



## Daily Report

Friday, 30 October 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 30 October 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:32 P.M., 30 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

#### ■ Batteries: Waste Disposal

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[106342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UK skill base for recycling and disposal of lithium ion batteries; and what plans the Government has to manage demand for those services.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

To maximise on the economic and environmental opportunities of a transition to zero emission vehicles, the UK Government is supporting the creation of a circular economy for electric vehicle batteries.

The future demand for the recycling and disposal of lithium ion batteries and the UK skills base in this area has been assessed by Government and research into battery re-cycling, and the large scale industrialisation, is currently being undertaken.

To support this vital work, we have committed £318m to the Faraday Battery Challenge to fund the research, development and scale-up of world-leading battery technology in the UK. The innovation strand of the Faraday Battery Challenge is supporting several business-led collaborative R&D projects on reuse and recycle of electric vehicle batteries.

Policy is being formulated based on this research and Government is committed to building on the Faraday research programmes to ensure that we meet the skills and demand required to support this growing industry.

#### ■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[104728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of businesses unable to access the bounce back loan scheme due to their bank not participating in that scheme; and what steps he is taking to help businesses access that scheme.

**Paul Scully:**

As of 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1,260,940 applications have been approved for Bounce Back loans, at a value of £38.02bn.

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme is currently being delivered through 28 accredited lenders, including several non-banks and alternative lenders. If a business is unable to access the scheme because their bank is not a participant or is unable to process their application, they may also consider approaching other Scheme accredited providers.



Several lenders are allowing applications from new customers. The Government have always made clear to lenders that they should open to new customers as soon as it is operationally possible for them to do so.

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[107014]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of applications to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme have been declined.

**Paul Scully:**

As of 18 October, 1,336,320 loans have been approved under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, with a total value of £40.20 billion.

The Scheme has received 1,660,845 applications. The applications figure includes: approved applications; applications that are still to be processed; applications that have been declined; and applications that may turn out not to be eligible or cases where customers will decide not to proceed.

#### ■ **Business: Equal Pay**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[106487]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which organisations the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets has met with to discuss mandatory pay gap reporting in the last month.

**Paul Scully:**

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>.

#### ■ **Business: Morley and Outwood**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

**[106425]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have closed in Morley and Outwood constituency since March 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

The Office for National Statistics has published information on business closures up to September 2020, but this is at a regional level and is not broken down to a constituency level. Information at a regional level for quarter 2 2020 (April to June 2020) and quarter 3 2020 (July to September 2020) on business closures forms part of 'Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK: July to September 2020.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/bulletins/businessdemographyquarterlyexperimentalstatisticsuk/julytoseptember2020>

## ■ Carbon Dioxide: Storage

**Alan Brown:** [107044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2020 to Question 101040, if he will list the carbon dioxide storage licences declined by the Oil and Gas Authority.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2020 to Question 101040, the Oil and Gas Authority has received two applications for a carbon dioxide storage licence. In both cases the Oil and Gas Authority granted the carbon dioxide storage licence to the applicant. There have been no further applications to the Oil and Gas Authority for a carbon dioxide storage licence.

**Alan Brown:** [107045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2020 to Question 101040, how many carbon dioxide storage licence applications have been received by the Oil and Gas Authority.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Pursuant to the Answer of 15 October 2020 to Question 101040, the Oil and Gas Authority has received two applications for a carbon dioxide storage licence.

A complete, public register of carbon dioxide storage licences is held on the Oil and Gas Authority's website ( <https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/licensing-consents/carbon-storage/> ). This register includes licences issued prior to the Oil and Gas Authority being formed and becoming a licensing authority for carbon dioxide storage.

## ■ Centrica: Contracts

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [105273]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total value is of Government contracts delivered by Centrica and its subsidiaries for service provision since 2015.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

This information is not held centrally and can only be obtained disproportionately.

## ■ Clinical Trials and Research

**Chi Onwurah:** [106333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to encourage research and clinical trials in non-covid related research.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government funds research and clinical trials through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and we have put a large focus on research into COVID-19 to tackle the immediate crisis.

The NIHR baseline budget for 2020/21 is set at £1,090 million excluding Official Development Assistance funding. In addition, there will be a number of in-year budget adjustments/transfers and funding contributions from the Devolved Administrations and other funders that have yet to be finalised but will at current estimates exceed £50 million. NIHR expects to spend its budget in full and a significant proportion of this spend will be on funding or supporting clinical trials funded by other research funders

However, the Government's long-term objectives for R&D are clear: to invest in the science and research that will deliver economic growth and societal benefits across the UK for decades to come, and to build the foundations for the new industries of tomorrow.

### ■ **Clothing: Manufacturing Industries**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with the British Retail Consortium on introducing a fit to trade licensing scheme to tackle labour exploitation in garment factories.

**Paul Scully:**

BEIS and Home Office officials have had two meetings with representatives from the British Retail Consortium to understand more about their proposal to introduce a fit to trade licensing scheme for garment factories, and what action brands are taking to ensure compliance throughout their supply chain. I also regularly meet with the British Retail Consortium as part of his frequent engagement with the retail sector.

BEIS and the Home Office 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. This is aimed at tackling all forms of labour exploitation in the garment industry.

The Government will continue to work closely with the multi-agency Taskforce, which has been established in Leicester to tackle allegations of exploitation in the sector, to consider the most appropriate measures to tackle labour exploitation.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**John Redwood:**

[\[106880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to issue guidance to commercial property owners who wish to (a) improve or (b) modify their air flow, heating and air extraction systems to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

**Paul Scully:**

Evidence shows that proper ventilation can be used to mitigate the transmission risk of COVID-19, alongside other measures. Ventilation into the building should be

optimised to ensure the maximum fresh air supply is provided to all areas of the facility wherever possible.

Our workplace guidance includes a number of steps that will usually be needed to ensure that ventilation systems provide a good supply of fresh air. It is important that businesses check whether ventilation systems need to be serviced or adjusted. If businesses and employers are unsure we advise they seek advice from their heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers.

The workplace guidance broken down by business type/environment can be found here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[107082]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to deals the Government have signed related to finding a vaccine for covid-19, whether (a) pharmaceutical companies, (b) the Government or (c) both have the authority to declare an end to the pandemic.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The World Health Organisation declared a coronavirus pandemic on 11 March 2020 and we would expect it to declare a move to a post-pandemic period as it has done previously for the H1N1 pandemic in 2010.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Leeds**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

**[106423]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on local economies in the Leeds area.

**Paul Scully:**

Just over £155 million has been provided to businesses in Leeds via the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund and in the Financial Year 2020/21 Leeds City Region Growth Hub has been allocated £780k to engage with businesses in this area.

