthorised erection of perimeter fencing at the Chinese Consulate buildings in Belfast.

**Nigel Adams:**

Subsequent to a judgment earlier this year by the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland about the planning dispute, we have continued to facilitate contact between with the Consulate-General and Belfast City Council. The perimeter works are complete and both parties continue to co-operate productively about the remaining construction works. We expect diplomatic and consular missions in the UK to respect our laws and regulations in line with their obligations under the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations and UK law.



## ■ Christianity

**Andrea Leadsom:** [\[105368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the UK has to move a UN Security Council Resolution in response to recommendation 20 of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the UK Foreign Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Support for Persecuted Christians during the UK's presidency of the Security Council in 2021.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government remains committed to implementing the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's independent review on persecuted Christians in full. Work is continuing to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements to the lives of those persecuted because of their faith, belief, or those of no religious belief. The UK's Mission to the United Nations in New York is considering the best approach to achieve Security Council support for an inclusive resolution.

## ■ Cyprus: Beaches

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[105303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Turkish counterpart on the decision to re-open beachfront areas in Famagusta in violation of UN resolutions.

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[105304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations in the UN Security Council on the decision to re-open beachfront areas in Famagusta in violation of UN resolutions.

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[105305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he is making to his Turkish counterpart on compliance with UN resolutions on Famagusta.

**Wendy Morton:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* The UK continues to be concerned by the announcement on 6 October to open the beach within the fenced-off area of Varosha and the subsequent opening of this beach on 8 October. We have made representations to Turkey through our Embassy in Ankara both prior to and following the announcement. These have been reinforced by conversations held with the Turkish Representative at the United Nations in New York and with the Turkish Ambassador in London.

In response to the announcement, the UK called for the UN Security Council to hold closed consultations on the matter on 9 October. The UK continues to strongly support the numerous Security Council Resolutions covering the issue of Varosha, notably 550 (1984) and 789 (1992). In this regard, we support the UN Presidential



Statement reaffirming its support for the relevant Security Council Resolutions and expressing deep concern regarding the announcement. The issue of Varosha underlines the importance of reaching a comprehensive Cyprus Settlement as a matter of urgency. On 19 October the Foreign Secretary spoke to Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusolgu and stressed the importance of resuming the UN Cyprus Settlement process.

## ■ Diplomatic Service

**Hannah Bardell:**

**[105450]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, who was interviewed at his Department as part of the RAND Corporation report, Consular services to citizens abroad: Insights from an international comparative study, published November 2019.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO can confirm that consular officials fully responded to the RAND survey in writing in the interests of transparency.

**Hannah Bardell:**

**[105452]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the RAND Corporation report, Consular services to citizens abroad: Insights from an international comparative study, published November 2019, whether other countries participating in that study referred to people seeking consular assistance as customers.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO cannot comment on other states' choice of terminology in relation to consular matters.

**Hannah Bardell:**

**[105453]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason his Department decided to refer on its website and in documentation to people seeking consular assistance as customers.

**Nigel Adams:**

The 'Customer Charter' in in the publication 'Support for British Nationals Abroad: A Guide'

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/914039/FCO\\_BritsAbroad\\_A4web\\_020920.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914039/FCO_BritsAbroad_A4web_020920.pdf)) reflects the FCDO's commitment to provide a high quality service to those who need our support. As well as supporting British individuals who have experienced crime or trauma we also issue travel documents and provide notarial services and our publication seeks to set out the full range of help available. I was happy to meet the Honourable Lady on the 19th of October to discuss this aspect of the APPG report "Deaths Abroad, Consular Services and Assistance: Why Families Deserve Better and What Can Be Done".

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[105454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department's decision to refer to people seeking consular support as customers is in line with international best practice.

**Nigel Adams:**

The United Kingdom's consular relations are generally regulated by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963, multilateral agreements, and bilateral consular conventions which does not specify language that should be used.

#### ■ Diplomatic Service: Standards

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[105451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the UK last compared the effectiveness of its consular assistance with that provided by other countries.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO is an active member of international consular forums and learns from, and shares experiences and practice with, a range of other countries.

#### ■ Hong Kong: Human Rights

**Chris Law:**

[\[105393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many meetings have taken place since January 2019 between Ministers in his Department and members of the Chinese Government on the rights of the Hong Kong people enshrined in the joint Sino-British declaration.

**Chris Law:**

[\[105394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many meetings have taken place between Ministers in his Department and members of the Hong Kong Government on the rights of the Hong Kong people under the joint Sino-British declaration, since January 2019.

**Nigel Adams:**

We hold regular discussions with the Chinese Government and the Hong Kong authorities about the situation in Hong Kong. Both are well aware of our serious concerns about the National Security Law, and we will continue to raise these concerns at senior levels with the Chinese and Hong Kong administrations.

#### ■ Hong Kong: Police

**Chris Law:**

[\[105395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether representatives of (a) the Government and (b) non-departmental public bodies have met with representatives of the (i) Hong Kong Government and (ii) Chinese

Government to discuss providing training to members of the police and other law enforcement bodies in Hong Kong since January 2019.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are not aware of any discussions by representatives of (a) the Government and (b) non-departmental public bodies with the Hong Kong or Chinese Governments on the provision of training to members of the police and other law enforcement bodies in Hong Kong since January 2019.

■ **International Development Association: Finance**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[104061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the contribution of the UK to the World Bank International Development Association for 2021.

**James Duddridge:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2020]:* As indicated in the Report from the Executive Directors published in February, the UK pledged £3.062 billion to the 19th replenishment of the International Development Association, covering the period between July 2020 and June 2023. The UK's contribution in 2021 is to be confirmed.

■ **Lebanon: Overseas Aid**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[105495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what financial support his Department has provided to Lebanon since the explosion in Beirut on 4 August 2020 to assist (a) search and rescue, (b) treating survivors and (c) the rebuilding of that city.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK remains committed to supporting the Lebanese people deal with the tragic explosion in Beirut Port. The UK was one of the biggest donors to the crisis. Our £25 million aid package is helping support the most vulnerable people in Lebanon to meet their immediate survival needs. A British team of medics specialising in trauma, emergency nursing and rehabilitation flew out on 7 August, and we also provided medical equipment for Lebanese hospitals and clinics. In addition, the UK gave medical, strategic air transport, engineering and communications support to the Lebanese Armed Forces as they responded to the explosion and its aftermath, and UK ship HMS Enterprise was deployed to survey the damage to the Port.

■ **Occupied Territories: Demolition**

**Anna McMorrin:**

[\[104176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) cost to the public purse of UK aid-funded projects in the West Bank and Gaza which have been demolished by Israeli authorities; and whether he plans to fund their replacement.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is concerned by the continued demolitions of Palestinian structures by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We have made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Between 2015 and 2019, around eight per cent of West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) structures were demolished or seized by the Israeli authorities. The UK continues to fund the WBPC, and has provided a total of £1.9 million to the WBPC and its activities since 2018. Our legal aid programme supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home eviction in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

**■ Sri Lanka: Peace Negotiations****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[104722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Sri Lankan counterpart on promoting peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK continues to encourage and support Sri Lanka to deliver the commitments it made to the UN Human Rights Council through Resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1. We firmly believe that this is the best framework for establishing truth and achieving justice and lasting reconciliation following the conflict in Sri Lanka.

We are concerned about the government of Sri Lanka's decision to withdraw support for the UN Resolution. Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, who is also responsible for Human Rights, has raised these concerns on several occasions with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. The Foreign Secretary also underlined the importance of accountability and reconciliation when he spoke to Foreign Minister Gunawardena in May. The UK Government made our concerns clear in statements delivered on behalf of the Core Group on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council in February, June and September. These statements reiterated our ongoing commitment to justice and accountability for victims of conflict and human rights violations, and lasting reconciliation. We continue to engage with the Government of Sri Lanka on this important issue.

**■ Venezuela: Overseas Aid****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[103599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the findings of the International Criminal Court into the human rights abuses of Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro; and what support the Government has provided to the Lima countries.

**Wendy Morton:**

In September 2018, six members of the Lima Group (Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay and Peru) referred the situation in Venezuela and possible commission of crimes against humanity there to the International Criminal Court (ICC). On 27 September 2019, the Foreign Secretary announced the UK's support for the Lima Group's referral.

The Court has yet to conclude the Preliminary Examination into the situation in Venezuela. The Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) is carrying out a Preliminary Examination to determine whether the situation meets the legal criteria established by the Rome Statute to warrant investigation by the OTP. The OTP will provide an update on the Preliminary Examination in December in its annual report on Preliminary Examination Activities. We look forward to hearing about the progress the OTP has made. It would not be appropriate for the UK to comment further at this stage. The UK respects the independence of the ICC Prosecutor and her role in undertaking a Preliminary Examination into the situation in Venezuela.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Angling: Coronavirus****Scott Mann:**[\[99051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether angling will be included in the proposed three tier covid-19 restrictions list.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government understands the importance of physical exercise and spending time outdoors.

Under the current restrictions people can go fishing alone or with no more than five others, in public outdoor spaces. People should always follow social distancing guidelines when encountering others. Outdoor angling events can also take place, if they are managed by a licenced individual, in line with Government guidance.

We are seeing COVID-19 cases rise at a rapid rate across the country and, it is vital everyone plays their part by following the measures in place. As we have shown, we are prepared to take action decisively when it is necessary to control the virus, and the Government will, as always, be led by the science.

**■ Asthma: Medical Equipment****Luke Pollard:**[\[102158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent shortages of prescription inhalers at the end of the transition period.

**Luke Pollard:**

**[102159]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of regional availability of inhalers in England (a) as of October 2020 and (b) after the transition period.

**Jo Churchill:**

Our priority is to ensure that patients in all parts of the United Kingdom continue to have access to medicines and medical products they need, including inhalers. We continue to work closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to deliver the shared goal of continuity of safe patient care by mitigating any potential disruption to supply into the UK of medicines and medical products at the end of the transition period, in all scenarios.

As set out in a letter from the Department to industry of 3 August, we are implementing a multi-layered approach, that involves asking suppliers of medicines and medical products to the UK from or via the European Union to get trader ready, reroute their supply chains away from any potential disruption and stockpiling to a target level of six weeks on UK soil where this is possible. The letter is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-medicines-and-medical-products-suppliers-3-august-2020/letter-to-medicine-suppliers-3-august-2020>

## ■ Atrial Fibrillation: Medical Treatments

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[103469]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in England have undergone treatment for atrial fibrillation having reduced their weight to meet the inclusion criteria for that treatment.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* Being overweight, especially if the person has sleep apnoea (interrupted breathing while sleeping) is a factor that increases risk of atrial fibrillation.

Information regarding the number of patients in England who have not met the criteria for treatment as a result of their weight or who have reduced their weight in order to be included for treatment for atrial fibrillation is not held centrally.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[103470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have not met the inclusion criteria for treatment for atrial fibrillation as a result of their weight, in England, in the last three years.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* Being overweight, especially if the person has sleep apnoea (interrupted breathing while sleeping) is a factor that increases risk of atrial fibrillation.

Information regarding the number of patients in England who have not met the criteria for treatment as a result of their weight or who have reduced their weight in order to be included for treatment for atrial fibrillation is not held centrally.

#### ■ **Blood Cancer: Health Services**

**Henry Smith:**

**[86631]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the rising incidence of blood cancer on the funding requirements of NHS services for blood cancer patients.

**Jo Churchill:**

The amount spent by the National Health Service on blood cancer-related services is not collected separately to the overall spend on cancer services.

#### ■ **Blood Diseases: Coronavirus**

**Stephen Timms:**

**[92668]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on the vulnerability of people living with (a) beta-thalassaemia, (b) sickle cell disease and (c) other haemoglobinopathies; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* NHS England, as part of its response to COVID-19, has worked closely with the Haemoglobinopathy Coordinating Centres (HCCs) across the country to provide an expert clinical panel to understand, assess and inform on the effect of COVID for patients with beta-thalassemia, sickle cell disease and other haemoglobinopathies. The HCC teams formed an HCC COVID-19 specific group to meet weekly from 20 April.

The HCC COVID-19 group are now able to collect real time COVID-19 specific data which has found that patients with haemoglobinopathies were affected by COVID-19. This was found to be in older patients and with other medical conditions, and was fully explored and published by the group. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://haematologica.org/article/view/haematol.2020.259440>

In response to the pandemic the clinical services have adapted the delivery of clinical practices to support patients safely. One example of this has been achieved through redesigning outpatient appointments to run through virtual clinics. The teams have been able to stay in touch with patients providing advice and support alongside clinical care throughout this period.



## ■ Breast Cancer: Health Services

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[84742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to maintain the standard of treatment for secondary breast cancer during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Cancer Recovery Taskforce has been established, and met for the first time in September, where they took stock of the status of cancer services against recovery metrics on referrals, treatment and backlog levels. A national recovery plan will be developed for publication shortly.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing to operate cancer surgical hubs, supported by the extension of the independent sector deal, to maintain a whole-system approach to managing cancer surgery at volume and in accordance with clinical priority.

## ■ Breast Cancer: Screening

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[98158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the additional resources required to (a) manage and (b) clear the breast screening backlog created as a result of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have made good progress in clearing the backlog of appointments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: all local National Health Service breast screening services are operational and are working to ensure that these women are invited for screening as quickly as possible.

Services have been advised to prioritise women aged 53 who have not yet been screened and women aged 71 or over awaiting a breast screening invitation, together with women assessed as being at very high risk of developing breast cancer. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also made funding available to trusts to support the adaptation of mobile breast screening units in order to enhance their safe use and so maximise the number of units available to screen women.

## ■ Cancer: Children

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[96063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the treatment options available on the NHS for children with diffuse midline glioma; and whether he plans to improve those treatment options.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has not made an assessment of any treatments for children with diffuse midline glioma.



However, NICE is planning to develop guidance on MTX110 for untreated diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), also known as diffuse midline glioma. The timescale for this will be announced in due course.

NICE is also aware of a further drug, tasadenoturev (DNX-2401) for DIPG, that is currently undergoing clinical trials. If successful, NICE will appraise this drug once it has been licensed.

## ■ Cancer: Diagnosis

**Martyn Day:**

[\[99669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reduce the number of people with sarcoma waiting more than six months for a diagnosis.

**Jo Churchill:**

Healthcare providers have been asked to ensure that there is sufficient diagnostic capacity in COVID-19 secure environments through the use of independent sector facilities and the development of Community Diagnostic Hubs and Rapid Diagnostic Centres. Endoscopy capacity is being restored to normal levels, and the capacity of surgical hubs is being expanded to meet demand.

The National Health Service has continued to provide urgent and emergency services, including the diagnosis of cancers, throughout the outbreak and has run the 'Open for Business' media campaign to encourage people with potentially serious health issues, such as cancer, to continue to seek medical advice and attend essential appointments.

**Martyn Day:**

[\[99673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that primary healthcare professionals are trained to spot (a) sarcoma and (b) other less common cancers.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) updated referral guidelines for suspected cancer in June 2015. This was estimated to save up to 5,000 lives a year, with general practitioners urged to think of cancer sooner and lower the referral threshold for tests.

Health professionals and the organisations that employ them are expected to take NICE guidance into account when deciding what treatments to give people.

## ■ Cancer: Radiotherapy

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[92758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase capacity in radiotherapy services to help reduce the number of cancer patients awaiting treatment as a result of backlogs accrued during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* During the COVID-19 pandemic radiotherapy service provision has continued.

Recovery is now underway across the National Health Service – the focus for radiotherapy will be on embedding the use of hypo-fractionated (fewer fraction) treatments.

As part of the wider NHS recovery programme, local systems will need to determine how best to restore services and then reduce waiting lists. This will, in some areas, include the use of the independent sector.

**■ Cancer: West Yorkshire****Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[106428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are waiting for cancer treatment in West Yorkshire; and what the average waiting time is for that treatment.

**Jo Churchill:**

Data is not held in the format requested.

**■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments****Patricia Gibson:**[\[93610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made in ensuring that (a) very ill children and (b) other patients who benefit from prescription cannabis are able to access it.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 September 2020]:* The latest guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends two prescription medicines - Sativex – for the treatment of spasticity in Multiple Sclerosis patients, and Epidyolex – for the treatment of seizures associated with two rare forms of epilepsy. These are licensed cannabis-based products, which may be prescribed by specialist doctors, in cases where it is clinically appropriate and funded on the National Health Service in England. NICE is clear that there is a need for more evidence to support routine prescribing and funding decisions for unlicensed cannabis-based products on the NHS.

**■ Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust: Remdesivir****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[95007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has adequate stock and future supply of remdesivir to help treat covid-19 patients.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* Remdesivir has been granted a conditional marketing authorisation for use in hospitalised patients with COVID-19, pneumonia and on supplemental oxygen. NHS England and NHS Improvement have published an interim commissioning policy, which specifies the clinical criteria for use in the National Health Service. The United Kingdom is participating in a joint procurement for remdesivir that has been arranged by the European Commission and the NHS currently has sufficient stock for use in line with the published clinical criteria.