The Government has made clear that where businesses are required to close as part of localised restrictions being put in place to manage the spread of covid-19, further financial support will be made available.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[106341]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the £18.5 million funding for Imperial College London for phase three covid-19 vaccine trials announced on 17 May 2020 was disbursed; and whether any conditions were attached to that funding.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government has funded early clinical trials for the Imperial vaccine which began in June 2020 and continue.

The £18.5 million for further large scale studies for 2.5 million people has not yet been disbursed, as those studies cannot be undertaken until the ongoing phase 1 clinical trials, future phase 2 efficacy trials and other criteria have proven successful and regulatory approvals have been secured for human deployment of the vaccine.

Any further investment decisions will be made in due course as necessary.

**Coronavirus: Wakefield****Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[106424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on local economies in the Wakefield area.

**Paul Scully:**

Just over £66 million has been provided to businesses in Wakefield via the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund in the Financial Year 2020/21 Leeds City Region Growth Hub has been allocated £780k to engage and support businesses, including in Wakefield.

The Government has made clear that where businesses are required to close as part of localised restrictions being put in place to manage the spread of covid-19, further financial support will be made available.

**Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Stuart Anderson:**[\[106496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding his Department provides to service stations in (a) the UK and (b) Wolverhampton South West constituency for installing electric car charge-points.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government has published a vision for rolling out high-powered chargepoints across the motorway and A-road network in England. Today, a driver is never more than 25 miles away from a rapid chargepoint anywhere along England's motorways and major A roads.

By 2023, we aim to have at least six high-powered, open access chargepoints (150 to 350 kilowatt capable) at motorway service areas in England, with some larger sites having as many as 10 to 12. By 2035, we expect the number to increase to around 6,000 high-powered chargers across the network.

This vision will be supported by a Rapid Charging Fund, which was announced at Budget as part of a £500 million commitment for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. To target spending from this Fund effectively, the Office for Low

Emission Vehicles has commenced a comprehensive review of electric vehicle infrastructure to complete later this year.

Highways England has now completed its commitment to ensure there is a rapid chargepoint every 20 miles along 95% of the Strategic Road Network by March 2020. The management of motorways and major roads is a devolved matter and the UK Government is working with partners in the Devolved Administrations to ensure that there are coordinated plans in place for the development of a rapid charging infrastructure across the UK.

## ■ Electricity Generation

**Alec Shelbrooke:**

[\[106966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps with Ofgem to amend the emerging RIIO-ED2 framework so that Distribution Network Operators are encouraged to optimise voltage in the electricity network.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The price control is a matter for the independent regulator, Ofgem.

Ofgem sets the price control with incentives to ensure Distribution Network Operators operate their networks in the most efficient manner. Ofgem have also used innovation funding to support trials and roll out of new technologies enabling Distribution Network Operators to manage voltage levels on the network to optimise system efficiency and drive down customer bills.

The independent Electricity Engineering Standards Review, jointly commissioned by Government and Ofgem, is looking at how the planning and operational engineering standards should be updated to reflect our changing electricity system. This includes considering future changes to voltage limits set out in the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002.

## ■ Electricity Interconnectors: Coronavirus

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[106473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of interruptions to (a) scrutiny of and (b) consultation on the Aquind Interconnector project as a result of the covid-19 outbreak on public confidence in that project.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Planning Inspectorate is responsible for the conduct of examinations into applications for development consent for nationally significant infrastructure projects. The examination of the application for the proposed Aquind Interconnector project is being carried out by The Planning Inspectorate in accordance with Government advice for dealing with such matters during the Covid-19 outbreak. The Planning Inspectorate is mindful of the need to ensure fairness and open access to all parties throughout the examination process.

The Planning Inspectorate's report on the development consent application for the Aquind Interconnector will be carefully considered once it is submitted to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

## ■ **Energy: Infrastructure**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[106313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his review of National Policy Statements for energy, which Statements will be reviewed; whether the Statements under review will be active during the review; what his timescale is for that review; and if he will make a statement.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

My Rt Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will confirm his intention and the timeframe for any review as part of the forthcoming energy white paper.

## ■ **Equal Pay: Ethnic Groups**

**Martyn Day:**

[\[107058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to introduce additional regulation to (a) require and (b) support businesses to report ethnicity pay gaps.

**Martyn Day:**

[\[107059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make ethnicity pay gap reporting mandatory.

**Paul Scully:**

In 2018/19 the Government consulted on options for employer-level ethnicity pay reporting. Following the consultation, Government met with businesses and representative organisations to understand the barriers to reporting and explore what information could be published to allow for meaningful action to be taken. We also ran a voluntary methodology testing exercise with a broad range of businesses to better understand the complexities outlined in the consultation using real payroll data. The Government is continuing to analyse this data and will respond to the consultation in due course.

## ■ **Ethnic Groups: Pay**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[106483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government will publish its response to the consultation on Ethnicity pay reporting, which closed on 11th January 2019.

**Paul Scully:**

Following the consultation, Government met with businesses and representative organisations to understand the barriers to reporting and explore what information



could be published to allow for meaningful action to be taken. We also ran a voluntary methodology testing exercise with a broad range of businesses to better understand the complexities outlined in the consultation using real payroll data. The Government is continuing to analyse this data and will respond in due course.

## ■ EU Emissions Trading Scheme

**Alan Brown:**

[\[106396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the introduction of a UK emissions trading system.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is working closely with the Devolved Administrations on establishing a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS). Ministers and officials in BEIS have regular discussions with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive on a range of energy and climate change issues, including the introduction of a UK ETS.

## ■ Global Navigation Satellite Systems

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[106338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the Government has spent on developing a sovereign Global Navigation Satellite System since 2018; and what the breakdown of that spending is.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[106339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much has been spent from the public purse on contracts with companies based outside the UK for development of a satellite system to replace Galileo.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The 18 month UK Global Navigation Satellite System Programme successfully concluded its work to develop outline proposals for a conventional satellite navigation system in September. £92m was originally allocated for the UK GNSS Programme and work has concluded successfully under budget. Much of the work was covered by Non-Disclosure Agreements and, for reasons of both commercial and national security sensitivities, it is not possible to offer a detailed breakdown of that spending for both inside and outside the UK.

Work completed by the UK Space Agency so far has developed cutting edge British expertise in areas such as spacecraft and antenna design, satellite and ground control systems, systems engineering and simulation, which have wider applications across the space sector, in addition to supporting specialist UK jobs and industrial GNSS capability.



The new Space Based PNT Programme will carry forward this work to consider newer, more innovative ideas of delivering global 'sat nav' and secure satellite services to meet public, government and industry needs.

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[105422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which local authorities have been allocated funding through the green homes grant local authority delivery scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 22 October to Question UIN [105421](#).

**Tim Farron:** [\[106286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will extend the Green Homes Grant for 12 months to March 2022 to (a) allow the full uptake of the scheme and (b) help stimulate new green jobs.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is committed to improving the building stock as part of reaching our net zero targets. We recognise the importance of providing industry with certainty over demand in future years in order for them to have confidence to invest and grow their businesses.

We are working to provide that certainty and have therefore confirmed that the delivery dates for Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator will extend into 2021/22 to provide assurance that work will be available. Outside of support schemes, we are creating the regulatory environment to drive retrofit and on 30<sup>th</sup> September we published a consultation on further improving the energy performance of privately rented homes over the 2020s, which provides a clear signal on how Government is committed to improving the housing stock.

**Darren Jones:** [\[R\] \[106455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many green homes grants have been awarded by his Department in the first month of that scheme being open to applications.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Green Homes Grant opened to applications on the 30 September 2020. As of midday on 21 October 2020, 22,013 grant applications have been received. BEIS will continue to monitor application data as the scheme progresses.

**Darren Jones:** [\[R\] \[106456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many providers have been approved for accredited services under the new green homes grant in (a) the UK and (b) each region in England.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

As of 26 October, TrustMark has registered 1,108 businesses able to install the primary and/or secondary measures supported by the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme.

**■ Heating: Carbon Emissions****Alan Brown:**[\[106393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a heat decarbonisation strategy in lieu of the non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings. These actions include the deployment of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating as part of an ambitious programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions on how we achieve the mass transition to low-carbon heat and set us on a path to decarbonising all homes and buildings.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[106408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the findings of his Department's consultation on Future support for low carbon heat.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The government response to the Future Support for Low Carbon Heat consultation will be published in due course.

**■ Housing: Energy****Richard Fuller:**[\[106953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment he has made of the average cost for an (a) off grid rural home and (b) urban home to meet average energy efficiency standards.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

In the Clean Growth Strategy, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy stated the aspiration for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable. As a result, it focusses its analysis on the cost of bringing homes up to this standard, rather than the current stock average. The recent PRS Regulations Consultation stage Impact Assessment shows the expected cost of upgrading rented homes up to EPC band C under different cost cap scenarios (table 12). It also shows costs assumptions for energy efficiency and heating systems (Tables 31-32).

## ■ Housing: Heating

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[106381]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 97618 on Housing: Heating, what date his Department plans to publish the Heat and Buildings Strategy; and if he will make a statement.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is developing options for how a long-term framework of policy approaches, including regulation, can combine to provide a clear direction-of-travel for industry and accelerate the uptake of low-carbon heat, initiate a transformation of our building stock, and set us on a path to decarbonising all homes and buildings. Our Heat and Buildings Strategy will be published in due course.

**Richard Fuller:**

**[106952]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to support off grid homes in rural areas decarbonise their home heating.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

As stated in the Clean Growth Strategy (2017), the Government is committed to 'phase out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating in homes not connected to the gas grid, starting with new homes, during the 2020s.' The first part of this commitment, to decarbonise new homes, is being met through the Future Home Standard, on which government consulted earlier this year. The Future Homes Standard will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency, and is set to be introduced in 2025. We are developing proposals for phasing out fossil fuel heating in existing homes in off-gas-grid areas and will be consulting on them in due course.

Additionally, we are providing financial support to help decarbonise homes of the gas grid. This is being done through:

- The domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) – a support scheme for low carbon heat installations in domestic buildings that will remain open to new applicants until March 2022. As of July 2020, the domestic RHI has supported around 80,300 homes make the transition to low carbon heat.
- The Green Homes Grant – a government-funded voucher scheme launched in September 2020 to help consumers install energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures in their homes. This is available for domestic buildings in England, including rural properties, until March 2021. Under this new scheme, the government will fund up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements for over 600,000 homes.

Further support will be provided from 2022 to 2024 through the Clean Heat Grant scheme. This will provide financial support to help consumers and small businesses transition to low carbon heating through the installation of heat pumps and, in limited circumstances, biomass.

**■ Industry: Carbon Capture and Storage**

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[104777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK industries reduce the release carbon through extraction techniques.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is committed to bringing all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. A key part of this is closing all unabated coal-fired power stations in Great Britain by 2024. The reduction of demand for coal in the UK will mean a reduction in domestic mining activity and therefore of the emissions associated with extraction.

The National Policy Statement is clear that planning permission should not be granted for the extraction of coal unless the proposal is environmentally acceptable or the national, local or community benefits outweigh its likely impacts. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government leads on planning policy for coal mines in England.

**■ Infrastructure: Finance**

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[104776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to set up a new green investment bank to finance clean and resilient infrastructure projects throughout the UK.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Our (2019) Green Finance Strategy sets out how we intend to support progress towards Net Zero by 2050 by combining a focus on mobilising and accelerating flows of private finance into key clean growth sectors, using public funds to leverage private capital, whilst providing good value for taxpayers.

Infrastructure is central to our economic strategy, and the Government will publish a National Infrastructure Strategy setting out further details on its long-term ambitions in due course.

**■ LaunchUK Industry Group**

**Owen Thompson:** [\[106411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many companies participate in the LaunchUK Industry Group; and which of those companies were consulted on the contents of the US-UK Technology Safeguards Agreement signed on 16 June 2020.

**Amanda Solloway:**

There are over 100 companies and research institutions in the LaunchUK Industry Group.

The US-UK Technology Safeguards Agreement (TSA) is a legally binding bilateral treaty with the United States of America and is subject to 21 sitting days scrutiny under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRaG). The Command Paper along with the Exchange of Notes for the TSA and Explanatory Memorandum was published and E-laid before Parliament on 16 October 2020.

Companies which are likely to be affected by the provisions in the TSA were consulted prior to and throughout its negotiation, both through the LaunchUK Industry Group and in direct consultations. The Agreement will not place any undue limitations on UK-based companies; indeed, it is expected to open new opportunities for them while meeting the UK's counter-proliferation obligations.

### ■ **Motor Vehicles: Carbon Emissions**

**Ben Lake:**

[\[106457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of a California-style zero emission vehicle mandate to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

We recognise that we need to go further than the existing regulatory regime to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from road transport to deliver our climate goals. We are considering our options as part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

### ■ **Postal Services**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[104730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the installation of automated parcel sorting machines at Royal Mail centres on jobs.

**Paul Scully:**

The installation of automated sorting machines is an operational matter for Royal Mail, a private company.

### ■ **Race in the Workplace Review**

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[106485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to recommendation 26 of the report Race in the workplace: the McGregor-Smith review, published on 28 February 2017, what assessment he has made of whether (a) the recommendations of that review have been implemented and (b) the need for government action to ensure their implementation.

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[106486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government has taken to monitor progress against the recommendations of the Race in the workplace: the McGregor-Smith review, published on 28 February 2017.

**Paul Scully:**

A [one-year on review](#) of how employers in the UK are performing against the recommendations outlined in the McGregor-Smith Review 'Race in the workplace' was conducted in 2018 by Business in The Community and was sponsored by BEIS.