In addition to remdesivir, the corticosteroids dexamethasone and hydrocortisone have been proven through clinical trials to be effective treatments for patients with COVID-19. The UK has secured supplies of both drugs for use in COVID-19 and they are now routinely available to NHS patients.

■ **Coronavirus****John Spellar:**[\[98663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's updated estimate is of the number of daily new covid-19 cases during the peak week in March 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

The following table shows the estimated number of new COVID-19 infections each day between 20 March and 26 March 2020, which is considered to be the peak of the epidemic in England.

Estimated number of COVID-19 cases between 20 March and 26 March 2020 in England, shown in thousands

DATE	UPPER CONFIDENCE INTERVAL	MEDIAN	LOWER CONFIDENCE INTERVAL
20 March 2020	292	219	180
21 March 2020	361	272	223
22 March 2020	443	335	275
23 March 2020	542	412	338
24 March 2020	399	305	252
25 March 2020	205	153	124
26 March 2020	233	176	144

**Notes:**

1. Source: Latest Report on Nowcasting and Forecasting – 12 October 2020, available to view at the following link:

<https://www.mrc-bsu.cam.ac.uk/tackling-covid-19/nowcasting-and-forecasting-of-covid-19/>

1. Note that modelled estimates of daily incidence are liable to change as data accrue.

## ■ **Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[92657]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to engage with (a) representatives of people affected by thalidomide and (b) other stakeholders as part of his Department's consultation on Distributing vaccines and treatments for covid-19 and flu, announced on 28 August 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department's public consultation from 28 August to 18 September proposed changes to the Human Medicine Regulations and welcomed views from a wide variety of stakeholders. The response to consultation, which has now closed, will be issued in due course.

As part of the consultation process, the Department, in collaboration with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, held a number of meetings with health and social care professional bodies and pharmaceutical industry representatives. The Department invited views from a wide range of organisations, including patient groups, to respond to the consultation.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Birmingham**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[96158]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria are being used to assess the effectiveness of support for people shielding and the clinically extremely vulnerable in Birmingham; and how regularly that support is assessed.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* Clinically extremely vulnerable people living in Birmingham, and other parts of the West Midlands affected by the local restrictions there, are not currently advised to shield. They must observe the local COVID-19 alert level arrangements in place in their area; and are advised to continue to take precautions such as observing social distancing guidelines with others outside their household or support bubble, avoiding crowds, and keeping hands and face as clean as possible. The Government has published new guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable that is aligned to local COVID-19 alert levels.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Bill Esterson:**

**[103492]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for the decision to close (a) gyms, (b) leisure centres and (c) fitness and dance studios as part of the covid-19 restrictions announced on 12 October 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* Restrictions announced on 12 October increase the restrictiveness of social distancing measures and in particular target the chain of transmission. Due to the impact of these new measures, we are working with local authorities to shape the set of restrictions in areas under the 'Very High' alert level.

Gyms, leisure centres, fitness and dance studios pose a higher risk of transmission, due to the increased risk of aerosol transmission and the likelihood of prolonged exposure, therefore some local authorities may decide to close these venues if they reach the 'Very High' alert level. Throughout this crisis, the Government, and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, have provided robust scientific evidence and advice to guide decisions regarding the measures taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Zarah Sultana:**[\[103634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made on the effectiveness of introducing targeted messages and advertising for people in clinically vulnerable categories as the UK enters a second wave of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* We have no plans to introduce such targeted messages and advertising. At present, clinically vulnerable people in England are advised to follow the same advice as the rest of the population. Revised guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable was published on 13 October.

This guidance, as with other Government guidance where appropriate, will shortly be available in a number of languages and in easy read format on GOV.UK.

**Siobhain McDonagh:**[\[48258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the research undertaken by Xu K of the State Key Laboratory for Diagnosis and Treatment of Infectious Diseases, National Clinical Research Center for Infectious Diseases, Collaborative Innovation Center for Diagnosis and Treatment of Infectious Diseases at The First Affiliated Hospital, Zhejiang University School of Medicine and others, entitled Management of COVID-19: the Zhejiang experience, published on 21 February 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* The Government has undertaken no specific assessment of this research.

**■ Coronavirus: Essex****Robert Halfon:**[\[104720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) beauty, (b) physiotherapy and (c) other businesses that operate from a person's home can continue to remain open and see clients under Tier 2 (High) covid-19 restrictions in Essex.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* New local alert levels announced on 12 October set out three tiers of restrictions that aim to control the chain of transmission in an area based on specific local circumstances. The Local Alert Level: High restrictions (tier 2) are primarily aimed at targeting household to household transmission by placing restrictions on indoor gatherings, which is recognised as a significant route of transmission.

Businesses based in a person's home may remain open at this level, provided they follow COVID-secure guidance and are not subject to other closure rules, e.g. closure of hospitality venues between 10pm and 5am. Close contact services must also follow relevant guidance, including mandatory use of face coverings.

Further guidance is available at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-high#business-and-venues>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>

**■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments****Damian Hinds:****[91830]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether treatments for community acquired pneumonia have been used to treat patients with covid-19 on the NHS; and whether he plans to stockpile those treatments to prepare for a rise in cases of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

Guidance published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence advises that antibiotic treatments for community acquired pneumonia are ineffective for COVID-19 related viral pneumonia unless there is a bacterial co-infection though the guidance allows for antibiotic prescription in certain circumstances, accommodating local antimicrobial prescribing preferences.

The Government continues to hold stockpiles of medicines, including those used in the treatment of community acquired pneumonia, to cope in a range of scenarios, and robust contingency planning continues to ensure that the country is prepared for a possible second peak of COVID-19 infections.

**Naz Shah:****[92795]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps have been taken to assess the effectiveness of (a) inhaled treatment for covid-19 and (b) trials carried out by Synairgen plc in Bradford Royal Infirmary and other hospitals.

**Lee Anderson:****[93686]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is working on an agreement with Synairgen plc to supply inhaled treatment for covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* The Department with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has established a single United Kingdom-wide process which labels COVID-19 research with the most potential with Urgent Public Health (UPH) status. Any trials evaluating the effectiveness of inhaled treatments are subject to this same process.

National and international trials are monitored by the RAPID-C19 initiative, which aims to get treatments for COVID-19 to National Health Service patients quickly and safely. This process begins with scanning all trials for COVID-19 treatments. Any promising drugs will be identified for further review.

Synaigen have been requested to submit a formal submission to UK-CTAP and NIHR UPH for review, where the inhaled interferon beta-1, SGN001 will be reviewed by a panel of independent experts to assess if it will be suitable to be incorporated into the RECOVERY+ trial or an independent trial, for Phase III.

UK-CTAP is an independent COVID-19 Therapeutics Advisory Panel, which will advise on what treatments should be proposed for testing through RECOVERY+. As with all other therapeutic compounds in trial, progress of the effectiveness will continue to be monitored by the Chief Medical Officer, NIHR UPH and RAPID C-19.

**■ Coronavirus: Older People****Nick Fletcher:**[\[105597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to (a) change the rules on support bubbles and (b) permit individuals to visit both elderly parents in the same household to assist with their caring needs.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government regularly reviews its rules on social contact, assessing all restrictions to ensure that they continue to be necessary and proportionate. These decisions are based upon the best evidence available regarding their impact and effectiveness.

A support bubble is a close support network between a household of any size and a single occupancy adult and provide support for those that might be most isolated during the pandemic. Local restrictions provide an exemption to rules on household mixing for those providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person.

**■ Coronavirus: Research****Julie Elliott:**[\[96067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the research undertaken by Gabriella d'Ettorre of the Sapienza University of Rome and others entitled Challenges in the Management of SARS-CoV2 Infection: The Role of Oral Bacteriotherapy as Complementary Therapeutic Strategy to Avoid the Progression of COVID-19, published in Frontiers in Medicine.



**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* The research, undertaken by Gabriella d'Ettorre and others, adds to the evidence on the potential role of probiotics to benefit patients with COVID-19. We will invite the Therapeutic Taskforce's expert group on prophylaxis to consider the evidence of benefits and risks of probiotic supplementation for COVID-19 patients.

**■ Coronavirus: Screening****Sara Britcliffe:****[102198]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons eligibility criteria for accessing covid-19 tests are different for care workers in (a) the community and (b) care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

Protecting care home residents and staff has been and continues to be one of our top priorities. We know that people receiving care are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Asymptomatic testing for domiciliary care workers (also known as home care workers) is guided by the results from the Public Health England (PHE) prevalence study into domiciliary care. This study found that COVID-19 prevalence among domiciliary care workers was similar to prevalence in the general population.

The eligibility criteria for accessing COVID-19 tests for care workers is based on advice from PHE, The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and evidence from the Vivaldi study, which highlighted the importance of frequent testing for care home staff and residents.

We will continue to develop our testing strategy for adult social care, based on scientific advice on relative priorities and available testing capacity in order to limit the spread and save lives.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Alex Norris:****[100519]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS (a) dentists and (b) other dental staff will be eligible to receive a covid-19 vaccination.

**Alex Norris:****[100520]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy that NHS (a) dentists and (b) other dental staff will have priority access to receive a covid-19 vaccination.

**Alex Norris:**

**[100521]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy that private dentists will have priority access to receive a covid-19 vaccination alongside other health and social care professionals.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise Government on which vaccine/s the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. The JCVI published interim advice on 25 September 2020 stating the vaccine should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and risk. The JCVI has prioritised healthcare workers and care workers, which would include dentists, in the initial recommendations. The final recommendations will be based on a detailed analysis of benefit-risk and may further refine these recommendations taking into account the different levels of exposure and other factors such as age and clinical risk.

We will consider the Committee's advice carefully as we continue to plan for a vaccination campaign.

**Layla Moran:**

**[100534]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has for eligibility for potential covid-19 vaccines for people with long covid symptoms.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise Government on prioritisation at a population level. Based on scientific analysis and modelling data, the JCVI will advise on which cohorts of the United Kingdom's population will be eligible for vaccination, should a safe and effective vaccine be found. This will depend on factors such as the properties of the vaccine, those most at need (including frontline health and social care workers) and the unique medical circumstances of individuals.

The committee's interim advice is that the vaccine should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and risk. Further work is being undertaken to understand more about the groups most at risk of serious disease and death from COVID-19 infection. Any advice will need to be modified depending on the characteristics of the vaccines, when these become available.

We will consider the Committee's advice carefully as we continue to plan for a vaccination campaign.

**Martyn Day:**

**[101293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether young people under 18 will be able to receive the covid-19 vaccination; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise Government on prioritisation at a population level. Based on scientific analysis and modelling data, the JCVI will advise on which cohorts of the United Kingdom's population will be eligible for vaccination, should a safe and effective vaccine be found. This will depend on factors such as the properties of the vaccine, those most at need (including frontline health and social care workers) and the unique medical circumstances of individuals.

The committee's interim advice is that the vaccine should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and risk. Further work is being undertaken to understand more about the groups most at risk of serious disease and death from COVID-19 infection. Any advice will need to be modified depending on the characteristics of the vaccines, when these become available.

We will consider the Committee's advice carefully as we continue to plan for a vaccination campaign.

**Rosie Duffield:****[101302]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to prioritise residents of care settings to receive a covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 14 October 2020]:* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise Government on which vaccine/s the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. The JCVI published interim advice on 25 September 2020 stating the vaccine should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and risk. The latest recommendations on the priority groups for a COVID-19 vaccine can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-25-september-2020/jcvi-updated-interim-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination>

We will consider the Committee's advice carefully as we continue to plan for a vaccination campaign.

**Sir Mark Hendrick:****[103438]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his strategy is for administering a covid-19 vaccine once it has been approved by the Government.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are preparing for the delivery of any potential COVID-19 vaccination programme as quickly as possible. The scale of what is rolled out and when will depend on a safe, effective vaccine being available. Plans include ensuring there is adequate of

provision of transport, storage, personal protective equipment, and the consideration of the settings and workforce required to vaccinate against COVID-19.

**Rushanara Ali:**

[103523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with medical logistics experts on the roll-out of a covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

The safe and efficient delivery of a COVID-19 vaccine is a top priority for the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. Discussions are held regularly on a wide range of topics with experts about the logistics, warehousing, transport and end-destination 'clinic' storage, for delivering a COVID-19 vaccine when one becomes available.

**Liz Twist:**

[103602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation with the necessary information to add people living with rare and genetic conditions to the prioritised groups for access to a future covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), and the JCVI sub-committee on COVID-19 are currently reviewing evidence on clinical risk factors associated with serious disease and mortality from COVID-19. Following a review of the evidence the Committee will develop advice on risk groups for any future COVID-19 vaccination programme. The minutes of JCVI committee meetings and statements on COVID-19 vaccination are available on the JCVI website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation>

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[104172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 vaccine on the performance of elite athletes in the context of International competitions in 2021.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2020]:* The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has not made such an assessment.

**John Spellar:**

[92628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate refrigeration capacity for a vaccination programme to tackle covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

National preparations for storage of COVID-19 vaccines at the required temperatures are being made by Public Health England to support a national COVID-19

vaccination programme. This includes both the central storage of vaccines and distribution capability across the United Kingdom to the National Health Service.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working to ensure that appropriate freezer and refrigeration capacity is in place to maintain the required cold-chain for COVID-19 vaccination deployment across England. NHS England and NHS Improvement are using the latest available COVID-19 vaccination characteristic and supply information to model the required capacity and working with suppliers to secure additional freezer and fridge as needed. NHS England and NHS Improvement have taken early steps, and are continuing to work to secure these resources, recognising the likely global competing demand for items.

**Jim Shannon:**

**[94422]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure (a) public confidence in development of a covid-19 vaccine and (b) effective planning by GP surgeries to (i) administer and (ii) provide information on that vaccine in the event that one is developed.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is working closely with Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to promote vaccinations and raise awareness of their benefits and the diseases they prevent. We are also working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to help social media platforms identify and take action against incorrect claims about the virus in lines with their terms and conditions. This includes anti-vaccination narratives that could endanger people's health.

**Gerald Jones:**

**[95154]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the responses to his consultation on legislative changes to support the rollout of covid-19 vaccines in the UK; and when he plans to publish the outcome of that consultation.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* The consultation on Changes to Human Medicine Regulations to support the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines received a huge number of responses, and we welcome the views of all individuals, organisations and stakeholders who participated.

We are now in the process of analysing those responses, considering any changes to the legislation we may wish to make, and will respond to the consultation in due course.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[96155]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the medical logistics sector on the distribution of a potential covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* Public Health England is in regular discussion with potential suppliers of COVID-19 vaccines around the storage and distribution of vaccines.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[96156]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to plan for the distribution of a potential covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement are the health and social care delivery organisations responsible for ensuring that a COVID-19 vaccine is deployed and administered safely and efficiently to the public. This includes the planning for distribution and the consideration of the settings and workforce required to vaccinate against COVID-19. All developing programme plans recognise that there are numerous potential vaccine candidates, meaning that we will need to remain flexible.

Throughout, as health is a devolved matter, the Government is working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure successful delivery across the whole of the United Kingdom.

**Sarah Owen:**

**[99130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the distribution of a covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care discusses a range of topics concerning Departmental responsibilities with Cabinet colleagues, including the distribution of a potential COVID-19 vaccine.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vitamin D**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[92655]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution of 21 September 2020 Official Report, column 633, if he will publish the evidential basis for his statement that vitamin D does not reduce the incidence or impact of covid-19; and what his Department's process is for keeping that finding under review.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 September 2020]:* Public Health England (PHE) supported the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to review emerging evidence on vitamin D for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. NICE's review concluded that there is currently no robust evidence to support taking vitamin D supplements to reduce the risk or severity of COVID-19. The review was published in June 2020 and can be accessed at the following link:

[www.nice.org.uk/advice/es28/evidence/evidence-review-pdf-8777674477](https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/es28/evidence/evidence-review-pdf-8777674477)

PHE and NICE will keep this topic under review and consider updating the evidence summary if emerging high-quality evidence suggests a change to existing conclusions and advise the Government accordingly.

**Mr David Jones:**

**[96809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the minutes of the deliberations of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence on the use of Vitamin D3 in the treatment of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a rapid evidence summary on vitamin D for COVID-19 in June. This includes vitamin D3. There are no minutes as the process for developing rapid evidence summaries does not include a committee stage. Instead, NICE conducted a robust targeted review with a wide range of external expert advisers, as listed in the evidence review. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/es28/evidence/evidence-review-pdf-8777674477>

## ■ Death: Air Pollution

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[102091]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of deaths that were attributed to poor air quality in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last five years.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 16 October 2020]:* Public Health England is responsible for collecting data to better understand public health challenges. This data is available via the Public Health Outcomes Framework for England portal, which includes an indicator for air pollution expressed as the fraction of adult mortality attributable to long-term exposure to human-made particulate air pollution. This is updated annually. The data are available to view at the following link:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#gid/1000043/par/E12000004>

Of the last five years, data estimates are available are for 2016, 2017 and 2018 and are shown in the following table.

Fraction of adult mortality attributable to long-term exposure to human-made particulate air pollution in Coventry, West Midlands Region, West Midlands Combined Authority and England

	2016	2017	2018
Coventry	5.9%	5.5%	5.6%
West Midlands Region	5.5%	4.9%	5.0%



	2016	2017	2018
West Midlands Combined Authority	Not available	5.4%	5.5%
England	5.4%	5.1%	5.2%

Source: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#gid/1000043/par/E12000004>

## ■ Dementia: Care Homes

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[103624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to lift restrictions on care home visits to enable families to visit loved ones with dementia.

**Helen Whately:**

We appreciate the particular challenges visiting restrictions pose for people with dementia and their loved ones.

On 15 October we published updated visiting guidance for care homes. Care homes can develop a policy for limited visits, following the advice set out in this guidance. This should be on the basis of a dynamic risk assessment which takes into account circumstances and needs of the individual care setting including both residents and staff, and the external COVID-19 environment including local COVID alert levels. This should include an assessment of whether residents' needs make them particularly clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 and if they make visits particularly important. This guidance is available at the following link:

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

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

## ■ Dental Services

**Alex Norris:**

[84336]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many FP17 forms detailing dental activity were submitted in each of the last six months.

**Jo Churchill:**

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: The data is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Diabetes: Mental Health Services

**Derek Thomas:**

[R] [103589]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of psychologists (a) specialising in diabetes and (b) providing clinics for people with diabetes.

**Jo Churchill:**

On 21 March 2018, NHS England and NHS Improvement, along with the National Collaboration Institute for Mental Health, published 'The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Pathway for People with Long-term Physical Health Conditions and Medically Unexplained Symptoms'. The pathway provides primary care services including psychological therapies for common mental disorders across England. It includes therapists specially trained to provide psychological therapies for people with long term conditions, including diabetes. NHS England and NHS Improvement are expanding this service, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan.

NHS England is also working to improve care for those with type 1 diabetes and eating disorders (often referred to as diabulimia) by supporting two pilots to test, trial and evaluate the effects of integrated diabetes and mental health pathways for the identification, assessment and treatment of diabulimia. NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned an in-depth evaluation to assess the impact of these pilot services.

**■ Drugs****Dame Diana Johnson:****[102708]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the extent of stockpiling of medicines in preparation for (a) a second wave of covid-19 and (b) the end of the transition period, and if he will publish that assessment.

**Jo Churchill:**

As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to have access to COVID-19 medicines in all scenarios. This includes holding stockpiles of a variety of medicines currently and potentially used in treating patients with COVID-19, to help ensure there is uninterrupted supply over the coming months.

As set out in a letter from the Department to industry of 3 August, we are implementing a multi-layered approach to the end of the Transition Period, that involves asking suppliers of medicines and medical products to the United Kingdom from or via the European Union to get trader ready, reroute their supply chains away from any potential disruption and stockpiling to a target level of six weeks on UK soil where this is possible. The letter is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-medicines-and-medical-products-suppliers-3-august-2020/letter-to-medicine-suppliers-3-august-2020>

Any information on suppliers' stock levels that has been shared with the Department to support contingency planning is commercially sensitive and cannot be shared with third parties.

## ■ Drugs: Misuse

**Cat Smith:**

[\[95679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the National Oversight Group overseeing implementations on dependence forming medicines, if he will (a) list the members of the group, (b) announce when the recommendations will be published and (c) state which patient groups and experts are being consulted; and whether the independent review by Professor Dame Carol Black into the misuse of illegal drugs will inform the implementations.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have established an oversight group to oversee the NHS recommendations from Public Health England (PHE)'s prescribed medicines review. The oversight group is jointly chaired by Dr Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, and Dr Nikiita Kanani, Primary Care Medical Director for NHS England and NHS Improvement.

The membership of the group includes:

- NHS England and NHS Improvement
- The Department of Health and Social Care
- Public Health England
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
- NHS Clinical Commissioners
- NHSX

Further consideration is being given on wider engagement with patient groups, charities and people with lived experience, alongside clinical experts, professional bodies and Royal Colleges, including the potential for a separate advisory stakeholder group to support development and implementation.

The remit of the group is dependence forming prescription medicines, as this is the scope of the PHE review. However, the group will be considering relevant evidence and reviews from a range of sources, including the independent review by Professor Dame Carol Black into illicit drug use.

## ■ Drugs: Prices

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[98223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to respond to concerns raised by the Competition and Markets Authority on the pricing of (a) hydrocortisone tablets and (b) liothyronine tablets since 2016.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 October 2020]:* Concerns about potential drug pricing abuses are a matter for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The CMA has several

ongoing investigations into excessive prices of generic medicines. Where it has concern about the price of a generic medicine, the Department asks the CMA to investigate that price.

**Anne Marie Morris:**

**[98224]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of medicines deemed to be priced excessively by (a) his Department and (b) the Competition and Markets Authority.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 October 2020]:* Concerns about potential drug pricing abuses are a matter for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The CMA has several ongoing investigations into excessive prices of generic medicines. Where it has concerns about the price of a generic medicine, the Department asks the CMA to investigate that price.

**Anne Marie Morris:**

**[98225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Access to Medicines and Medical Devices on Special Medicinal Products, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a national formulary of red-amber-green coded specials.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 October 2020]:* The Government published a Consultation last year which asked stakeholders to give their feedback to proposals that included improving the system for reimbursement of special medicinal products. The Government will consider the report on Special Medicinal Products by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Access to Medicines and Medical Devices as work post the consultation is taken forward. The Consultation is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-pharmacy-drug-reimbursement-reform>

**Anne Marie Morris:**

**[98226]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Health Service Products (Provision and Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2018 on the costs of generic medicine or special medicinal product listed with a reimbursement price in the drug tariff.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 October 2020]:* The Government publishes an annual review on the Health Service Products (Provision and Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2018, which assesses the regulations against their objectives. The latest review can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-service-products-and-medicines-regulations-2018-annual-review>

The collection of data under the regulations ensures reimbursement prices set using market data includes data from all suppliers and therefore the reimbursement price more fairly reflects the average market selling price. A number of factors effect both the selling and the reimbursement price.

■ **General Practitioners: Coronavirus**

**Chris Green:**

[\[102101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of GP appointments that have been missed in the UK as a result of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

Data on the number of general practitioner appointments missed in the United Kingdom as a result of COVID-19 is not held.

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[102762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when GP surgeries will resume face to face consultations.

**Jo Churchill:**

General practice is open and people should continue to access services by phone, online or in person.

On 31 August, NHS England and NHS Improvement issued guidance stating that general practitioner (GP) practices must offer face-to-face appointments at surgeries and continue to use remote triage, video, online and telephone consultations where appropriate – whilst also considering those unable to access or engage with digital services. On 14 September, NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to GPs and their commissioners reiterating the importance of providing face to face appointments for those who need them and shared a communications toolkit designed to support clear communication with patients about how they can access the right type of appointment.

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[103521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support he plans to make available to general practices (a) during and (b) after the coronavirus outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government is supporting general practices in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in several ways. We have facilitated remote working by distributing over 22,000 laptops to general practice staff; have provided a COVID-19 Support Fund to cover additional costs incurred by practices as a result of the response to the virus; have enabled flexibility in the delivery of services to relieve pressures; and have reduced bureaucratic burdens.

In addition, we are supporting the wellbeing of the primary care workforce in collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners via the

#LookingAfterYouToo: Coaching Support for Primary Care Staff service, which provides access to mental health services for all primary care workers.

#### ■ Health Centres: Vaccination

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [85960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether individual health centres are receiving guidance from Public Health England on the administering of winter flu jabs.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 10 September 2020]:* The Department, Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement have published the Annual Flu letter 2020/21 to ensure that local areas have plans to deliver activities to encourage all eligible individuals particularly those in at risk groups to have this year's flu vaccine. The latest letter is available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907149/Letter\\_annualflu\\_2020\\_to\\_2021\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907149/Letter_annualflu_2020_to_2021_update.pdf)

#### ■ Health Services: Rehabilitation

**Munira Wilson:** [97727]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to make a single person accountable for the provision of rehabilitation support in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* There are presently no plans to make a single person accountable for rehabilitation provision.

In 2016, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance for clinical commissioning groups and other organisations on commissioning accessible, high-quality rehabilitation services that meet the needs of their local population. The guidance is available at the following link:

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/rehabilitation-comms-guid-16-17.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/rehabilitation-comms-guid-16-17.pdf)

As part of the Government's continued commitment to ensure high-quality, accessible rehabilitation services for patients, NHS England and NHS Improvement have commenced work on updating this guidance. This has included engagement with professional bodies' clinicians, alongside other stakeholders, societies and third sector organisations who represent the patient voice.

#### ■ Home Care Services: Coronavirus

**Helen Hayes:** [100493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) access to and (b) take up of weekly covid-19 tests for domiciliary care staff.

**Helen Whately:**

Anyone who is symptomatic can access a free test. Domiciliary care staff with symptoms can be tested for COVID-19 through the self-referral portal on the GOV.UK website.

Domiciliary care staff are not required to participate in the weekly COVID-19 testing regime for care homes as the Public Health England pilot study found that the COVID-19 prevalence among domiciliary care workers was similar to prevalence in the general population.

We will continue to review and prioritise our testing policies and develop our strategy for testing in adult social care, based on the available testing capacity and scientific advice regarding relative priorities in order to limit the spread and save lives.

**■ Influenza: Vaccination****Alex Norris:****[100518]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that NHS (a) dentists and (b) dental staff are able to access free NHS flu vaccines for winter 2020-21.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* Responsibility for offering a free flu vaccination to frontline health care workers rests with their employers, as part of their occupational health responsibility. It is recommended that National Health Service independent contractors, which include dentists, offer vaccination to their employed staff, and responsibility for this lies with employers.

Dentists, and dental staff who are in a 'at-risk' group will be eligible for a free flu vaccine under the flu programme.

**Andrew Rosindell:****[83679]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the expanded flu vaccination programme, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure extremely vulnerable people receive flu vaccinations as soon as possible.

**Jo Churchill:**

General practitioners and other NHS service providers have been asked to prioritise flu vaccination for all those who are in the defined clinically vulnerable groups documented in the national guidance. In addition, this season household contacts of those who are on the shielded patients list are also eligible for a free National Health Service vaccine to allow us to offer additional protection.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have introduced a call and recall service to ensure that all eligible individuals are aware that they can receive a free vaccination and how to access one. Alongside this, additional trained workforce is being made available to local providers to support them to access the most vulnerable patients who may be in care homes or require domiciliary visits.



## ■ Lithium: Prescriptions

**Mr David Jones:**

[\[92724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the availability of Priadel to NHS prescribers.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* Supplies of Priadel (lithium carbonate) are currently available.

The Department is aware Priadel tablets are being discontinued in April 2021, but alternative lithium products will remain available and we have worked with national mental health experts to issue guidance for healthcare professionals to support those affected.

We continue to work closely with the supplier and wholesalers to maintain the availability of Priadel and to ensure supply remains available for patients. We are aware that the supplier has quotas in place to reduce the risk of stockpiling but have confirmed that ordering mechanisms are in place to ensure all prescriptions for Priadel can access this treatment.

We have also added lithium carbonate to the parallel export restriction list (8 September 2020) to ensure supplies remain available for the United Kingdom.

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[95617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost of prescriptions for lithium carbonate to NHS mental health providers.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 September 2020]:* No estimate has been made for the cost of prescriptions for lithium carbonate to National Health Service mental health providers.

## ■ Maternity Services

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[104742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) antenatal and (b) postnatal care.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* Evidence suggests that continuity of carer can significantly improve outcomes for women and their babies. The commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan, for women to receive continuity of carer during pregnancy, during birth and postnatally, will ensure that women receive safer and more personalised maternity care, improving outcomes for both mother and baby.

It is now also a contractual requirement for general practitioners (GPs) to offer a maternal postnatal consultation at six to eight weeks after birth, as an addition to the six to eight week baby check. £12 million of new funding has been invested through the GP Contract to support all practices to deliver this. The maternal postnatal

consultation should focus on a review of the mother's physical and mental health and general wellbeing, using open questioning.

## ■ **Maternity Services: Coronavirus**

**Catherine McKinnell:**

**[101004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 23 September 2020 to Questions 90184 and 89844, what assessment his Department has made of the number of NHS trusts that still have restrictions in place on birth partners attending hospital during scans and from admittance during labour.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* The Department expects trusts to use the 'Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services' and consider as a priority how access for partners, visitors and supporters of pregnant women can be reintroduced as soon as possible whilst maintaining the safety of all service users, staff and visitors.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are assured that 100% of trusts report that they are actively using the framework as they make local decisions on visiting restrictions, based on a risk assessment.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rosie Cooper:**

**[84174]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the NHS England Chief Dental Officer responds to the letter of the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 23 June 2020 ref ZA52357.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 7 September 2020]:* The Chief Dental Officer responded on 3 September and has spoken to the hon. Member for West Lancashire.

## ■ **Mental Health: Community Centres**

**Emma Hardy:**

**[102916]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the closure of community centres on people's mental health; and what plans he has for their safe reopening.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We recognise that there is the potential impact of the pandemic on people's mental health and wellbeing. On 8 September, the Government launched a mental wellbeing campaign, this involves an extension of Public Health England's Every Mind Matters webpage and signposts to a range of support available to help people manage their mental health and wellbeing. There is also a dedicated section to support children and young people.

**■ Myeloma: Drugs**

**Mr Clive Betts:** [R] [\[103426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when assessment he has made of the timescale for the approval of lenalidomide as a maintenance drug for post stem cell transplant treatment of Myeloma.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is currently developing guidance on lenalidomide for the maintenance treatment of multiple myeloma after autologous stem cell transplantation.

NICE expects to publish final guidance on lenalidomide in January 2021.

**■ Neurofibromatosis: Health Services**

**Greg Smith:** [\[87681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the diagnosis and treatment of neurofibromatosis Type 1.

**Greg Smith:** [\[87682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the known patients with neurofibromatosis Type 1 were treated at national specialist care centres in the last 12 months.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned a national specialised service to address the healthcare needs of neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1) patients with rare complications that cause major health problems (called complex-NF1). There are two centres responsible for the diagnosis and long-term care of patients with complex NF1, which are based at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust.

These centres also provide education with the National Health Service to raise and maintain awareness of NF1 and are expected to form a relationship with local health and social care providers to help optimise any care for complex NF1 patients provided locally.

The complex NF1 service has approximately 450 patients on its caseload, however the number of patients treated in the last 12 months is not held centrally.

**Greg Smith:** [\[87684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that adequate funding is being made available for neurofibromatosis Type 1 patients.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England has commissioned a national specialised service to address the healthcare needs of neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1) patients with rare complications that cause major health problems (called complex-NF1).

NHS England has published processes on its website that set out how it decides which treatments to prioritise for funding at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/allocations/>

**■ NHS 111: Coronavirus****Sir Desmond Swayne:****[104008]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS 111 Get an isolation note service checks that applicants to that service have genuinely met one of the conditions for receiving that note; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2020]:* In order to reduce pressure on health services, employers have been advised to use their discretion about what evidence is required where an employee is absent due to COVID-19. In March 2020, the Get an Isolation Note (GaIN) service was established to support employees who need evidence for their employer to cover a period of absence due to COVID-19 and to avoid the need for them to contact their general practitioner (GP) surgery for a fit note.

Employers are able to check the authenticity of an isolation note through the verification service and should have their own absence management policies in place to deal with any issues that may arise.

GaIN has been warmly welcomed by GPs, since it has helped them to manage demand and ensure that appointments remain available for those that need a fit note for non-COVID-19 health reasons.

**■ NHS and Social Services: Coronavirus****Munira Wilson:****[82468]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to mitigate the effect of burn-out among (a) NHS staff and (b) staff in the care sector as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government recognised at the start of the pandemic the need for enhanced wellbeing support for National Health Service and social care staff. NHS England and NHS Improvement have put in place a comprehensive emotional, psychological and practical support package for NHS staff. Wherever possible we have ensured the same offer is in place for all social care staff as is in place for their colleagues in the NHS.

'We are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21', published on 30 July 2020, is an important step forward in supporting the NHS workforce. It sets out a clear strategy for supporting the NHS workforce and requires employers to invest in physical health and wellbeing and make flexible working a priority.

We will continue to work closely with the adult social care sector to improve the occupational health offer for social care workers, support mental health interventions where needed, and ensure staff have access to practical support and advice.

## ■ Parkinson's Disease: Drugs

**Mary Glendon:**

**[94417]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department last reviewed reimbursement prices for pharmaceutical companies licensed to supply entacapone only products.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 28 September 2020]:* Reimbursement prices paid to community pharmacies for dispensed medicines are reviewed on a monthly basis. For example, the reimbursement price for entacapone was recently reviewed for October. Due to fluctuations in selling prices, there is also a mechanism which allows for reimbursement prices to be reviewed in month. These reimbursement prices are referred to as concessionary prices. Entacapone 200 milligram tablets were granted a concessionary price in August.