As the Government said in its response to the 'McGregor-Smith Review', this was an industry-led review with recommendations that are mostly for the private sector to consider. The Government remains committed to building an economy that works for everyone. This is a mission that needs to start from the top – Chairs, CEOs, and CFOs – to help effect the change and Government stands ready to support all businesses on this. As the Government noted in its response, it is important that all employers play their part in harnessing this potential.

■ **Redundancy****Siobhain McDonagh:**[\[106895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 98870, how many proposed redundancies were indicated on HR1 forms received by the Redundancy Payments Service in each of the last 12 months.

**Paul Scully:**

Forms received from all employers where there are proposals to dismiss 20 or more employees at an establishment, over the last 12 months, are set out in the following table:

| MONTH  | NUMBER OF HR1 FORMS<br>RECEIVED FROM ALL EMPLOYERS | NUMBER OF PROPOSED<br>DISMISSALS ON HR1S |
|--------|--|--|
| Sep 19 | 303  | 26,716                                   |
| Oct 19 | 343  | 23,882                                   |
| Nov 19 | 305  | 27,820                                   |
| Dec 19 | 196  | 16,733                                   |
| Jan 20 | 372  | 29,884                                   |
| Feb 20 | 329  | 28,674                                   |
| Mar 20 | 485  | 44,465                                   |
| Apr 20 | 447  | 62,443                                   |
| May 20 | 871  | 73,331                                   |
| Jun 20 | 1,888  | 155,739                                  |
| Jul 20 | 1,784  | 149,688                                  |

| MONTH  | NUMBER OF HR1 FORMS<br>RECEIVED FROM ALL EMPLOYERS | NUMBER OF PROPOSED<br>DISMISSALS ON HR1S |
|--------|--|--|
| Aug 20 | 966  | 58,056                                   |
| Sep 20 | 1,734  | 82,029                                   |

Please note that employers are only required to file a Form HR1 where they are “proposing” to dismiss 20 or more employees at a single “establishment”.

“Propose” and “establishment” have distinct meanings in this context.

The aggregate number could include proposed dismissals due to insolvency, restructuring of a solvent/continuing business, changes to terms and conditions, or proposed relocation of employees, for example.

It should also be noted that a proposal to make a given number of dismissals does not necessarily result in all or any of the proposed dismissals occurring.

## ■ Re-employment

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[105272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many letters have been issued under section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 in the last 12 months by employers informing employees of a reduction in their conditions and terms of employment in the event that they are rehired.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government and its agencies do not have this information.

Terms and conditions of employment are for negotiation and agreement between employers and employees (or their representatives). Once agreed, these form a legally binding contract of employment. If the employer changes any of the terms without the employee’s agreement, the employee may be entitled to seek legal redress. Where the employer recognises a trade union, consent for the changes can be facilitated through collective bargaining.

## ■ Renewable Energy

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[104778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support (a) skills and (b) research and development in (i) low emission oil and gas extraction and (ii) hydrogen production; and what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of those technologies to export industry.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

We will support the offshore oil and gas sector with a transformational North Sea Transition Deal, which we have committed to deliver within this Parliament. The focus

of this deal will be on ensuring the sector can support the energy transition and anchor the supply chain to the UK.

The oil and gas sector has an important part to play in sustaining our energy security of supply, and in the energy transition to support net zero, having many of the essential skills and capabilities in its world class supply chain to support emerging technologies such as carbon capture and storage, hydrogen production, and infrastructure to reduce its production emissions. Developing this capability will help provide significant export opportunities as the world moves towards clean energy.

In 2016, the Oil & Gas Technology Centre was established with £180 million funding, supported by the UK and Scottish Governments. The Centre aims to encourage, accelerate, and deliver innovation and innovative technologies in the North Sea as we transition to net zero.

We are committed to exploring the option of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier. In line with this we are currently investing up to £121 million in hydrogen innovation, supporting a range of projects exploring the production and potential of low carbon hydrogen across the value chain.

In November 2019, we published the Energy Innovation Needs Assessment for hydrogen and fuel cells. This identified that the future market for all hydrogen technologies could yield around £5.3bn of gross value added and create nearly 50,000 jobs by 2050 to meet demand in export and domestic markets.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Subsidies

**Marco Longhi:**

**[106509]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review the eligibility criteria for Government green subsidies to enable more community buildings to access funding to install renewable energy sources.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The £10m Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) provides non-capital grant support to rural communities in England. RCEF grants cover the costs for feasibility and further project development work to bring community renewable energy projects to an investment-ready stage. The RCEF eligibility criteria ensures funding is only allocated to projects that demonstrate value to the taxpayer.

The Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) gives small scale low-carbon electricity generators, including community energy projects, the right to be paid for the renewable electricity they export to the grid. There are currently more than 10 SEG tariffs on offer from electricity suppliers, which small scale generators can choose from.



## ■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme

**Alan Brown:**

[\[106394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to extend the non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive at its current funding level.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government consulted on the future of the Non-Domestic RHI scheme in April 2020 and set out its intent to close the scheme at the end of March 2021. The consultation closed on the 7th July and the responses are currently being analysed. The Government response will be published in due course.

## ■ Small Business Grants Fund: Newcastle Upon Tyne

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[104727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the recall of undistributed covid-19 business support grants provided to Newcastle City Council.

**Paul Scully:**

The Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF), the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF) and the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) were part of an unprecedented package of support for businesses in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. My department worked with HM Treasury on the design and delivery of these funds.

We have been clear with local authorities throughout that any unspent funds would need to be returned to the Exchequer. The schemes closed on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020, with all payments made by 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. Local authorities have now received guidance on the reconciliation process.

## ■ USA: Spaceflight

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[107055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take to ensure that launch vehicles manufactured abroad by UK-based companies outsourcing their supply chains abroad are not classified as Foreign Launch Vehicles under Article 2 point 2 of the UK/USA Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Notes between the United Kingdom and the United States of America on Technology Safeguards associated with United States Participation in Space Launches from the United Kingdom [CS USA No.1/2020].

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government will follow the definition contained in the Agreement.

The definitions in the Agreement are designed to capture all possible business and operational models for UK based launch operators and were drafted to enable maximum flexibility for UK companies.

**CABINET OFFICE**■ **Borders: Artificial Intelligence****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[104698]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to implement AI infrastructure at EU-UK borders.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Cabinet Office published on 22 July a consultation document on the 2025 Border Strategy. This set out the Government's intention to create a highly digitised and automated border. As part of this approach, we will explore the potential to use artificial intelligence at the border. We will respond to the consultation in due course.

■ **Common Travel Area: Northern Ireland****Claire Hanna:****[105591]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to make provision for the (a) Common Travel Area and (b) Memorandum of Understanding signed by the British and Irish Governments in 2019.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Common Travel Area (CTA) is an arrangement between the UK, the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey, and Ireland. It is underpinned by domestic law in each jurisdiction.