**Mary Glendon:**

**[94418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if they will make an assessment of the potential merits for supply stabilisation of recategorising entacapone only products to category C in the NHS drugs tariff; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 28 September 2020]:* Entacapone 200 milligram (mg) tablets are currently listed in Category M of Part VIII of the Drug Tariff. Reimbursement prices of generic medicines in Category M are calculated on the basis of sales and volume data provided from manufacturers and they also include an element of medicine margin. For a product to be considered for addition to a category or to move from one category to another – the guideline criteria relevant to the category in which the product may be placed needs to be met. This is constantly kept under review for all products listed in the Drug Tariff including entacapone 200mg tablets.

## ■ Perinatal Mortality: Health Services

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[104743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available for (a) women and (b) partners who have experienced pregnancy loss or baby loss; what steps his Department is taking to improve (i) funding for, (ii) provision of and (iii) access to support services for those who have experienced such losses; and what assessment he

has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on access to support services for pregnancy loss and baby loss for (A) women and (B) their partners.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* The Government has funded the Stillbirths and Neonatal Death charity (Sands) to work with other baby loss charities and Royal Colleges to produce and support the roll-out of a National Bereavement Care Pathway. The pathway covers a range of circumstances of a baby loss including miscarriage, stillbirth, termination of pregnancy for medical reasons, neonatal death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

The Government announced £4.2 million of additional funding to mental health charities and charities providing bereavement support during the COVID-19 pandemic and is taking a cross-Government approach to assess what is needed to help ensure that families and friends of those deceased get the support they need.

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[104770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available to mothers who suffer baby loss; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* Support is available for parents who suffer baby loss through the National Bereavement Care Pathway. The pathway covers a range of circumstances of a baby loss including miscarriage, stillbirth, termination of pregnancy for medical reasons, neonatal death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

■ **Pharmacy: Coronavirus**

**Holly Mumby-Croft:**

[\[100564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with community pharmacies on Government support for their services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and I meet regularly with key stakeholders to determine the impact of COVID-19.

In respect of stakeholders representing community pharmacy, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I have hosted regular meetings with a wide range of primary care stakeholders, including the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, to discuss the pressures community pharmacies are facing and what further support they need to be able to support patients in their communities.

I will be hosting further meetings with community pharmacy stakeholders shortly to discuss winter planning, further rises in COVID-19 infections and the implications for community pharmacy and their communities. I visited a community pharmacy on 22 September to discuss the role of community pharmacists and their teams in supporting patients during COVID-19.

## ■ Prescription Drugs

**Cat Smith:** [\[95680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prescriptions for (a) benzodiazepines, (b) z drugs and (c) antidepressants were issued in the last year.

**Jo Churchill:**

The following table shows the number of prescription items prescribed in England in the last year for benzodiazepines, z drugs and antidepressants.

DRUG GROUP	ITEMS
Antidepressants	77,610,982
Benzodiazepines	9,081,258
Z Drugs	5,767,191

**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[96083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost of prescribing waste to the NHS in each of the last five years; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce prescribing waste.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* No such assessment has been made.

## ■ Prescription Drugs: Misuse

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[96782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of deaths which are primarily caused by excess of prescription drugs.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* A number of measures are in place to reduce death and harm from unnecessary medicines. Healthcare professionals are advised to take an approach known as medicines optimisation to their prescribing practice. Medicines optimisation focuses on patients and their experiences: the goal is to help patients to improve their outcomes, take their medicines as intended, avoid taking unnecessary medicines, reduce wastage of medicines and improve medicines safety. Medicines optimisation is a key workstream within NHS England's Medicines Value Programme, which aims to improve outcomes, quality and value from the investment made in medicines.



## ■ Prostate Cancer: Olaparib

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[96896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Olaparib will be made available for the treatment of prostate cancer on the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is currently developing technology appraisal guidance on olaparib for previously treated, hormone-relapsed metastatic prostate cancer with homologous recombination repair gene mutations. The first committee meeting is scheduled to take place on November 2020, with publication of guidance expected on February 2021.

If recommended, the Cancer Drugs Fund will provide interim funding from the point that the positive draft guidance is published. Commissioners have a statutory responsibility to make funding available for a drug or treatment no later than 90 calendar days (30 calendar days for cancer medicines) after the guidance is published, unless otherwise specified.

## ■ Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[92759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the funding allocations for the replacement of NHS linear accelerator radiotherapy machines (a) was for the financial year 2019-20 and (b) is for the financial year (i) 2021-22 and (ii) 2022-23.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* Future National Health Service capital funding will be determined as part of the Department's multi-year settlement at the next Spending Review.

## ■ Rare Diseases: Drugs

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[92777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many times a medicine for a rare disease, not eligible for the HST process, has received a conditional approval for reimbursement based on a managed access agreement or similar.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has made recommendations on two medicines for rare diseases through a managed access agreement that were not eligible for the evaluation through the highly specialised technologies process.

These are:

- Belimumab (Benlysta) for treating active autoantibody-positive systemic lupus erythematosus [TA397] published 22 June 2016; and
- Nusinersen (Spinraza) for treating spinal muscular atrophy [TA588] published on 24 July 2019.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Kate Osamor:**

**[100502]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a centralised database is being used by Public Health England to record the information provided to them by schools who report positive cases of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

Local Health Protection Teams record COVID-19 clusters or outbreaks reported to them by schools on HPZone – a web-portal used for case and outbreak management. Nationally, Public Health England reports on the number of suspected and confirmed clusters and outbreaks linked to schools in the weekly surveillance report, available to view at the following link:

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

## ■ Social Services: Employment

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[93644]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the nationality of people employed in care work sector in each year since 2015.

**Jo Churchill:**

Skills for Care collects data on the nationality of people employed in adult social care in England. The following table details the nationality trends from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
All job roles	1,320,000	1,330,000	1,340,000	1,355,000	1,370,000
British	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
European Union	6%	7%	7%	8%	8%
Non-EU	11%	10%	9%	10%	10%

Source: Skills for Care's adult social care workforce estimates 2014/15 to 2018/19.

## ■ Sodium Valproate: Prescriptions

**Caroline Nokes:**

**[96853]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prescriptions for sodium valproate have been issued since 8 July 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

The following table shows the number of items for the chemical substance of sodium valproate which includes generic and equivalent brands for all presentations, dispensed in the community in England and submitted to the NHS Business Services

Authority for reimbursement in the month of July 2020. This is the latest period for which data is currently available. We are unable to provide data for the exact time period, since 8 July.

MONTH	ITEMS FOR SODIUM VALPROATE
July 2020	210,310

## ■ Spina Bifida: Surgery

**Mary Glendon:**

[\[103512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many unborn babies have received surgery for open spina bifida; and how much money has been spent on those surgeries since the introduction of the open spina bifida surgery in 2018.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS Digital data collection for open repair of spina bifida in a fetus was introduced from 1 April 2020. However, finalised Hospital Episode Statistics data is only available up to March 2020, so we are unable to provide this information.

NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned a United Kingdom-wide 'Open fetal surgery to treat foetuses with open spina bifida' service since November 2019. Since the start of the service to the end of July 2020, surgery has been undertaken on 13 unborn babies and the total cost of these surgeries was £164,021.

## ■ Surgery: Coronavirus

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[96207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of elective surgeries that have been postponed or cancelled during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps he plans to take to support NHS trusts to resume those procedures.

**Edward Argar:**

The data requested is not held centrally.

## ■ Urinary Tract Infections

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[\[94467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of catheter acquired urinary tract infections which develop into a gram negative bloodstream infection; and if he will make a statement.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

[\[94468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of catheter acquired urinary tract infections on (a)

antimicrobial resistance and (b) antibiotic over-prescription; and if he will make a statement.

**Kevin Hollinrake:**

**[94470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to World Patient Safety Day 2020, what steps his Department is taking to improve the (a) tracking and (b) prevention of catheter acquired urinary tract infections; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England's (PHE's) continuous routine laboratory surveillance does not include device use or procedures associated with urinary infections, such as urinary catheters. Therefore, no estimate has been made of the number of catheter-acquired urinary tract infections (CAUTIs) which develop into a gram-negative bloodstream infection.

No assessment has been made on the effect of CAUTIs on antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic over-prescription.

However, PHE's English surveillance programme for antimicrobial utilisation and resistance (ESPAUR) is working with the National Health Service and across sectors, to develop and maintain surveillance systems for monitoring trends in antimicrobial use and resistance in England. Further details are available in the ESPAUR report 2018-19 at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-surveillance-programme-antimicrobial-utilisation-and-resistance-espaur-report>

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Alcoholic Drinks: Minimum Prices

**Derek Thomas:**

**[103593]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a minimum price for alcohol.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government continues to monitor the impact of minimum unit alcohol pricing in Scotland and Wales as it emerges. Minimum unit pricing has been in place in Scotland for less than two years. The Scottish Parliament will not consider its extension until April 2024.

### ■ Disclosure and Barring Service: Reform

**John Spellar:**

**[105288]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to implement the reforms to the Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure rules.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government expects to implement the changes to the disclosure rules before the end of the year, following Parliament's approval of the legislation and the necessary operational changes within the Disclosure and Barring Service.

We remain committed to implement these changes to balance the rights of the individual to move on with their lives and move away from their past offending whilst continuing to support effective protection for children and vulnerable adults.

**■ Factories: Conditions of Employment****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[104116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the level of labour exploitation in garment factories in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[104117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will introduce a fit to trade licensing scheme to tackle labour exploitation in garment factories.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government is committed to tackling labour exploitation and protecting workers' rights. We have taken a number of steps to deal with the issues in the textiles sector and take this issue very seriously. In light of the very concerning recent allegations of illegal and unsafe working conditions for garment workers in Leicester, a multi-agency Taskforce, led by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) has been established to enable the relevant enforcement bodies to work together at pace, to take appropriate action against unscrupulous employers and individuals who exploit workers.

We are also working in partnership with the industry through the Apparel and General Merchandise Public and Private Protocol, a partnership between enforcement bodies and industry partners - including, the British Retail Consortium, UK Fashion and the Textile Association – aimed at tackling all forms of labour exploitation in the garment industry. Given the serious nature of the allegations in Leicester and the spectrum of labour market non-compliance issues that have been raised, it is imperative that we have a strong evidence base to inform the options we are considering to protect vulnerable workers and drive up standards. The Government will continue to work closely with the taskforce to consider the most appropriate measures to tackle labour exploitation in this sector.

The Government is committed to improving enforcement of employment rights. We have announced the intention to introduce a Single Enforcement Body, which will provide a clearer route for workers to raise a complaint and get support, enabling more coordinated enforcement action and the use of pooled intelligence to better target proactive enforcement. The public consultation on the establishment of the

new Single Enforcement Body included questions on extending licensing to other high-risk sectors. We will publish a response to this consultation in due course.

## ■ Fixed Penalties

**Ellie Reeves:**

[103605]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the number of cases issued under a fixed penalty notice in (a) 2020, (b) 2019, (c) 2018, (d) 2017, (e) 2016 and (f) 2015.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office routinely collects and publishes data on the number of recorded Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued by the police in England and Wales for motoring offences. These data are published as part of the annual 'Police Powers and Procedures' statistical bulletin and can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/841256/fixed-penalty-notices-police-powers-procedures-mar19-hosb2519-tables.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/841256/fixed-penalty-notices-police-powers-procedures-mar19-hosb2519-tables.ods).

The National Police Chiefs' Council has been regularly publishing the number of FPNs issued by the police in England and Wales for breaches of the public health regulations that have been introduced this year to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19). The latest published information can be found here:

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/crime-is-close-to-pre-lockdown-levels-and-fines-given-to-the-public-rise-as-new-regulations-are-introduced-1>

The Home Office does not collect information on FPNs issued by other public bodies, such as local authorities, who have powers to issue them with respect to anti-social behaviour, environmental breaches and parking offences.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Owen Thompson:**

[105449]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will provide physical proof of settled and pre-settled status to EU Citizens who have applied successfully to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave to PQ 48558 on 20 May 2020.

## ■ Immigration: Windrush Generation

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[75445]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 January 2020 to Question 1928 on Immigration: Windrush Generation, when she plans to make the first compensation payments; and how much funding her Department has allocated to that scheme.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

**[75446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 July 2019 to Question 276275 on Immigration: Windrush Generation, if she will publish data on the time taken between a person submitting a claim to the Windrush compensation scheme and a decision being made on that claim.

**Priti Patel:**

I apologise for the delay in responding to this question, which was due to a departmental administrative error.

Information on the total number of claims paid and the overall amount paid out by the scheme is available to view on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-september-2020>.

Information relating to estimated costs including compensation payments are referred to in the Home Office's Impact Assessment IA No: HO 0329 dated 29/1/20. The Home Office has secured funding from HM Treasury for the scheme, and there is no cap on the amount of compensation an individual can receive.

We do not publish information on waiting times for decisions to be taken on Windrush Compensation Scheme claims. This could jeopardise a full assessment of the claim and ultimately be potentially detrimental to the claimant. Furthermore, as each claim is unique, we do not prescribe a set list of documentation but work with claimants to obtain evidence when required.

## ■ Knives: Safety

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[103451]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answers of 10 September 2020 to Question 85969 and 14 October 2020 to Question 100312, if she will take steps with knife (a) manufacturers and (b) retailers to change the design of kitchen knives to replace pointed ends with rounded ends.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We know that knives are used for legitimate purposes by the vast majority of people. Bladed articles with pointed ends have legitimate uses and are often needed for a wide range of purposes, including as tools for work for instance in farming or fishing and in private such as in the household for use during cooking. While we are always ready to engage with manufacturers and retailers to help ensure public safety, it is important that the government strikes the right balance between allowing access to knives for legitimate reasons, with the need to protect the public from dangerous weapons. We believe the current legislation strikes the right balance. We will, however, continue to do everything we can to ensure that people do not carry dangerous weapons and commit violent crime in the first place.



This is why we have invested £176.5 million over two years in preventing serious violence in local communities and bolstering police capacity to respond to serious violent crimes when they do occur.

It is also why we have launched a consultation on new powers for the police to target those who have been convicted of knife related offences. We will also be piloting new Knife Crime Prevention Orders, introduced through the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. These new preventative orders will provide an additional tool for police to steer people away from serious violence.

## ■ Police: Coronavirus

**Matt Western:**

[\[104163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of police resources during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government has been clear that it will provide police forces with the support they need to continue protecting the public and keeping communities safe through the coronavirus pandemic.

The Government is taking steps to mitigate forces' COVID-19 related financial pressures. It is reimbursing all their additional expenditure on medical-grade personal protective equipment between 27 February and 27 July, and has launched an income loss recovery scheme for Police and Crime Commissioners to claim a proportion of their budgeted income on sales, fees and charges in 2020/21 lost due to the coronavirus.

On 8 October the Government announced an additional £30m for police forces in England and Wales to step up their enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions through the autumn and winter months.

The department continues to work closely with the policing sector to monitor and make decisions on their current and future funding needs.

## ■ Police: Stop and Search

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[105509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to ensure that data is collated on police (a) traffic stops and (b) vehicle searches.

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[105510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to ensure that data is collated on the ethnicity of those involved in police (a) traffic stops and (b) vehicle searches.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office already collates data on vehicle searches as part of the stop and search data collection.

In 2018/19, there were a total of 8,041 vehicle stops, with 7,949 stops under Section 1 of PACE and its associated legislation, and 92 stops under Section 60 of CJPOA. Data was published in 'Police powers and procedures, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2019', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019>.

The Home Office collects ethnicity data on all stop and searches of an individual, under Section 1 of PACE and its associated legislation and Section 60 of CJPOA. Additionally, data is collected on the number of searches of unattended vehicles. It is not possible from the data currently collected to identify the ethnicity of those involved in vehicle searches. Overall ethnicity data on stop and search was published in 'Police powers and procedures, England and Wales year ending 31 March 2019', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019>.

Figures for the year ending 31 March 2020 will be published on 27 October 2020.

There are currently no plans to require police forces to collect data for vehicle stops under section 163 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

## ■ Visas: Foreign Nationals

**Allan Dorans:**

[103625]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to extend the visas of foreign nationals stranded in the UK due to travel restrictions during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has put in place measures for visa customers both in the UK and overseas to help during the Covid-19 outbreak and will continue to monitor the situation. The latest information and guidance for customers is available on GOV.UK:

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

It confirms if you intend to leave the UK but have not been able to do so and you have a visa or leave which expires between 1 September and 31 October 2020, you may request additional time to stay, also known as 'exceptional assurance', by contacting the coronavirus immigration team (CIT).

The UK Government is committed to supporting the most vulnerable and is closely monitoring the Covid-19 situation worldwide. Policy decisions will be taken as needed based on how the situation develops.

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION****■ House of Commons Chamber: Coronavirus****Alan Brown:**[\[103575\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment has been made of the potential merits of reconstructing the Commons Chamber to facilitate social distancing in the event of future coronavirus outbreaks.

**Pete Wishart:**

Strategic steers have been provided to the Sponsor Body by the management boards at the beginning of lockdown around longer-term work that may be required. These made reference to future coronavirus outbreaks or similar events, but further work is still required. The strategic review is seeking to validate the underlying assumptions.