The UK Government and Irish Government have indicated their commitment to maintaining the CTA, and to taking all necessary measures to ensure that its associated rights and privileges are protected. Both Governments confirmed that position on 8 May 2019, when they signed a Common Travel Area Memorandum of Understanding, setting out that commitment. The text is available on GOV.UK. The UK Government and Irish Government continue to work together to implement the CTA through bilateral agreements and legislation where required.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control****Liz Twist:****[106454]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what (a) procurement policies have been applied and (b) invitations to tender have been submitted in respect of Government contracts with (i) Serco and (ii) other private companies being used in the response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Julia Lopez:**

Details of central government contracts above £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[99101\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to issue covid-19 related guidance on trick or treating.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

We appreciate that people will be thinking about how they can safely mark halloween. Local Authorities will communicate relevant advice on halloween in their area, and the Government is working with Local Authorities to support understanding of how the social distancing rules apply.

## ■ **Death**

**John Redwood:**

[\[106875\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) number and (b) pattern of excess deaths.

**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 PQ106875 [PQ106875.pdf]

## ■ **Housing: National Parks**

**Damian Hinds:**

[\[105354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2020 to Question 100935 on Housing: East Hampshire, if he will undertake an assessment of affordability ratios for homes inside (a) South Downs National Park and (b) other National Park boundaries relative to neighbouring areas.

**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 PQ105354 [PQ105354.pdf]

## ■ **Large Goods Vehicles: Borders**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[106230\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Cabinet Office Policy Paper entitled The Border Operating Model updated on 8 October 2020, what testing has been undertaken of the Check an HGV is Ready to Cross the Border web service.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

I refer the hon. Member to the [letter](#) from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the Chair of the Future Relationship with the European Union select committee dated 7 October 2020 and published on the committee website.

■ **Public Service: Russia**

**Alyn Smith:** [\[93680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the UK Government holds data on the number of former senior crown servants who (a) have and (b) have had in the last five years business relationships with Russian state-backed organisations.

**Chloe Smith:**

Some information on former senior officials taking up appointments is published by ACOBA and available online.

■ **Royal British Legion: Social Clubs**

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[105539\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what financial support is available to Royal British Legion social clubs during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Government has provided service charities with financial support during the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure the support being delivered by these crucial organisations can continue. In addition to the normal lines of funding offered to the service charity sector, the Government has made available £6million through the Covid-19 Impact Fund. This has been distributed to 100 charities, including the Royal British Legion. RBL social clubs may also apply for grants from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

■ **Veterans**

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[106379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department last met with representatives of each of the devolved Administrations to discuss the implementation of the 10 year Veterans Strategy.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The 2018 Strategy for our Veterans is the UK's commitment to those who have served in the Armed Forces. Each nation in the Union is responsible for delivering the outcomes for veterans contained in the Strategy.

Officials regularly engage with counterparts in the Devolved Administrations to discuss progress made on the delivery of their respective Strategy action plans and

wider veterans matters. I have also met ministerial counterparts from the Scottish and Welsh Government this year to discuss veterans issues including the Strategy.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Armed Forces: Housing

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[106355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support families who are being evicted from military homes owned by Annington Homes.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member to the *Ministry of Defence Tenants: Evictions* debate held in the chamber on 15 October 2020 (Hansard Volume 682, 636:644) and I will write with further details.

### ■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 6 September 2015 air-strike on a consolation gathering in Khab Wa Al-Sha'af was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 6 September 2015 air-strike on a consolation gathering in Khab Wqa Al-Sha'af was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 8 September 2015 air-strike on stores in Al-Mukha was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 8 September 2015 air-strik on stores in Al-Mukha was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 18 September 2015 air-strike on a house in Haydan was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 18 September 2015 air-strike on a house in Haydan was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106245]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 10 October 2015 air-strike on a bridge in Baqim was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 10 October 2015 air-strike on a bridge in Baqim was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106246]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 18 December 2015 air-strike on a house in Al-Safra'a was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 18 December 2015 air-strike on a house in Al-Safra'a was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106247]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 12 January 2016 air-strike on Hammam Jarif was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 12 January 2016 air-strike on Hammam Jarif was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106248]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 17 February 2016 air-strike on a house in Nihm was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 17 February 2016 air-strike on a house in Nihm was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106249]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 27 June 2016 air-strike on a fuel market in Hayfan was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 27 June 2016 air-strike on a fuel market in Hayfan was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106250]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 22 January 2017 air-strike on a house in Al-Mukha was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 22 January 2017 air-strike on a house in Al-Mukha was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106251]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 14 December 2017 air-strike on a bridge in Maqbanah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 14 December 2017 air-strike on a bridge in Maqbanah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106252]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 15 December 2017 air-strike on a market in Monabbih was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 15 December 2017 air-strike on a market in Monabbih was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106253]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 31 January 2018 air-strike on a bridge in Qaflah Odhr was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 31 January 2018 air-strike on a bridge in Qaflah Odhr was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106254]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 23 April 2018 air-strike on a fuel station in Abs was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 23 April 2018 air-strike on a fuel station in Abs was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 24 May 2019 air-strike on a fuel station in Mawiyah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 24 May 2019 air-strike on a fuel station in Mawiyah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 4 April 2019 air-strike on a water transport truck in Al Sawadyah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 4 April 2019 air-strike on a water transport truck in Al-Sawadyah was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 16 December 2018 air-strike on a water transport truck in Al Sawadyah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 16 December 2018 air-strike on a water transport truck in Al-Sawadyah was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020. This incident was added to the tracker after 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 12 July 2020 air-strike in Washah was among the incidents entered on the MOD Tracker.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 12 July 2020 air-strike in Washah is among the incidents entered on the MOD Tracker.

## ■ Aviation: Fuels

**James Gray:**

[\[104687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on the use of leaded aviation fuel within the armed forces.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Policy dictates that the current issue of the fuel specification, Defence Standard (Def Stan) 91-090, for Aviation Gasoline (Avgas) is adhered to.



Avgas 100LL is the staple fuel for most piston engine aircraft and contains the additive tetra-ethyl lead (TEL). TEL is used to boost and maintain the octane level and prevent destructive detonation within engines. High-compression and turbocharged engines are particularly affected by such issues.

The Ministry of Defence is driving to reduce environmental contaminants such as TEL where possible and, as soon as alternatives are proven to be fit for purpose and safe in use, it is our policy to seek clearances from the airframe and engine Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for their inclusion in the procurement process.

## ■ Aviation: Training

**James Gray:** [\[104675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) Army and (b) Royal Navy pilots are planned to be streamed through project TELUM per year.