**■ Richmond House: Coronavirus****Alan Brown:**[\[103574\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment has been made of the adequacy of the design of the proposed temporary chamber in Richmond House to facilitate social distancing measures in the event of future coronavirus outbreaks.

**Pete Wishart:**

The design for Richmond House as a temporary Commons Chamber has been paused. The House of Commons Commission has taken the decision to use Richmond House as temporary accommodation for Members and their staff.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Derelict Land: Wolverhampton****Jane Stevenson:**[\[105546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the amount of brownfield land in the Wolverhampton local authority area.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The National Planning Policy Framework defines brownfield as 'previously developed land'. Our latest statistics, *Land Use in England, 2018*, show that 44.7 per cent of City of Wolverhampton Council's area is brownfield land.

It is for each local authority to consider how best the land in its area should be used, and plan accordingly, and to identify and publish in its Brownfield Register those sites it finds suitable for housing-led redevelopment.

## ■ Evictions: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[105419]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of evictions that were prevented between 27 March and 20 September 2020 as a result of the suspension of ongoing housing possession actions.

**Christopher Pincher:**

This Government took urgent and necessary steps in the immediate face of a public health emergency to suspend housing possession action in the county courts between 27 March 2020 until 20 September 2020. This meant that neither cases in the system nor any about to go into it could progress to the stage at which someone could be legally evicted from their home. The latest government statistics for the period between April to June 2020 show that, as a result of the stay on possession proceedings, there were no bailiff repossessions recorded during this time.

The suspension of possession proceedings ended on 20 September 2020 and landlords are now able to advance their possession claims through the courts. The judiciary will look to prioritise the most serious cases including anti-social behaviour, fraud and egregious rent arrears. We have published guidance on the possession action process which includes new rules to protect tenants and new processes and procedures which landlords need to follow.

To further protect renters over winter, we have legislated to increase notice periods to 6 months in all but the most serious circumstances and we have asked bailiffs not to carry out evictions in a four week period over Christmas or in areas where gatherings are not allowed in homes. Bailiffs should not carry out evictions in tier 2 (high) and tier 3 (very high) local COVID alert areas, and we will keep this under review.

These measures build on the Government's major economic package of support including assistance for businesses to pay wages; boosting the welfare safety-net by more than £9 billion; increasing Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile; and providing £180 million funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, for local authorities to distribute to support renters needing additional help.

## ■ Homelessness

**Jon Trickett:**

**[104041]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many people were recorded as (a) homeless or (b) rough sleeping on (i) 1 March 2020 and (ii) 1 October 2020.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The most recent national rough sleeping data is the 2019 annual statistics, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2019>.

The most recent homelessness statistics cover the period from January to March 2020 and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>.

## ■ Homelessness: Veterans

**Sarah Atherton:**

**[105617]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent statistics he has on the number of homeless people with a military background.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Our veterans have played a vital role in keeping our country safe and we owe them a duty to ensure they are provided with all the support they need to successfully adjust back into civilian life.

The annual Statutory Homeless Release for April 2019 to March 2020 showed that of the total number of households assessed as owed a homelessness duty, 0.7 per cent had a support need relating to having served in Her Majesty's armed forces.

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires certain public authorities to refer members of the regular forces in England they consider to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days to a local housing authority, with the individual's consent. A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular armed forces has a priority need for accommodation. Former members of the armed forces will include a person who was previously a member of the regular naval, military or air forces.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Helen Hayes:**

**[103587]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's response to the e-petition entitled Free leaseholders trapped in new build properties by post-Grenfell EWS1 form and the statement in that response that building owners and managing agents should also make available relevant information to residents, lenders and potential buyers, what (a) content that information should provide and (b) form that information should take.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Not all lenders request an EWS1 and we are encouraging lenders to accept a broader range of evidence to assure themselves of a building's safety. This could include a fire risk assessment that includes external walls, a recent building control certificate, or other assurances of the building's safety the building owner can provide.

## ■ Night Shelters: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[105420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's announcement of 13 October 2020 on COVID-19: provision of night shelters, what steps the Government is taking to help support shelters which are not financially viable for re-opening with fewer guests during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* On 13 October, the Government announced additional support for rough sleepers this winter, giving local areas the tools they need to protect people from cold weather and the risks posed by COVID-19.

Building on the £6.4 billion already given to councils to help them manage the impacts of COVID-19, this announcement includes a new £10 million Cold Weather Fund for local areas to bring forward COVID-secure accommodation. This is in addition to the new £2 million Transformation Fund for the faith, community and voluntary groups to help them provide secure accommodation for rough sleepers.

Alongside this, comprehensive guidance to the sector, produced with Public Health England and Homeless Link, has been published to help them open shelters more safely in situations where this decision needs to be taken and where not doing so would endanger lives.

We have allocated £91.5 million to Local Authorities from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and have a £161 million fund this year to bring forward long term accommodation for rough sleepers.

## ■ Permitted Development Rights: Coronavirus

**James Wild:**

[\[104194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward a statutory instrument to extend the additional 28 day permitted development period for the use of land for any purpose provided under the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development and Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 beyond 31 December 2020.

**Christopher Pincher:**

These time-limited measures were introduced to support businesses and communities during the COVID-19 crisis. We continue to keep temporary rights under review.

## ■ Planning Permission

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[103592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on (a) ensuring contractors are not able to start work on site without evidence of a planning approval notice and (b) seeking consent from all landowners affected by the application to be given before starting work.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Local planning authorities have a range of planning enforcement powers to address unauthorised development, including where development has commenced in breach of appropriate planning permission, for example, before the discharge of pre-commencement conditions. It is the case that the grant of planning permission has no effect on the ownership of the land, and that obtaining planning permission does not automatically mean a development can go ahead. In particular, development cannot proceed without the agreement of the relevant owners.

**■ Property Development: Taxation**

**Rushanara Ali:** [\[103530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the financial implications for local authorities of removing section 106 payments.

**Rushanara Ali:** [\[103531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how his Department plans to ensure that the proposed new levy on developers raises at least as much value as is currently captured through the Community Infrastructure Levy and section 106 payments.

**Rushanara Ali:** [\[103532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is his policy that local authorities will be able to determine the new infrastructure levy on developers; and at what level he plans to set the value-based minimum threshold for that levy.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We intend to reform the current approach to developer contributions by creating a new, single system, the Infrastructure Levy. This new levy would be a flat rate, value based charge, set nationally, at either a single rate, or at area specific rates, and charged on the final value of a development.

We will aim for the new Levy to raise more revenue than under the current system of developer contributions. Our proposals are set out in our White Paper 'Planning for the Future' which was published on 6 August and is out to consultation until 29 October. The consultation responses will support the assessment of the proposals, and detailed design.

**■ Repossession Orders: Coronavirus**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[105300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to extend the suspension on house repossession.



**Christopher Pincher:**

The suspension of possession proceedings ended on 20 September 2020 and possession claims are now being actioned by the courts. The Government has introduced measures which strike the right balance so that landlords are able to access justice, alongside protections for vulnerable renters.

We have worked with the judiciary to put in place new court arrangements that seek to ensure appropriate support to all parties within the current statutory framework. To further protect renters over winter, we have legislated to increase notice periods to 6 months in all but the most serious circumstances and asked bailiffs not to carry out evictions in a four week period over Christmas or in areas where gatherings are not allowed in homes. Bailiffs should not carry out evictions in tier 2 (high) and tier 3 (very high) local COVID alert areas, and we will keep this under review.

These measures build on the Government's major economic package of support including assistance for businesses to pay wages; boosting the welfare safety-net by more than £9 billion; increasing Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile; and providing £180 million funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, for local authorities to distribute to support renters needing additional help.

**■ Sleeping Rough****Jon Trickett:**[\[104042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to Government funding for winter 2019 of £13 million for the Cold Weather Fund for rough sleepers, for what reason the Government is providing £12 million to keep rough sleepers safe during winter 2020.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

On 13 October, the Government announced additional support for rough sleepers this winter, giving local areas the tools they need to protect people from cold weather and the risks posed by COVID-19. This 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; and, a new £2 million Transformation Fund for the faith, communities and voluntary sector to move away from their traditional communal models. Regarding communal spaces, we have published operating principles for the sector, produced with Public Health England and Homeless Link, which should be observed in any area where a shelter is required to open as a last resort, where not doing so would endanger lives.

**■ Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[105418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what financial and other support he is providing to local authorities to enable them to provide self-contained accommodation to rough sleepers during winter 2020-21.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* On 17 September MHCLG announced that £91.5 million had been allocated to 274 councils in England for the short-term funding aspect of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, to help vulnerable people housed during the pandemic, and throughout the winter period.

On 13 October, we announced a further £10 million Cold Weather Fund for local areas to bring forward self-contained and COVID secure accommodation this winter, and £2 million funding for the faith, communities and voluntary sector to make available self-contained and COVID secure accommodation. Alongside this, comprehensive guidance to the sector, produced with input from Public Health England, Housing Justice and Homeless Link, has been published to help them open shelters more safely in situations where this decision needs to be taken, as a last resort and where not doing so would endanger lives.

This is on top of Government's commitment to support up to 6,000 rough sleepers into longer term accommodation, with 3,300 units of this accommodation becoming available in 2020/2021. Homes England, in partnership with MHCLG, have pledged to work hand-in-hand with leading Housing Associations and local authorities to deliver this.

Taken together, the overall amount Government is spending on rough sleeping and homelessness this year is over £700 million.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[105325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to her written statement on Trade Update, Official Report, cols 32-34WS, what the different circumstances and reasons were for the Saudi-led coalition's (a) 2016 air strike on the Al-Wehdah school and (b) repeated air strikes on schools in Taz in Yemen over the past five years which led her to conclude that these were isolated incidents not constituting a pattern of violations of international humanitarian law.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

As part of the overall assessment under Criterion 2c, we have considered whether there were any patterns or trends across past incidents. In considering whether there are patterns or trends arising from those incidents that are assessed to be possible violations of IHL, particular consideration is given to whether there are similarities in the factual nature of the incidents, the reasons/explanations for them and the timescale in which they occurred. The conclusion was that these incidents did not indicate patterns of non-compliance or systemic weaknesses.

The assessment of whether it is 'possible' that an incident constituted a breach of international humanitarian law uses all available sources of information, including

some that are necessarily confidential and sensitive. Accordingly, we are unable to go into the details of individual assessments.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to her written statement on Trade Update, Official Report, cols 32-34WS, what the different circumstances and reasons were for the Saudi-led coalition's repeated air strikes on farms, rural markets, agricultural land and fishing boats documented in Yemen from 2015-18 by Dr Martha Mundy of the London School of Economics which led her to conclude that these were isolated incidents not constituting a pattern indicating the deliberate targeting of food as an object indispensable to the survival of the civilian population prohibited under international humanitarian law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to her written statement on Trade Update, Official Report, cols 32-34WS, what the different circumstances and reasons were for the Saudi-led coalition's (a) 16 December 2018 strike on a tanker transporting fresh water for a village in Wahbyia and (b) repeated air strikes on wells, bottling plants, tankers, and other water infrastructure in Yemen which led her to conclude that these were isolated incidents not constituting a pattern indicating the deliberate targeting of food as an object indispensable to the survival of the civilian population prohibited under international humanitarian law.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

I refer the Rt Hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 22nd October, UIN:105325.

■ **Department for International Trade: Pay**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[100329\]](#)

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

**Greg Hands:**

The biggest pay rise given to employees in percentage and cash terms over the last 12 months for the Department for International Trade (DIT), including UK Export Finance (UKEF), is in the table below. Figures have been rounded to the nearest £100 to protect individual's identities.

	(A) HIGHEST PERCENTAGE	(B) HIGHEST CASH VALUE
DIT	21%	£15,900
UKEF	29.6%	£11,700

For DIT, the pay increase was the consequence of a SCS1 (Deputy Director) being promoted to SCS2 (Director) via fair and open competition in line with the Civil

Service Recruitment Principles and moving to the band minima of their new grade. The Civil Service pay range for SCS2 with effect from 1 April 2020 is £93,000 - £162,500.

For UKEF, the pay increase was the result of an employee at the minimum of their existing pay band being promoted to the minimum pay of the next pay band.

#### ■ Department for International Trade: Private Education

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much funding her Department allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund school places (a) overseas and (b) in the UK in 2019-20; and how many school places that funding supported in total.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) does not hold the information requested.

Whilst working overseas, terms and conditions of DIT employees, including those relating to the Continuity of Education Allowance, are administered by the Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on our behalf.

### JUSTICE

#### ■ Child Arrangements Orders

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[105430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that women on low incomes are able to access legal aid in cases where a child arrangement order has been breached.

**Alex Chalk:**

Legal aid is available for certain specific private family law proceedings, including a breach of a child arrangement order (CAO), where a child is a party to those proceedings or where there is evidence of domestic violence or child abuse. The Government ensures that legal aid is available for victims of domestic abuse in all private family proceedings subject to evidence requirements and statutory means and merits criteria being met. In April 2020 we laid an SI to widen the acceptable forms of evidence of domestic abuse.

In June 2020 we published the 'Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases' and our Implementation Plan in which we committed to a number of measures that aim to improve the outcomes for those who go through private law children proceedings, especially those who are most vulnerable. The Domestic Abuse Bill focusses on further improving the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Bill completed its Commons stage on 6 July 2020. The Post-Implementation Review of LASPO (PIR), published in February 2019, also considered the impact of LASPO on

victims of domestic abuse. In the Legal Support Action Plan, published alongside the PIR, we announced a review of the legal aid means tests, including a commitment to specifically considering the impact of the means test on victims of domestic abuse. This review will report in Spring 2021, at which point we will publish a full consultation paper setting out our future policy proposals in this area.

## ■ Children: Maintenance

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[\[105547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on waiting times for Child Maintenance Service appeals.

**Chris Philp:**

The latest period for which data about appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) are available is January to March 2020 which predates the pandemic.

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics).

The most recent tribunal statistics publication covering the period April to June 2020 does not include SSCS data due to issues identified as the Tribunal was being migrated to a new operational system. The data will be made available as soon as this is resolved and the data quality assured.

Appeals to the SSCS Tribunal have continued to be heard in line with government guidance throughout the pandemic. Telephone hearings and the use of other hearing technology have been used to facilitate as many hearings as possible being held remotely.

In addition to holding remote hearings in all regions, appeals may also be decided by judges sitting alone in chambers, using the evidence before them in the case papers.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service has also introduced safety measures so that face to face hearings can be held for any cases which cannot be decided on the papers or heard remotely.

The decision as to how a hearing is conducted is a matter for the judge, who will determine how best to uphold the interests of justice. In considering the suitability of video/audio hearings to replace face to face hearings, judges will consider matters such as the nature of the dispute at stake and any issues the use of video/audio technology may present for participants in the hearing, having regard to individuals' needs.

## ■ Crime: Children

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[105461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many minors were found not guilty through successful use of a Section 45 defence under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in each year in the last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Information on the use of the defence under section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 is not held in the court proceedings database so these cases cannot be separately identified.

The Government is acting to tackle modern slavery, ensuring that victims are supported to rebuild their lives, and the criminals and perpetrators of slavery face justice for their crimes and activities. On the 19th of October 2020 the Government published the Modern Slavery Annual Report 2020 which sets out the world-leading action of the UK Government, Scottish Government, and Northern Ireland Executive over the last year to tackle modern slavery. The Modern Slavery Annual Report 2020 can be accessed here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/927111/FINAL-2020\\_Modern\\_Slavery\\_Report\\_14-10-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927111/FINAL-2020_Modern_Slavery_Report_14-10-20.pdf)

**■ Criminal Legal Aid Review****Andy Slaughter:****[105311]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to announce the Chair of part two of the Criminal Legal Aid Review.

**Alex Chalk:**

We are working closely with stakeholders, including the criminal defence representative bodies, to ensure that the Independent Review is set up as quickly as possible and that we appoint the right chair and advisory panel so that the review can deliver a robust, evidence-based assessment of the criminal legal aid market.

This means ensuring that the chair of the review has the right skillset, expertise and experience. At present, we are working to identify and appoint the right candidate for the role and will say more in due course.

**Andy Slaughter:****[105312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when part two of the Criminal Legal Aid Review is planned to conclude.

**Rehman Chishti:****[106322]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the timeframe is for the conclusion of the Criminal Legal Aid Review Part 2.

**Alex Chalk:**

We are working to ensure that the next phase of the Criminal Legal Aid Review is set up as quickly as possible and are planning for the Independent Review to conclude in 2021. However, this timeframe will be subject to the agreement of the Chair, once appointed. We will seek to confirm the timeframe at the launch of the Independent Review.

## ■ Debt Collection: Coronavirus

**Karl Turner:**

[R] [\[105355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether enforcement agent home visits will continue in regions placed in (a) Tier 2 and (b) Tier 3 during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government is clear that enforcement activity must be conducted safely and in accordance with the public health measures in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

Currently, enforcement agents should not enter residential properties in areas that are classified as Local Alert Level 2 (high) or 3 (very high), for the purposes of enforcement. This position has been set out in HMCTS operational guidance for County Court bailiffs and by the Lord Chancellor in correspondence to the enforcement trade associations. The Government is keeping the approach under review.