**James Heappey:**

The Royal Navy will assess approximately 48 candidates per year and the Army will assess approximately 90 candidates per year.

**James Gray:** [\[104677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average qualification failure rate was for (a) Army and (b) Navy pilots that have successfully streamed in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**James Heappey:**

For the current financial year fewer than ten Royal Navy and Army pilots failed flying training, following grading/streaming.

**James Gray:** [\[104679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what type of training will be provided through Project TELUM.

**James Gray:** [\[104682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing virtual training through Project TELUM.

**James Gray:** [\[104684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what priorities his Department has set for Project TELUM.

**James Heappey:**

Project TELUM will provide the end to end solution for RAF Air Cadet and University Student flying experience, whilst simultaneously supporting Defence flying grading and streaming. In addition to the necessary live flying, where feasible the use of synthetics and virtual training to support training requirements will be encouraged from potential bidders.

The objective is to inspire a practical interest in aviation, attract undergraduates to military service through provision of military flying training and to de-risk flying training through early introduction and screening as a precursor to the provisions of UKMFTS.

**James Gray:** [\[104680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the contract for Light Aircraft Flying Training 2 is due to be renewed.

**James Gray:** [\[105281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what time period is covered by the contract between his Department and Babcock for light aircraft flying training.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Light Aircraft Flying Training 2 contract was awarded to VT Aerospace Ltd in 2009. The contract was transferred to Babcock International following their takeover of VT Aerospace Ltd in 2010; it has been extended under its terms and is due to run until 2022.

**James Gray:** [\[104686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the circumstances of previous fatal accidents involving Air Cadets; and what steps he is taking to ensure contracts held by his Department deliver the highest practicable level of safety.

**James Heappey:**

The RAF has introduced a number of safety enhancements on its aircraft, including the addition of electronic Collision Warning Systems on the Tutor aircraft. Military Aviation, including cadet flying, is now governed by a Duty Holder system in which senior responsible officers are held accountable to ensure that all safety risks are managed to as low as reasonably practicable. Contractors are required to comply with the safety standards in place and the Tutor fleet has operated safely under the Light Aircraft Flying Training 2 contract.

## ■ Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[105335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 12 August 2016 air-strike on a house in Saada was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 12 August 2016 air-strike on a house in Saada was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[105336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 16 February 2017 air-strike on an informal petrol station

near a school in Nihm was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 16 February 2017 air-strike on an informal petrol station near a school in Nihm was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 31 May 2015 air-strike on the Great Dam of Marib was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 31 May 2015 air-strike on the Great Dam of Marib was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 24 September 2019 air-strike on a residence in Qataba was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 24 September 2019 air-strike on a residence in Qataba was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 26 April 2015 air-strike on a house in Al-Makhader was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 26 April 2015 air-strike on a house in Al-Makhader was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 27 May 2015 air-strike on a fuel station in Khadir was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

Yes, the alleged 27 May 2015 air-strike on a fuel station in Khadir was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86598, whether the 7 July 2015 air-strike on a store in Al-Mansoriyah was among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

**James Heappey:**

No, the alleged 7 July 2015 air-strike on a store in Al-Mansoriyah was not among the 528 incidents entered on the MOD Tracker as of 30 April 2020.

■ **Twentyshilling Hill Wind Farm****David Mundell:**[\[106234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) recent progress has been made on the Twenty Shilling Windfarm agreement and (b) assessment he has made of when that agreement will be concluded.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Ministry of Defence (MOD) officials are working collaboratively with the developer to see if a Mitigation Scheme could be devised to allow the Twenty Shilling windfarm to be built whilst protecting the nearby Eskdalemuir Seismological Array. The scheme is complex and covers noise monitoring, testing, reporting, compliance, and curtailment.

A legal agreement would need to be reached by all parties, that legal agreement is progressing. If a mitigation scheme is achievable MOD officials aim to be in a position to conclude the legal agreement in the next few months, subject to negotiation.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **ARM: NVIDIA****Chi Onwurah:**[\[106334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with Nvidia on their purchase of ARM; and what guarantees he has sought on (a) employment levels and (b) employee TUPE conditions.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

ARM is an important part of the UK's technology sector and makes a significant contribution to the UK economy. The government monitors acquisitions and mergers closely. When a takeover may have a significant impact on the UK we will not hesitate to investigate further and take appropriate action. We are examining this deal carefully. It would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

■ **Arts: Self-employment Income Support Scheme****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[106297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to support freelancers working in the creative sector who are ineligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

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 and
- £6m distributed by a series of Benevolent Funds focused on the self-employed.

An unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector has benefitted 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 ACE. Each organisation that receives money will know what best they can do to support their workforce, including their freelance workforce.

## ■ Broadband

**Esther McVey:**

[\[100988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made with Building Digital UK in rolling out full-fibre broadband throughout the UK.

**Matt Warman:**

According to Thinkbroadband, currently 27.1% of premises have access to gigabit-capable broadband - up from 0.9% in 2016. 17.1% of premises have access to full fibre connections.

The Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme is investing £278 million to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre networks in both rural and urban locations across the whole of the UK. There are 36 projects ongoing across the UK, 34 of which are in delivery.

The Superfast Programme has delivered superfast broadband to 5.3 million premises, which constitutes 17% of all households in the UK. In 2019, the majority of delivery on the Superfast Programme moved from Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) to Fibre to the Premise (FTTP). For example, for the financial quarter April-June 2020, ~90% (27k premises out of 30k) of delivery through the programme was FTTP. The Superfast Programme, therefore, is now a significant contributor to the government's gigabit ambitions, as well as satisfying its commitment to Superfast coverage.

**Damian Collins:**

[\[106319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with Ofcom on (a) Ofcom's policy to incentivise Openreach to build

full fibre infrastructure in areas deemed commercially uncompetitive and (b) the criteria Ofcom uses to define those areas as uncompetitive.

**Matt Warman:**

The department has regular conversations with Ofcom at both ministerial and official level about its work to regulate the telecoms market, including the Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review. Ofcom has set out its findings and proposed regulatory approach from the review in its published consultation documents, which are available on its website.

■ **Coronavirus: Disinformation**

**Chi Onwurah:** [106343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of staff hours of staff from each Government department spent working on the Counter Disinformation Unit; and what assessment the Government has made of the effect on existing departmental projects of the redeployment of staff to work on that Unit.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Counter Disinformation Unit was stood up to tackle disinformation and misinformation relating to COVID-19 in March 2020. This is a whole of Government effort and the unit rightly draws on resources from a number of existing cross-government teams, giving it the flexibility to respond to a range of different issues as needed. We keep under regular review the prioritisation of resources across projects to ensure effective delivery of the Government's priorities.

■ **Data Protection: USA**

**Chi Onwurah:** [102805]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2020 to Question 75283 on Disclosure of Information: USA, when his Department plans to publish updated guidance on international data transfers following the Schrems II ruling.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Government is committed to ensuring high data protection standards and supporting UK organisations on international data transfer issues.