## ■ Domestic Abuse

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[105531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of potential barriers to justice encountered by survivors of domestic violence since the implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012; and whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to improve access to justice for that group.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[105532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of whether the implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 has caused an unintended bias in access to justice in favour of the abuser rather than the victim.

**Alex Chalk:**

Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO), legal aid remains available for private family matters where there is evidence of domestic abuse or child abuse. The Post-Implementation Review of LASPO (PIR), published in February 2019, considered the impact of LASPO on victims of domestic abuse. In the Legal Support Action Plan, published alongside the PIR, we announced a review of the legal aid means tests, including a commitment to specifically considering the impact of the means test on victims of domestic abuse. This review will report in Spring 2021, at which point we will publish a full consultation paper setting out our future policy proposals in this area.

The government is absolutely clear that victims of domestic abuse must have access to the help that they need. The Government's report 'Assessing Risk of Harm to Children and Parents in Private Law Children Cases' published on 19 June 2019



further outlines an unwavering commitment to ensure domestic abuse survivors are better protected. This report acted as a springboard for further actions we are taking to protect and support domestic abuse victims and their children. The Domestic Abuse Bill has allowed us to enable the immediate changes called for in the report, creating a statutory definition of domestic abuse working to ensure that victims are protected and supported.

We recognise that victims of domestic abuse may need legal aid quickly in emergency situations, so there is already an eligibility cap waiver in place, which means that an applicant for a protective injunction may be eligible for legal aid even if they have income or capital above the thresholds in the means test, though they may have to pay a financial contribution towards their legal costs. In addition, we are providing £800,000 funding to the FLOWS project, run by RCJ Advice, who provide free legal support to victims of domestic abuse who wish to apply for an injunction from the courts.

#### ■ Domestic Abuse: Legal Aid Scheme

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[105533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many survivors of domestic violence have been ineligible for legal aid due to the capital means test since the implementation of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

**Alex Chalk:**

Legal aid is available to obtain an injunction to protect survivors of domestic violence, and this is not subject to any upper capital means limit; applicants cannot be found ineligible for this form of support.

Save for the above, whether someone is a survivor of domestic violence is not recorded for types of legal aid for other categories of law, eligibility for which would be subject to the applicable means and merits tests.

Some capital may be 'disregarded' for means assessment purposes in civil matters, for example to take into account equity in an applicant's home, their outstanding mortgage, and instances where the property is in dispute. The first £3,000 of capital held (after all relevant 'disregards' have been applied) is also not assessed by the Legal Aid Agency in matters of civil law.

#### ■ Remand in Custody: Young People

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[105459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to improve the timeliness for young people on remand being informed of trial dates.

**Lucy Frazer:**

As part of the COVID recovery, the Judiciary has set the criteria for the prioritisation of hearings across all jurisdictions which includes Youth cases especially where delay might mean a relevant age-threshold was crossed.

If the court remands a young person in Youth Detention Accommodation following an appearance before the Youth Court and retains jurisdiction to hear the case, it will try to take a plea at the first hearing of the case. If that plea is not guilty, the court will endeavour to list for trial within 56 days. Youth cases are listed as a matter of priority, particularly those cases where a young person is remanded either into a custodial establishment or into the care of the local authority. As part of recovery planning, outstanding youth cases are monitored closely to ensure they are listed as expeditiously as possible.

Where a young person is sent to the Crown Court for trial, the Crown Court will, if possible, take a plea at the initial Plea and Trial Preparation Hearing (PTPH) and, if the plea is not guilty, the judge can fix the date of the trial at that hearing. Listing is a judicial decision. If the young person is remanded into Youth Detention Accommodation by the Crown Court, custody time limits will apply, and the court will prioritise the listing of the case for trial. Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is currently developing a review of the end to end management of youth cases which aims to identify opportunities for further improvement.

#### ■ Youth Offending Teams: Coronavirus

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[105460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to develop specific training and employment opportunities to help people in the cohort of youth offending teams to tackle the economic effect on those people of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Government recognises the importance of employment and training in helping young people turn their lives around and that Covid-19 brings new challenges in securing employment.

On the 8 September 2020, the Youth Justice Board alongside the Youth Futures Foundation hosted a workshop with a range of stakeholders on improving options for employment and training for Black, Asian and minority ethnic children and care leavers in the youth justice system. This event aimed to explore practical solutions and opportunities for training and employment for children and young people, recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on this group. The Youth Justice Board will consider the findings of this workshop.

#### LEADER OF THE HOUSE

#### ■ Parliamentary Proceedings: Coronavirus

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[105448\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what recent assessment he has made of the level of health and safety risk posed by Members travelling to Parliament to take part in parliamentary proceedings that are physical-only.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

The Government guidance is clear that you can continue to travel into or out of Local COVID Alert Level: Very High and High areas, if you need to for work, school, or caring responsibilities, or where doing so is necessary as part of a longer journey. This guidance applies equally to Members of Parliament whose constituencies are in High and Very High Alert Level areas and to Members of the House of Lords. Similarly, guidance issued by the Scottish and Welsh Governments and Northern Ireland Executive also allows for travel for work purposes.

All Members must wear face coverings where mandated on public transport and I would encourage all to follow the government's guidance on this and other measures such as social distancing.

**Virtual Proceedings****Owen Thompson:**[\[105447\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reintroducing virtual parliamentary proceedings in response to London being subject to Tier 2 local covid-19 restrictions from 17 October 2020.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

It is the Government's view that we best serve our constituents when we are here in Westminster, carrying out our essential functions, as we have been throughout the pandemic. Covid Alert Level - High includes a number of additional restrictions to limit social contact to help lessen the spread of the virus; it does not seek to close workplaces in general and people may still travel for work purposes. Parliament is a place of work and an institution that performs an essential constitutional role, making and changing legislation, debating key issues and scrutinising the broader work of Government. A return to hybrid proceedings would mean that we would necessarily need to make difficult decisions to limit what the House of Commons can do.

The Government is sympathetic to those members who are currently unable to participate in some aspects of our proceedings. However, the Government has done everything it can to mitigate that, including a wide scale roll out of proxy voting and providing for remote participation in scrutiny proceedings, including select committees.

The House authorities have worked hard to put in place robust and effective measures to ensure that the House of Commons is a covid-secure workplace.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Armed Forces: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[105442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what estimate he has made of the number of investigations into deaths of British soldiers during Operation Banner which remain outstanding.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Over 250,000 people served in Northern Ireland during Operation Banner, the longest continuous military deployment in our country's history, the vast majority with courage, professionalism and great distinction. Without their contribution and in so many cases, sacrifices, there would quite simply have been no peace process in Northern Ireland. The status of criminal investigations into the deaths of members of the Armed Forces and others who lost their lives during the Troubles in Northern Ireland is a matter for the independent Police Service of Northern Ireland.

### ■ IRA: Libya

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[105446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Foreign Secretary on the publication of the Shawcross Report on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and other ministers across Government are carefully considering the next steps regarding Mr Shawcross' report. This has been challenging while the Government's main effort has focused on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is committed to working with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and others on a way forward.

### ■ Police and Security: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[105445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on meeting the financial commitments to policing and security outlined in the New Decade New Approach agreement.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Policing is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and the PSNI's main budget is allocated by the Department of Justice from the Northern Ireland block grant.

The UK Government provides the Police Service of Northern Ireland with the additional security funding it needs to ensure that it has the resource to tackle the SEVERE threat from Northern Ireland related terrorism. This additional security

funding ensures PSNI's ability to tackle the terrorist threat while ensuring day-to-day policing is not compromised.

PSNI received £160m in additional security funding from 2015-2021.

## ■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:** [\[105443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many joint boards of the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive have been appointed to review UK Government funding through the New Decade New Approach Agreement.

**Louise Haigh:** [\[105444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many meetings of the UK Government/Northern Ireland Executive Joint Board he has attended since his appointment.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Joint Board, which has oversight for transformation in health, education and justice, where these draw on funding provided under the New Decade, New Approach agreement, has met twice, on 22 July and 21 October. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland attended both meetings.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Biofuels: Coronavirus

**Matt Vickers:** [\[907955\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the introduction of E10 fuel.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department consulted on proposals to introduce E10 in 2021.

There is no assessment that identified any Covid-19 impact on that timeline.

### ■ Cycling and Walking: Urban Areas

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[907954\]](#)

What discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding to create active travel cities as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department's Ministers have regular discussions with their Treasury counterparts on issues including the Department's approach to the Spending Review.

## ■ Driving Instruction: Protective Clothing

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[105299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adequate personal protective equipment for driving test instructors is available at driving test centres.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) makes personal protective equipment (PPE) available at driving test centres for every examiner, for every test. PPE includes face coverings, gloves and car seat covers.

## ■ Driving Tests: High Wycombe

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[105361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the driving test centre in High Wycombe has closed; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

It is important customers are provided with a value for money service. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has taken the decision to cease driver testing at High Wycombe as the low demand for tests and the cost of the driving test centre lease is not a good use of public money.

Learner drivers will be able to receive a good service from the centres in Aylesbury, Slough and Uxbridge, which have the capacity to meet the extra demand for testing as the examiners who conducted tests at High Wycombe will be based in these nearby sites instead.

## ■ Global Travel Taskforce

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[103542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Global Travel Taskforce held its first meeting.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[103543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Global Travel Taskforce will engage with representatives of the business travel industry.

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[103544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will instruct the Global Travel Taskforce to work with representatives of the business travel sector to help (a) design and (b) implement a covid-19 testing regime at airports.

**Robert Courts:**

A core function of the Global Travel Taskforce (GTT) is to bring together industry and government to devise a way to implement measures to reduce quarantine while protecting public health. In its work, the GTT will therefore seek to consult representatives from across the travel sector.

Further information on the GTT can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/global-travel-taskforce>

The taskforce held its first meeting on 15 October 2020.

## ■ Public Transport: Young People

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[103645]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to provide additional funding to local transport authorities to reduce the cost of travel for young people in (a) London and (b) the rest of England.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Transport in London, including fares policy, is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London. There are no current national plans to reduce the cost of travel for young people in the rest of England. However, concessionary travel legislation gives local authorities the flexibility to offer local travel concessions, such as free or discounted travel to young people, if they choose to do so.

## ■ Railway Stations: Greater London

**Theresa Villiers:**

**[105306]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will ensure that none of the recent funding provided by the Government to Transport for London will be used, directly or indirectly, to fund the Mayor of London's plans to build over station car parks at Cockfosters, High Barnet, Finchley Central and Arnos Grove.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In May the Government agreed a £1.6 billion funding and financing package for Transport for London to enable them to continue operating essential services. Matters relating to the Mayor's plans for housing development in London are devolved and subject to local planning consents.

## TREASURY

## ■ Air Passenger Duty: Coronavirus

**Henry Smith:**

**[103484]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a 12-month waiver on Air Passenger Duty to provide support to the aviation sector, trade and connectivity during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation industry as a result of COVID-19 and firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and support jobs and flexibilities with tax bills. The



aerospace sector and its aviation customers are being supported with over £8.5 billion support through the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility, grants for research and development, loan guarantees and support for aerospace exports. The government has also launched a new Global Travel Taskforce to support the travel industry and the safe recovery of international travel.

Airlines' Air Passenger Duty liabilities will have considerably reduced following the decline in passenger demand caused by COVID-19.

The Government has committed to consult on aviation tax reform and will provide more detail on next steps in due course.

## ■ Average Earnings

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[105390]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the levels of pay in each of the last five years.

**John Glen:**

According to the Office for National Statistics, total average weekly earnings (AWE) increased from £476 to £550 between January 2015 and August 2020. Nominal pay increased by 2.3% in the year to 2016 Q1, 2.2% in the year to 2017 Q1, 2.9% in the year to 2018 Q1, 3.2% in the year to 2019 Q1, and 2.3% in the year to 2020 Q1. Both the public and private sector have experienced increases in AWE since January 2015.

The introduction of the National Living Wage has delivered the fastest pay rise for the lowest earners in 20 years – the latest increase saw a full-time worker's annual pay up over £3,680 since its introduction in April 2016. In April 2020 the National Living Wage was increased to £8.72 – the biggest cash increase ever – giving a full-time worker an annual pay rise of £930 this year.

## ■ Aviation and Business Travel: Coronavirus

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

**[103541]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide sector specific financial support for (a) businesses and (b) employees operating in the (i) aviation industry and (ii) business travel sector in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation and travel industries as a result of COVID-19.

Firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills and, where eligible, grant schemes and business rate holidays.

Firms in the aviation and travel industries will also be able to take advantage of the targeted package of measures the Chancellor announced as part of the Winter

Economy Plan to support jobs and businesses through the Winter months, including the new Job Support Scheme.

The Government has also recently launched a new Global Travel Taskforce to support the travel industry and the safe recovery of international travel. The border quarantine measures in the UK are being kept under constant review, and where possible the Government has looked to open up travel corridors in order to facilitate increased travel.

The Government will continue to engage closely with these sectors on the impact of COVID-19.

### ■ Aviation and Travel: Coronavirus

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[103540\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has held with the Secretary of State for Transport on introducing a bespoke package of financial support for businesses and employees operating in the aviation and travel industries in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Chancellor speaks to his colleagues on a regular basis about a range of matters.

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation and travel industries as a result of COVID-19. Firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills and, where eligible, grant schemes and business rate holidays.

Firms in the aviation and travel industries will also be able to take advantage of the targeted package of measures the Chancellor announced as part of the Winter Economy Plan to support jobs and businesses through the Winter months, including the new Job Support Scheme.

The Government has also recently launched a new Global Travel Taskforce to support the travel industry and the safe recovery of international travel. The border quarantine measures in the UK are being kept under constant review, and where possible the Government has looked to open up travel corridors in order to facilitate increased travel.

### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[105496\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support businesses that (a) operate seasonally, (b) have insufficient funds to see them through winter 2020-21 and (c) will not have an income until spring 2021.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the extreme disruption that Covid-19 is having on businesses, including those that operate seasonally. That is why we have delivered a comprehensive package of support worth over £190 billion, including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which continues until the end of October.
- The Job Support Scheme (JSS), which is supporting businesses operating but experiencing reduced demand. The enhanced JSS is providing substantial wage support to businesses legally forced to close.
- The Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme, worth £3,000 per month, for businesses legally forced closed for at least two weeks.
- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme for the self-employed.
- Government-backed loans, which can be applied for until 30 November.
- The Job Retention Bonus, which will support businesses in January 2021.
- VAT deferrals and more flexible repayment terms for government backed loans will help businesses manage their cash flow.

The Government is committed to continuing to support businesses and will keep these measures under review.

**■ Coronavirus: Liverpool City Region****Conor McGinn:****[105434]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the economic effect of the tier-3 local covid restrictions on (a) the Liverpool City Region and (b) the six individual boroughs in that combined authority, in the event that those restrictions last (i) 28, (ii) 56, (iii) 112 and (iv) 224 days.

**John Glen:**

The UK, along with many other countries around the world, has experienced a severe recession caused by coronavirus, and no major economy has avoided a dramatic fall in GDP. In response to those restrictions, the government took action to protect jobs and livelihoods and support businesses through the deepest global recession in decades.

Since they were classed as Very High Alert, the government has also recently provided local authorities in Liverpool City Region with £44m to support businesses and public health. The government had already provided businesses in the Liverpool City Region with £1.3bn in direct support through grants and loans, and local authorities with £136m of additional support to address Covid-related pressures.

## ■ Debts: Developing Countries

**Jane Hunt:**

**[103659]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on debt relief for developing countries in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**John Glen:**

In April 2020, G20 Finance Ministers approved the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) to pause debt repayments from the poorest countries in 2020. On 14 October the Chancellor met with his G20 counterparts, including China, to agree an extension of the DSSI for 6 months. The G20 also agreed in principle a Common Framework on future debt treatments beyond the DSSI which will ensure fair, timely and sustainable debt reductions on a case by case basis when needed.

## ■ Duty Free Allowances

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[105310]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support duty free stores prepare for the changes to duty free shopping from 1 January 2021.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers). The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom (UK) will be able to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.
- Personal allowances will apply to passengers entering Great Britain from a destination outside of the UK, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- The VAT Retail Export Scheme (RES) in Great Britain will not be extended to EU residents and will be withdrawn for all passengers.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales for non-excise goods will be removed across the UK.

The Government published a consultation which ran from 11 March to 20 May. During this time the Government held a number of virtual meetings with stakeholders to hear their views and received 73 responses to the consultation.

The detailed rationale for these changes are included in the written ministerial statement and summary of responses to the recent consultation: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-11/hcws448> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-duty-free-and-tax-free-goods-carried-by-passengers>.

The Government is also continuing to meet with stakeholders following the announcement of these policies, including to discuss the implementation of duty-free sales for EU-bound passengers in export shops.

## ■ English Language: Education

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[105556\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending business rates relief to include English language teaching schools.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for local authorities on the implementation of the business rates holiday for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. This includes definitions of properties that will benefit from the relief, which does not include English language teaching schools.

A range of measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, has also been made available.

## ■ Gyms: Coronavirus

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[103649\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what economic impact assessment has been undertaken on gym closures in tier 3 covid-19 areas; and what further economic support will be provided to gyms that are forced to close as a result of those restrictions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has announced an expansion of the Job Support Scheme for businesses which are legally required to temporarily close 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 from 1 November for 6 months.

The Government has also introduced the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme. Businesses which are required to close due to a local lockdown in England can now receive up to £3,000 per month and are eligible for payment after two weeks of closure.

For local authorities that agree to being placed at Very High Alert, a small amount of additional business support may be made available subject and proportionate to local needs, to complement national measures to protect jobs and businesses.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[105545\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the loss of revenue to the public purse from the UK hospitality sector as a result of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has not made an estimate of revenue lost from the UK hospitality sector as a result of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

This sector is a vital source of employment across the country, and in addition to the government's unprecedented Covid-support package, we have prioritised support for hospitality businesses over the last 6 months by introducing several targeted measures to support the sector. This includes:

- A 12-month business rates holiday for all eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in England
- The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund
- The Eat Out to Help Out Scheme, which subsidised 100 million meals through August
- A temporary reduction in the VAT rate from 20% to 5% on most tourism and hospitality-related activities – extended until the end of March.

However, the Government recognises that the sector has been acutely disrupted by recent restrictions introduced by the Tier system. Through the Chancellor's Winter Economic Plan, government will protect jobs and struggling businesses across the most impacted areas of the UK.

The Job Support Scheme will guarantee that most workers working a minimum of 20% of hours receive at least 73% of their usual wages, while workers whose employers have been closed by health restrictions will be guaranteed two thirds of their wages.

And hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses in Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas will be eligible to receive a grant of up to £2,100 and £3,000, respectively, according to the value of their premises. Sufficient funding will be allocated to Local Authorities to distribute.

**■ Job Support Scheme****Stephen Farry:****[104221]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Job Support Scheme incentivises employers to maximise the number of jobs retained during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Job Support Scheme (JSS) is designed to protect jobs in businesses which are facing lower demand over the winter months due to COVID-19, and to support jobs where businesses are legally required to close as a result of coronavirus restrictions. This comprehensive package of support will ensure that as many jobs as possible are protected and help keep employees attached to the workforce.

Further incentivising employers to retain employees is the Job Retention Bonus (JRB), which can be claimed alongside the JSS. This is worth £1,000 per employee

and is paid to the employer. JSS grants can be used by employers to play an employee's wages and help meet the JRB Minimum Income Threshold.

**Lucy Powell:**

**[105376]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether people employed by (a) business conference centres, (b) exhibition centres, (c) sports stadia, (d) live music venues, (e) theatres, (d) cinemas and (e) events companies are eligible for the Job Support Scheme; and when his Department plans to publish further detail on eligibility for that scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

To support individuals and businesses to deal with the challenges created by coronavirus during this winter, the Government is providing additional support to help employers retain their employees through the Job Support Scheme. The scheme will open on 1 November 2020 and run for 6 months, until April 2021. Employers will be able to make a claim online through GOV.UK from December 2020. They will be paid on a monthly basis.

Businesses which can continue to operate safely but are facing reduced demand will have access to JSS-Open, where the government grant will cover a portion of wages for non-worked hours.

Businesses are eligible to claim JSS-Closed if their business has been legally required to close as a direct result of COVID-19 restrictions set by one or more of the four governments of the UK. This includes premises restricted to delivery or collection only services from their premises.

Further guidance will be issued shortly to set out the complete list of conditions for eligibility for the Job Support Scheme.

## ■ **Mortgages: Coronavirus**

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[105372]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions his Department has had with mortgage lenders on support for workers in industries that remain closed due to public health restrictions following the outbreak of covid-19.

**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 published guidance on mortgage payment holidays on 14 September setting out that firms should continue to provide support through tailored forbearance options for those borrowers that are facing ongoing financial difficulties. This could include granting new mortgage payment holidays. The FCA guidance also notes that lenders should take into consideration borrowers' circumstances regarding local



lockdown restrictions including not proceeding with repossessions where borrowers are in areas of lockdown or self-isolating.

The FCA and I are in frequent discussions with mortgage lenders regarding the ongoing support to mortgage consumers during this difficult time.

#### ■ Pharmacy: Finance

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[105286\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to conduct a review of funding for community pharmacies ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

**Steve Barclay:**

On the 20th October, the Chancellor announced that this year's Spending Review would focus on giving departments the certainty needed to tackle Covid-19, providing vital public services enhanced support to fight the virus, and investing in infrastructure to drive our economic recovery.

In 2019, a landmark 5-year settlement for the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) was agreed. This deal commits to spend £2.592 billion every financial year until 23/24, and sets out how community pharmacy will support the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan.

#### ■ Pre-school Education: Non-domestic Rates

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[105557\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of abolishing business rates for early education and childcare providers.

**Jesse Norman:**

On 18 March 2020, the Chancellor announced that non-local authority childcare providers would benefit from a business rates holiday for 2020-21 in response to COVID-19.

The Government keeps all taxes under review and any decisions on future reliefs or exemptions will be made as part of the fundamental review of business rates.

#### ■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[104222\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 99158, if he will publish the specific Barnett Consequential arising to Northern Ireland from the Kickstart scheme.

**Steve Barclay:**

Any additional funding provided to DWP for Kickstart will result in Barnett consequentials for the Northern Ireland Executive.

As is the normal process, changes to departmental and devolved administrations' funding will be confirmed at Supplementary Estimates.

Therefore, to give the Northern Ireland Executive the certainty to plan and deliver their coronavirus response, we have guaranteed they will receive at least £2.4bn in additional funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding.

## ■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

**Sir Alan Campbell:**

[\[103439\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether there are plans to provide a more tailored package of support for pubs and brewers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has moved to support pubs and brewers through its unprecedented coronavirus economic response, in common with action to support other parts of the hospitality industry. This includes the job support scheme, job retention bonus, business rates holiday, VAT deferral and repayment scheme and the bounce back loans scheme. The Government believes that these economy-wide measures are the quickest and fairest way of supporting these important sectors.

## ■ Public Sector: Redundancy Pay

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[104043\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that restrictions on public sector exit payments do not affect people whose annual salary is less than £25,000.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[104044\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of restrictions on public sector exit payments on (a) women and (b) people from BAME communities.

**Steve Barclay:**

This measure is aimed at putting a stop to excessive public sector exit payments funded by the taxpayer. The majority of public sector exits will not be affected by the cap. The government accepts that there will be circumstances where it is necessary or desirable to relax the cap. The waiver process is in place for use in exceptional situations, including where imposing the cap would cause genuine hardship.

An Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted on the primary legislation and published alongside the 2019 consultation document. An updated Equalities Impact Assessment has since been conducted based on the final regulations and will be published in due course.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[104038\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason self-employed individuals eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will receive 20 per cent of their average monthly trading profits as financial support.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension helps self-employed individuals who are actively trading but are experiencing reduced demand due to COVID-19, and is not a direct income replacement. It is a top-up, not intended to replace all lost profits. The SEISS Grant Extension covers three months' worth of average trading profits at 20%, meaning self-employed individuals affected for shorter periods will still be entitled to the full three months' worth of the grant. This strikes the right balance between ensuring support is granted to those who need it, while protecting value for the taxpayer.

Those who require further support may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support available. The Government has temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor for the duration of the crisis so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly reduced, their Universal Credit award will have increased. In addition to this, the self-employed have access to other elements of the financial support package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

**■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Entertainers****Angela Crawley:**[\[104126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending eligibility to the extended Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to freelance performers and musicians.

**Jesse Norman:**

The forthcoming Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension will help provide critical support to the self-employed, including freelance performers and musicians. The SEISS Grant Extension will support those who are currently eligible for the SEISS and are actively continuing to trade but are facing reduced demand due to COVID-19. The scheme will last for 6 months, from November 2020 to April 2021.

The extension will be in the form of two grants. The first grant will cover a three-month period from the start of November until the end of January. The second grant will then cover the subsequent three-month period from the start of February until the end of April.

Those who require further support may be able to benefit from other elements of the comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[105567\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will offer a settlement opportunity for people affected by loan charges.

**Jesse Norman:**

In 2017 HMRC offered settlement terms to taxpayers who used disguised remuneration (DR) tax avoidance schemes and who may have been liable to pay the Loan Charge unless they chose to settle with HMRC.

Taxpayers who provided the necessary information to HMRC by 5 April 2019 and worked with HMRC to conclude settlement by 30 September 2020 were able to settle under these 2017 terms, enabling them to keep clear of the Loan Charge.

Later this year, HMRC will publish settlement terms for taxpayers who pay the Loan Charge and still have remaining liabilities, arising from HMRC enquiries into their DR scheme use, which have yet to be resolved.

## ■ Test and Trace Support Payment

**Neil Gray:**

[\[105379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to exempt the covid-19 self isolation grant from income tax.

**Jesse Norman:**

The UK Government introduced the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme in England to support those on low incomes who cannot work from home and are therefore financially affected by self-isolating.

As these payments – and payments from equivalent schemes in the devolved administrations – are linked to employment, the legislative default is that these payments are subject to income tax and National Insurance Contributions. This is in line with the tax treatment of other COVID-19 support payments, such as the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

However, the UK Government has granted the Test and Trace Support Payment in England an exemption from National Insurance Contributions in order to reduce the administrative burden on both local authorities and employers. The Government is working with the devolved administrations to extend this National Insurance Contributions exemption to their equivalent schemes.

## ■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[103661\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to develop the Authorised Economic Order system for trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has been clear that there should be no tariffs on internal UK trade because, as the NI Protocol acknowledges, the UK is a single customs territory.

In addition, processes on goods moving from GB to NI will be kept to an absolute minimum so that the integrity and smooth functioning of the UK internal market are protected. Nothing in the NI Protocol prevents NI businesses from enjoying unfettered access to the rest of the UK internal market. As set out in New Decade, New Approach, the Government will legislate to guarantee unfettered access for NI's businesses to the whole of the UK internal market, and ensure that this legislation is in force for 1 January 2021.

Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status will be available in both GB and NI at the end of the transition period, but, to ensure minimal disruption to businesses, the Government has established a new and unprecedented Trader Support Service for businesses moving goods between GB and NI. This will provide an end-to-end service which will guide traders through all import processes, including handling digital import and safety and security declarations on their behalf, at no additional cost.

**WALES****■ Coronavirus: Wales****Alexander Stafford:**[\[104782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on police powers to stop vehicles travelling into Wales during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Simon Hart:**

I wrote to the First Minister last week to seek urgent clarification on the additional travel restrictions placed by the Welsh Government on people travelling to Wales from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This included the evidence on which the restrictions are based and how the measures will be enforced.

I have not yet received a detailed response from the First Minister to the questions I have asked. There is a lack of clarity on many aspects of the new restrictions. I remain concerned about how the Welsh Government intends to enforce its new regulations and the impacts of any enforcement measures on the resources of Welsh police forces.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES****■ Equality: Politics and Government****Sarah Champion:**[\[100408\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the Government's policy is on enacting section 106 of the Equality Act 2010.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[102118\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what progress her Department has made on enacting Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government continues to keep section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 under review but is of the view that political parties should lead the way in improving diverse electoral representation through their selection of candidates.

**■ Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus****Helen Hayes:**[\[100498\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the timeframe is for the publication of the work of the Racial Disparity Unit in response to the report of Public Health England on disparities in risks and outcomes in relation to covid-19.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[100499\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what progress the Race Disparity Unit has made in its work on health inequalities in response to the Public Health England report on disparities in the risk and outcomes of covid-19.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

In June, the Prime Minister asked me, as Minister for Equalities, to lead cross-government work on the findings of the Public Health England (PHE) report 'COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes'. The Race Disparity Unit (RDU) is supporting me in this.

Following work undertaken by the RDU, the Office for National Statistics and the wider scientific community, we have made good progress in recent weeks in identifying the key drivers of the disparities highlighted by the PHE review and the relationships between the different risk factors for ethnic minority communities. We have also been reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by government departments and their agencies to directly lessen these disparities.

I will shortly be submitting the first quarterly update report on this work to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, as required by the [terms of reference](#).

**Shabana Mahmood:**

[99575]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to her oral contribution of 4 June 2020, official report, column 1003, on public health England review: covid-19 disparities, what recent progress has been made on the Government's review of its work to lessen disparities in infection and death rates of covid-19 between Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities and the wider population.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

I am leading cross-government work on the findings of the Public Health England Report "Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19". The Race Disparity Unit (RDU) is supporting me in this

Following work undertaken by the RDU, the Office for National statistics, and the wider scientific community, we have made good progress in recent weeks in identifying the key drivers of these disparities and the relationships between the different risk factors for ethnic minority communities. I have also been reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by government departments and their agencies to directly lessen the disparities. I will shortly be sending the first quarterly progress report on my work to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, as required by the [terms of reference](#).

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Aviation: Vetting

**Seema Malhotra:**

[105374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with local jobcentres on the length of time it takes to conduct pre-employment security checks for jobs in the aviation industry.

**Seema Malhotra:**

[105375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with employers in the aviation industry on pre-employment security checks for Kickstart placements.

**Mims Davies:**

Discussions on the specific recruitment needs of the aviation sector are happening at a local level where airports are situated, and nationally by our National Employer and Partnership Team. As part of our placed based approach we tailor the support required to meet local employer's needs, and where pre-employment checks have been identified as a potential issue the District teams have proactively taken steps to address this. For example, in West London they build pre-employment security checks into the screening process for airport based opportunities; in Manchester a series of upskilling sessions were delivered to Work Coaches, including an overview of pre-employment requirements for working at the airport.



We have had a number of conversations with employers and their representatives across all sectors for the launch of the Kickstart Scheme. Whilst the responsibility for undertaking security and other pre-employment checks rests with those parties, the Department will fund a 'start up' payment of £1500 for each placement approved which would assist with the costs of such checks.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Living Wage

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[105412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date her Department became a Living Wage Employer.

**Mims Davies:**

In April 2016, the government introduced a higher statutory minimum wage rate for all employees over 25 years of age - the National Living Wage. All employers in the UK are required to pay the National Living Wage. The Department for Work and Pensions pays all employees, regardless of age, at least the statutory National Living Wage which is revaluated each April. From April 2020 the rate increased to £8.72 per hour.

The Living Wage Foundation is an initiative by Citizens UK which advocates employers paying an alternative hourly rate known as the Living Wage. Employers can apply to be accredited Living Wage employers. DWP is not an accredited Living Wage employer.

## ■ Employment: Females

**Cat Smith:**

[\[103557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what specific steps she is taking to support women and girls facing multiple disadvantage into employment.

**Mims Davies:**

Jobcentre Plus provides a range of support to people with multiple barriers to employment. Work Coaches provide support tailored to the individual, referring as appropriate to specialist provision such as the Work and Health Programme and local partner support, often funded by the department's Flexible Support Fund. This support is being strengthened further by the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs package, including the Kickstart Scheme, and the new Youth Offer.

## ■ Food Banks

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[103527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations she has received from food bank providers on levels of demand for emergency food assistance in the last six months.

**Will Quince:**

The Department engaged with food bank providers throughout the Covid pandemic and will continue to do so.

The Department quickly introduced welfare changes worth over £9 billion and worked closely with other departments on the cross-government Task Force on Food and Other Essential Supplies for Vulnerable People, led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Kickstart Scheme****Cat Smith:**[\[105425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new jobs the Government aims to create through the Kickstart Scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

The Kickstart Scheme is a £2 Billion programme, planning to create thousands of new jobs for young people aged 16-24 at risk of long term unemployment. Whilst we will not limit our ambitions, our first priority is to ensure the quality of experiences created for young people.

**Pension Credit****Neil Gray:**[\[105383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effect of low pension credit uptake on (a) pensioner poverty and (b) fuel poverty.

**Guy Opperman:**

No assessments have been made.

**Anne McLaughlin:**[\[105429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2020 on Question 101290 on Pension Credit, how many (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful pension credit claims there were in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

**Guy Opperman:**

This information is only available at disproportionate cost to The Department for Work & Pensions as the Department does not have a business requirement for this information to be retained.

**Pensions: Consumer Information****Stephen Timms:**[\[105276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy for pensions dashboards to highlight information on responsible investment; and if she will make a statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Pensions Dashboards Programme consulted on what additional information dashboards could initially show in its summer Call for Input on data. This included the potential to signpost users to schemes' Statement of Investment Principles and Implementation documents, which include information on schemes' environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies and work.

A summary of the responses to the Call for Input will shortly be published alongside the Programme's next Progress Update Report, on its website –

[www.pensionsdashboardsprogramme.org.uk](http://www.pensionsdashboardsprogramme.org.uk).