The Government is continuing to work with the ICO to address the impacts of the Schrems II judgment for UK controllers. During the transition period, this includes the ICO supplementing the guidance provided by the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) and the European Commission with targeted advice to help UK controllers. We expect the EDPB to provide further guidance on this in due course.

The ICO has published updated material on its [website](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/international-transfers) ( <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/international-transfers> ), and will continue to publish further guidance, to supplement that provided by the EDPB, as and when appropriate.

## ■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

**Ben Bradley:**

[\[100540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional support for (a) fairgrounds and other outdoor events and (b) the wider events sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

My Department has taken a number of steps to support fairgrounds, other outdoor events, as well as the broader events sector through Covid-19.

The events sector has been able to access support such as the Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Bounce Back Loans scheme. We have also cut the rate of VAT applied on most tourism and hospitality-related activities, including admission to circuses and fairs, from 20% to 5% until March 2021.

On 22 October, the Chancellor increased the reach of the Government's winter support schemes to further help businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19, including those in the events sector. Measures include doubling the size of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme Extension Grant so that it covers 40% of previous earnings.

We continue to meet with stakeholders, including through the Visitor Economy Working Group and the Events and Entertainment Working Group, to monitor the ongoing impacts on the sector.

## ■ Events Industry: Insurance

**Ian Murray:**

[\[106314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a Government-backed insurance scheme for live events.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

We are aware that there are calls for a Government backed insurance scheme for live events. I am grateful for the evidence provided and I know DCMS and HMT colleagues are closely monitoring the situation together with the sector.

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

## ■ Football: Coronavirus

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[102685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason a maximum of 300 spectators are allowed to attend football matches at Step 7 of the pyramid but not in steps 5 and 6 during the covid-19 outbreak.



**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

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

Under government guidance non-elite sport clubs are able to admit spectators, whilst adhering to COVID-19 guidance. It is up to the respective governing bodies to determine what constitutes the boundary between elite and non-elite within their sports, and consider any appropriate additional regulation including total spectator numbers should that be appropriate within their sport.

**■ Greyhound Racing: Animal Welfare****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[105301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when (a) he and (b) members of his Department last met with representatives of the betting and gaming industries to discuss improving greyhound welfare.

**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[105302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of British Greyhound Racing Fund's levy being made mandatory in the context of the statutory levy imposed on Bookmakers by the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

In January 2019 the Government announced that it had secured a new funding commitment from five of the largest online bookmakers to help ensure the welfare of greyhounds is protected and improved. This was in addition to the existing voluntary payments made to the British Greyhound Racing Fund from most betting operators that benefit from greyhound racing, which sit alongside commercial deals between the betting and racing industries. In 2019/20 the BGRF collected a total of £8.87m, up from £6.95m in the previous 12 months.

Government has no plans to introduce a mandatory levy and will continue to encourage any remaining bookmakers that have not signed up to the voluntary arrangements to follow suit. The Department has discussions with the betting and greyhound racing industries on a range of issues and expects both to make sure that greyhound welfare is safeguarded and remains at the heart of the sport.

**■ Horse Racing: Coronavirus****John Spellar:**[\[106897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the financial effect of the tier system of covid-19 restrictions on the horse racing industry.



**Nigel Huddleston:**

Horse Racing behind closed doors continues to operate throughout the UK in line with government guidance and British Horseracing Authority (BHA) protocols.

The Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) has indicated that 1,565 Licensed Betting Offices (LBOs) are closed as part of the Tier 3 restrictions affecting the Liverpool City Region, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and Warrington. The BGC have estimated a loss of nearly £2.7million per month to the horse racing industry in media rights (payable to broadcast races) and levy income, based on the current amounts generated in levy and media payments.

The government will continue to work with the sector to understand the issues faced by organisations facing the most challenging circumstances

**Horses: Animal Welfare****Henry Smith:**[\[106523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to support equine rescue charities whose income has reduced as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and who are ineligible for the job support schemes.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

There are already generous measures in place to support the voluntary and community sector which include more than £1.3 billion a year in respect of Gift Aid on donations. Charities play an invaluable role in this country which is why the Government has made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector so that they can continue their vital work through the coronavirus outbreak.

The Government has also worked closely with the sector through the Canine and Feline Sector Group and National Equine Welfare Council to agree and update guidance to animal rescue and rehoming organisations, and other animal charities and businesses. This has enabled them to undertake core operations as far as possible, whilst maintaining compliance with the social distancing rules and need for hygiene precautions to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

DCMS and Defra remain committed to continued engagement with the sector to understand the longer-term impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, monitor the animal welfare implications of this and offer appropriate advice and support.

**Internet: Safety****Daisy Cooper:**[\[105551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish the online media literacy strategy connected with the Online Harms Bill.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Online Harms White Paper set out the Government's intention to publish an online Media Literacy Strategy to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to

media literacy education for all UK citizens. The Strategy is due to be published in spring 2021.

**Daisy Cooper:** [105554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations he has received from experts in the education sector on the Online Harms Bill.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

Ministers and officials are engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, in developing the Online Harms Bill. This includes discussions with experts from the education sector. We will publish a Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year, which will include more detailed proposals on online harms regulation. We will continue to engage with stakeholders from the education sector, as well as industry, academia and civil society, as we develop proposals and move towards legislation.

## ■ Job Support Scheme

**Matt Western:** [104152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether companies in the (a) events and exhibitions sectors and (b) sports stadia are eligible to access the Job Support Scheme for their employees due to restrictions on those sectors reopening during the covid-19 outbreak; and when his Department plans to publish further sector-specific guidance for the application of the Job Support Scheme to those sectors.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

On 9 October the Chancellor announced a further expansion to the package of financial support available to businesses across the UK. This includes an expansion of the Job Support Scheme (JSS) to cover 61.67% of wages for open businesses, an increase to self-employed grants, additional business grants, and an extension of the VAT reduction to 5%. This is an addition to the measures outlined on 24 September, which is intended to cover businesses closed by national and local restrictions. Individual businesses will need to evaluate the applicability of these schemes based on their own financial circumstance.

The Treasury has published a JSS policy paper (which can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-job-support-scheme/the-job-support-scheme>) , giving further details on eligibility criteria, conditions and timescales for making claims under the JSS Open and the JSS Closed. Further guidance will be published shortly.

## ■ Museums and Galleries: Wakefield

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [105613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the long-term sustainability of museums in Wakefield constituency.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

The Government has demonstrated the significance it places on culture through the Cultural Recovery Fund. This £1.57bn support package to protect Britain's world-class cultural, arts and heritage institutions, is the biggest ever one-off investment in UK culture. The funding will support our critical cultural and heritage institutions to survive and recover through the coronavirus pandemic.