The Government will work with the Pensions Dashboard Programme to assess and review their recommendations as to the extent of content on the dashboard. The initial dashboard will be simple in design but it is intended that it will have much more information as it develops.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses****Duncan Baker:****[105563]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department's review of how the welfare system works for people with a terminal illness includes an assessment of (a) the ability of people with motor neurone disease to access the special rules for terminal illness and (b) the potential merits of applying reforms to (i) the disability element of universal credit and (ii) personal independence payment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

In July 2019, the Secretary of State announced an in-depth evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their life. The evaluation included 3 strands of research:

- hearing directly from claimants and charities about their first-hand experiences;
- considering international evidence to find out what works in other nations and the support they provide; and
- reviewing current DWP performance to better understand how our Special Rules for Terminal Illness process operates and performs.

**■ Universal Credit****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[103431]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reducing the five-week wait time for universal credit claimants to receive their first payment.

**Will Quince:**

No such assessment has been made and no-one has to wait 5 weeks for a payment.

New Claims Advances are available which allow claimants to receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront so that new claimants will receive

their annual award over 13 payments during their first year, instead of 12. They are paid quickly and these can be applied for online or over the phone. The upfront payment phasing can be spread over a two-year cycle from October 2021, as was announced in the Budget 2020.

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[103526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on poverty levels of reintroducing universal credit sanctions and conditionality in the next six months.

**Mims Davies:**

New and updated claimant commitments for Universal Credit claimants have been reintroduced from 1 July 2020 in a phased approach and as capacity allows. Only once a new or updated claimant commitment has been agreed, can claimants receive a sanction if they fail to meet those commitments without good reason.

Work Coaches are empowered to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that conditionality is tailored to a claimant's individual circumstances, that only realistic and reasonable requirements are set, and that they can apply easements and take additional steps to help protect the most vulnerable.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[103554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 69600 and Answer of 1 July 2020 to Question 63208, what progress has been made on implementing the decision of the court of appeal on 22 June 2020 on universal credit systems taking account of the day that a monthly salary is paid.

**Will Quince:**

On 20<sup>th</sup> October I laid secondary 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. This 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.

## ■ Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit: Coronavirus

**Matt Western:**

[\[104156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 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) working age and (b) child poverty.

**Will Quince:**

The Government introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth around £9.3 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year.

Future decisions on spending will be made by the Chancellor at the next appropriate fiscal event, and Parliament will be updated accordingly.

**■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[105517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she made of the implications for her policies of the recent finding by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation that 700,000 more people will be living in poverty as a result of the Government's decision to end the £20 universal credit uplift in April 2021.

**Will Quince:**

The Government introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth over £9 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year.

Future decisions on spending will be made by the Chancellor at the next appropriate fiscal event, and Parliament will be updated accordingly.

**■ Warm Home Discount Scheme: Pensioners****Neil Gray:**[\[105380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to her statement made on 14 October 2020, Official Report, HCWS512, whether all existing pension credit claimants will receive the warm home discount automatically.

**Neil Gray:**[\[105381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to her statement HCWS512 made on 14 October 2020, by what means her Department identified (a) the one million claimants to receive the warm home discount automatically and (b) the further 220,000 pensioners who will receive a letter encouraging them to check their eligibility and apply for the warm home discount.

**Guy Opperman:**

To receive the Warm Home Discount, Pension Credit customers must be in receipt of the Pension Credit Guarantee Credit element, be named on the account and their supplier must participate in the scheme.

DWP matches Pension Credit data with data provided by energy suppliers participating in the Warm Home Discount Scheme in accordance with the scheme's July qualifying date. Where a match is confirmed, a notification is issued by DWP to the energy supplier for the rebate to be applied automatically.

In some instances, a match is not confirmed and for those Pension Credit customers a letter is sent asking them to contact the Freephone Warm Home Discount Scheme Helpline [0800 917 1003] to see if they qualify.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ Rohingya Donor Conference and Funding Announcement

**Minister for Asia (Nigel Adams):**

[\[HCWS532\]](#)

My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) has made the following Written Statement:

The UK is co-hosting a donor conference today for the Rohingya refugee response, alongside the United States, European Union and UN Refugee agency (UNHCR).

Bringing together donor countries and partners from the region, this conference will rally international support for the Rohingya humanitarian response in Bangladesh, Myanmar and other countries hosting Rohingya refugees in the region. Our aim is to ensure sustained support for Rohingya refugees and displaced populations, while working towards long-term durable solutions.

Maintaining international funding will become increasingly difficult over time - yet three years on from the terrible violence that erupted in August 2017, the Rohingya remain one of the world's most vulnerable populations. I pay tribute to the resilience, courage and tenacity of the Rohingya people. I also express our gratitude to the Government and people of Bangladesh for hosting the 860,000 refugees currently living in Cox's Bazar district.

The UK continues to support the Rohingya on both sides of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border while we push for a long-term solution that enables their voluntary, safe, and dignified return to Myanmar. This includes advocating for the implementation of the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations, including reform of citizenship laws and freedom of movement. The UK is clear that there must be accountability for atrocities. This will be fundamental to give the Rohingya people confidence that it is safe to return.

The UK is already one of the biggest donors supporting the Rohingya. The crisis remains a priority and we have worked hard to prioritise resources to maintain assistance in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

I am therefore pleased to announce that this Government is committing a further £37.5m to the Rohingya response operation in Bangladesh to continue our life saving support, a total of £293.5m committed to the crisis since 2017. This funding supports refugees in Cox's Bazar with protection, food, healthcare, water and sanitation, counselling, and will help mitigate the impact of natural disasters and disease, in addition to supporting local communities.

COVID-19 has created an additional dimension to the adversity Rohingya communities have faced. So far, UK aid has added more than 2,400 handwashing facilities in the camps and created capacity for over 600 beds for treating refugees and locals alike



suffering from severe respiratory infections. I am happy to announce that we are also committing £10m support for Bangladesh to help the country respond to coronavirus and natural disasters nationally.

In the meantime, providing education for Rohingya children and livelihood opportunities for adults is fundamental to equipping Rohingya with the essential knowledge and skills for their future in Myanmar and to prevent a lost generation. It is also the best guard against rising domestic violence, criminality and tensions between the refugee and host communities. Significant material support will be needed for the foreseeable future to uphold basic standards of living.

The UK also provides significant support to the Rohingya in conflict-affected Rakhine State in Myanmar. This includes over £25m since 2017 for Rohingya communities for nutrition, water, health and sanitation, protection, skills and livelihoods support. UK aid is also working hard to respond to the additional health and humanitarian needs brought on by COVID, amidst access restrictions.

We hope that the international community will continue to demonstrate its strong commitment to the humanitarian response and find solutions for the Rohingya that will enable them to return home voluntarily, safely and with dignity. We will continue to push for regional and international attention and support in helping manage and resolve the crisis.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ The Government Response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights reports on the Detention of Young People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism and Human Rights and the implications of the Government's COVID-19 response

**Minister of State for Care (Helen Whately):**

**[[HCWS530](#)]**

Today we have published the Government's formal response to the recommendations made by the Joint Committee on Human Rights in its report 'The detention of young people with learning disabilities and/or autism' published on 1 November 2019 and those made in its report 'Human Rights and the Government's response to COVID-19: The detention of young people who are autistic and/or have learning disabilities' published on 12 June 2020. A copy of the response will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

We welcome the Joint Committee on Human Rights' (JCHR) reports and their recommendations. Protecting the rights of people with a learning disability and of autistic people is a matter of the utmost importance to the Government. Rights must be upheld regardless of wider circumstances, no matter how unprecedented. This is especially so for those who may be at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives, in crisis or receiving treatment in specialist mental health inpatient settings. The Government's manifesto committed to improve how people with a learning disability/and or autistic people are treated in law and to make it easier for them to be discharged from hospital in recognition of some of the challenges faced by this group of people.

The JCHR made recommendations for Government and its system partners to improve the care and support of people with a learning disability and/or autism which was not found to always meet the high standard we would expect for each and every individual.

We have carefully considered these recommendations and are accepting in full or in principle the vast majority, including:

- The JCHR have specifically recommended that a legal duty is introduced on Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure the availability of sufficient community-based services. We have accepted this recommendation in principle and plan **to consult on new duties to ensure an adequate supply of community services for people with learning disabilities and autistic people.**

- In response to the recommendation that families should not be prevented from speaking out about poor care, we will **introduce guidance on the use of injunctions** to stop the inappropriate use of injunctions and ensure that families are able to speak out, driving up the standard of care for people with a learning disability and/or autism.

- **This guidance will require health bodies to notify the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care of their intention to seek an injunction.** This will enable us to monitor these instances and take further action such as following up with the body in question to seek additional information on the grounds seeking the injunction if required.

We propose to take forward a number of recommendations made by the JCHR through reform of the Mental Health Act and more detail will be provided in a **Mental Health Act White Paper** in due course. Reforming the Mental Health Act will help to ensure that when someone is admitted to hospital, the care they receive is therapeutic and beneficial and will have a positive impact for people with a learning disability and/or autistic people who are admitted for assessment or treatment. The White Paper will provide an opportunity to consult on changes as recommended by the JCHR including:

- **Placing Care, Education and Treatment Reviews (CETR) on a statutory footing.**

This would help to ensure that the CETR process is more robust and that there is greater involvement, where appropriate, of families. This should ensure that the process for resolving problems that keep people in hospital for longer than they should is improved along with improving current and future care planning, including plans for leaving hospital.

- **Reforming the detention criteria and the detention process should** reduce inequalities by making sure inpatient care for people with a learning disability or autistic people is only used when it offers clear benefits. For those who need inpatient care, having a say in the care they receive and requiring care to be therapeutic should ensure that people with a learning disability or autism are treated with the same dignity and respect that we would all expect.

- **Enforcing and enhancing the rights of individuals and families to advocacy** will be addressed, including through recommendations on improving access to Independent Mental Health Advocates, which would expect to have a positive impact in supporting individuals with learning disabilities and autistic people and their families.

The action we are taking in responding to these recommendations will help to ensure that people with a learning disability and autistic people are supported to live fulfilling lives in the community and that if they are admitted to hospital, the care they receive is both therapeutic and beneficial. The steps we are taking will also ensure that where appropriate family members will have a greater input into the care and support their loved ones receive. We must remain committed to delivering on our existing plans and on the new steps set out in this response.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Istanbul Convention Ratification: 2020 Report on Progress

**The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Victoria Atkins):**  
[\[HCWS531\]](#)

The Government has today laid before Parliament and published the fourth annual report on the United Kingdom's progress toward the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the "Istanbul Convention"). The UK signed the Istanbul Convention in 2012, signaling our strong commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and this Government remains committed to ratifying it as soon as we possibly can. The report sets out the work undertaken by the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to tackle VAWG since the 2019 Report on Progress, as well as the remaining steps required as we progress towards ratification.

Our measures to protect women and girls from violence are already some of the most robust in the world, and in most respects, we comply with, or go further than the Convention requires. Since signing the Convention in 2012, we have significantly strengthened our legislative framework; introduced a range of new protective tools and issued new guidance for professionals to better protect victims.

This year, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed those at risk of violence against women and girls in an even more vulnerable situation. In response to this, the Government announced enhanced support for victims, including £76 million of funding to ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and modern slavery, as well as vulnerable children and their families, receive the support they need during the pandemic.

On 3 March 2020 we reintroduced the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill in Parliament, which includes a package of measures to transform our response to domestic abuse. The Bill was passed by the House of Commons in July and has now moved to the House of Lords. The Bill (together with the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill currently before the Northern Ireland Assembly) includes the necessary legislative measures to ensure all parts of the UK are compliant with Article 44 of the Convention, which requires that criminal courts in the UK have extraterritorial jurisdiction over certain violent and sexual offences.

The Northern Ireland Executive had not been restored at the time of the last progress report, so the Domestic Abuse Bill as originally introduced in July 2019 contained a

provision for a new domestic abuse offence which would criminalise psychological violence in Northern Ireland, as required by Article 33 of the Convention. Following the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland, provision for this new offence was omitted from the re-introduced Westminster Bill and placed in the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill, which was introduced into the Northern Ireland Assembly on 31 March 2020. As this is a devolved matter, the timetable for the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill is for the Assembly to set. Nevertheless, I know that Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive share my desire for ratification of the Convention to proceed as swiftly as possible and that they will do all that they can to enable swift implementation of the new offence once the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill is enacted.

The issue of support for migrant victims of domestic abuse was raised by the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill and we committed to undertake a review into the Government's overall response to migrant victims of domestic abuse. This review has been completed, and the findings were published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) on 3 July 2020. More detailed evidence is needed to demonstrate which cohorts of migrant victims are likely to be most in need of support, the numbers involved and how well existing arrangements may address their needs.

In response to the review, the Government therefore committed to launch a £1.5 million Support for Migrant Victims (SMV) pilot scheme to address these evidence gaps, which will then enable us to take well-grounded and evidence-based decisions on how best to protect these victims in the long term. Details of the pilot scheme were published on 19 October. We have therefore recorded Articles 4(3) (to the extent that it relates to non-discrimination on the grounds of migrant or refugee status) and 59 as "under review" this year pending the evaluation and findings from the SMV scheme.

The publication of this report fulfils the requirement of section 2 of the Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017. I will lay before Parliament the report required by section 1 of that Act when our timescale for ratification is clear.

Copies of the 2020 progress report will be available in the Vote Office and it will be published on the Government's website at GOV.UK.

## ■ **Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the operation in 2018 of the Terrorism Acts**

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** [\[HCWS534\]](#)

In accordance with section 36 of the Terrorism Act 2006, Jonathan Hall QC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, has prepared a report on the operation in 2018 of the Terrorism Acts, which was laid before the House on 19 March 2020.

I am grateful to Mr Hall for his report and have carefully considered the recommendations and observations included within. I am today laying before the House the Government's response to the report (CP 310). Copies will be available in the Vote Office and it will also be published on GOV.UK.

## ■ Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules

### **The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Future Borders and Immigration (Kevin Foster):** [\[HCWS533\]](#)

My Rt Hon Friend the Home Secretary is today laying before the House a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules.

In February and July 2020, we published our Policy Statements on the UK's Points-Based Immigration System. This set out how we would fulfil our commitment to the British public to take back control of our borders by ending free movement and introducing a single, global immigration system. The Points-Based System will cater for the most highly skilled workers, skilled workers, students and a range of other specialist work routes including routes for global leaders in their field and innovators.

The changes to the Immigration Rules are a crucial part of the Future Points-Based Immigration System. They also introduce the new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route for a BN(O) citizen who wants to live and work in the UK and will extend the Afghan Interpreter ex-gratia scheme.

The rules also represent a significant further step in our commitment to simplify the rules, implementing many of the recommendations of the Law Commission to ensure we provide greater clarity to migrants, employers and all other users of the rules.

At the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, free movement will end and newly arriving European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss citizens will come within the scope of the new global immigration system. These rules will generally commence between 1 December and 1 January, but EEA nationals will not be granted permission until after 1 January as they are able to rely on free movement right until then.

I have set out in a separate document, attached, the details of the changes we are making to the Immigration Rules, which should be read together with this statement.

#### **Attachments:**

1. details of changes [Immigration Rules detailed changes.pdf]

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## ■ Local Government Finance update

### **Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS535\]](#)

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 12 October of new financial support for all local authorities, I wish to set out to the House how that support will be allocated to local authorities.

The allocation of this financial support, worth over £1 billion in total, consists of:

- £919 million in further un-ringfenced grant for all local authorities;

- £100 million package of support for public leisure services, to be administered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Government will once again be using the COVID-19 relative-Needs Formula to distribute the grant funding, as well as taking account of previous allocations. My approach also guarantees each authority gets at least £100,000 in additional funding – recognising that all areas continue to face pressures as we head into Winter. This approach will ensure the funds are distributed in a way that balances the need to support all areas across England, whilst maximising efficiency and targeting resources where they are most needed.

### **Un-ringfenced grant for local authorities**

As with previous support, the great majority of this additional funding is un-ringfenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to identify the specific pressures they are facing and to respond to local priorities. As with previous rounds of funding, local government should prioritise: adult social care, children's services, public health services, household waste services, shielding the clinically extremely vulnerable, homelessness and rough sleeping, domestic abuse, managing excess deaths and support for re-opening the country.

The grant funding also includes an amount from the Department of Health and Social Care's PPE fund to support councils in relation to PPE expenditure.

### **Package of funding for leisure centres worth £100 million**

To address the ongoing challenges council leisure centres are facing, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will introduce a new £100 million fund to support centres which are most in need. This complements the existing Sales, Fees and Charges scheme established by the Government which supports leisure centres run directly by local councils. Further details on the scheme will be set out in due course.

### **Overall position**

This brings the total direct funding provided to councils through this pandemic to £6.4 billion, comprising £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced funding, £1.1 billion from the Infection Control Fund, £300 million to support Test and Trace as well as funding allocated to councils from the new Local Alert Level system and a number of grants to support communities and vulnerable people.

The funding announced today is in addition to the up to £465 million that the Government has already announced for local authorities moving up to a higher local alert levels - this will ensure that councils, working alongside NHS Test and Trace can take the additional steps needed to contain the virus.

The Government has always been clear that we will stand behind local councils, and this funding demonstrates that the Government is taking the necessary steps, so that local government can continue to fulfil its pivotal role in the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.