My department has been working tirelessly with our Arms' Length bodies to process the awards and I am pleased organisations across the country have benefitted including The Hepworth Wakefield, which was awarded £146,726, and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park which was awarded £804,013 from the Fund.

The National Coal Mining Museum is also supported via Grant in Aid distributed through the DCMS- sponsored Science Museum Group.

**■ Musicians: Coronavirus****Jon Trickett:**[\[104039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of financial support available to freelance musicians during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

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

We recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading. As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities for freelancers. Each organisation that receives money will know what best they can do to support their workforce, including their freelance workforce.

And the culture recovery fund will benefit freelancers, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances. It will help many put on cultural activity within this Financial Year which wouldn't have been possible without this funding.

The government has taken active steps to support the self-employed. Over three quarters of eligible people in the cultural sectors have benefitted from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

The Arts Council England has made £119 million available to individuals, with £23.1 million already distributed and £95.9 million currently available to apply for via open funds. This includes:

- £17.1 million distributed through the Emergency Response Fund for individuals;
- £6 million distributed by a series of Benevolent Funds focused on the self employed.

- £18 million available through their Developing Your Creative Practice fund;
- £77.9 million available through National Lottery Project Grants (available to both individuals and organisations).

And the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will benefit freelancers, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances. It will help many put on cultural activity within this Financial Year which wouldn't have been possible without this funding.

The 1,385 successful arts recipients that were announced on Monday 12 October set out in their applications that this support would enable them to deliver over £150million of cultural activity before the end of March 2021. As organisations prepare for this activity, they will likely increase their employment of cultural freelancers.

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

## ■ **Printing: Coronavirus**

**Paul Blomfield:**

**[105356]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the print industry; and what support he is providing to that sector.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

We appreciate that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to many of DCMS' sectors including the publishing industries. Through regular ministerial-led roundtables, working groups and contact with DCMS officials, we will continue to work with the publishing sector to assess and understand the difficulties it faces in these challenging times and through recovery.

The Government has provided unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency. The Government's response has been one of the most generous and comprehensive in the world, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Bounceback Loan Scheme and business rates reliefs. The publishing sector has also benefited from the government's introduction of a zero rate of VAT to e-publications, which will make it clear e-publications are entitled to the same VAT treatment as their physical counterparts.

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.

## ■ Public Sector: Artificial Intelligence

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[104696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport what steps his Department is taking to ensure AI used in public services operates on the same principles of responsibility, transparency, and security as other local government activities.

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[104697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport what plans he has to launch AI registers that track how algorithms are being used locally.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Local Government's use of AI and Algorithms is currently not that widespread; in the few cases where the technology is used, it is used to aid decision making and not make decisions.

We are aware of the emerging importance of AI and algorithms, and we encourage local government to use the government guidance document 'A guide to using artificial intelligence in the public sector', when utilising this technology.

## ■ Rugby: Coronavirus

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[105625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the (a) level of fiscal support available to Premiership Rugby clubs in response to the covid-19 outbreak and (b) potential merits of increasing that support.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government recognises the impact that Covid-19 is having on the sporting sector and our multi-billion-pound package of business support has enabled many of our sports clubs to survive. We have 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.

The Government has 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 safety and security of players and spectators remains of paramount importance. Work continues at pace to find solutions that will allow crowds safely back into stadia as soon as possible. This includes the creation of a new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this. Ministers and officials will continue to engage with Premiership Rugby as part of this process. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is also working with HM Treasury on what can be done to provide further support.

**■ Sports: Coronavirus****Jon Trickett:****[103429]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his policy is on the role of (a) Government and (b) professional sporting governing bodies in providing financial support to financially stricken sports clubs during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

Where it can, we will expect the top tiers of professional sport to look at ways in which it can support itself, with government focusing on those most in need. I also welcomed the Premier League announcement to advance funds of £125 million to the EFL and National League to help clubs throughout the football pyramid and encourage the ongoing discussions

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 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.

**Daniel Kawczynski:****[104073]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to provide further support to individual sports clubs during 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.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is working with HM Treasury on what can be done to provide further support since the decision was made to prevent fans returning to stadia from 1 October.

## ■ Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[106498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the (a) German and (b) South Korean Governments on allowing spectators into sports stadia during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

My department has had no such recent discussions with the German or South Korean Governments. Officials in my department engage regularly with a range of representatives to discuss a variety of issues related to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on my department's areas of responsibility.

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 Department for Culture, Media and Sport is working with HM Treasury on what can be done to provide further support. The Department will also continue to work with colleagues across Whitehall to support the sector, to review best practice globally, and to return fans to sports stadia when it is safe to do so.

## ■ Third Sector: Coronavirus

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[106296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to support the voluntary and community sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

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

The Government has also provided targeted financial support to the sector during the Covid-19 outbreak, including an unprecedented £750 million in funding for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, which includes £360 million directly from Government departments and £200 million via the National Lottery Community Fund.

Additionally, the Office for Civil Society in DCMS has issued regular newsletters to ensure the civil society sector is up to date on the latest information and support available during the Covid-19 pandemic.

DCMS continues to work closely with the civil society sector to assess the needs of the sector and how the government can best support it to continue its vital work. The Minister for Civil Society, Baroness Barran holds regular meetings with civil society representatives to highlight and address key issues for the sector in responding to the Covid-19 crisis.



**■ Third Sector: Finance****Owen Thompson:****[106410]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October to Question 99668, what fiscal steps he is taking to provide targeted support for small community-level voluntary organisations and charities in addition to the support available for the wider charity sector outlined in that Answer.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

There are generous measures available for the whole voluntary and community sector which include more than £1.3 billion a year in respect of Gift Aid on donations. Charities play an invaluable role in this country, which is why we have committed £750 million in targeted funding so that they can continue their vital work through the coronavirus outbreak. £360m was allocated by central government departments to help charities in England based on service need, and £310m was allocated to support smaller, local charities working with vulnerable people in England on the frontline of the coronavirus response. £60 million from the wider package has been distributed via the Barnett formula to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to support all types of charities on the frontline of the response.

In addition to this support, the Charity Commission for England and Wales has 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 are providing an unprecedented multi-billion-pound package of government support for charities. We are absolutely committed to ensuring taxpayers' money is spent effectively and are working flat out to ensure help reaches those who need it most.

**■ Youth Investment Fund****Stuart Anderson:****[104769]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with youth sector representatives on the Youth Investment Fund.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Ministers and officials are in regular contact with the youth sector

Ministers continue to regularly engage with senior sector leaders, attend roundtables and hold conversations on the impact of Covid on the youth sector and young people, and the development of the Youth Investment Fund.

Officials hold fortnightly meetings with senior representatives from the Back Youth Alliance, a coalition of leading national youth organisations, as well as meeting with the sector to discuss specific issues.



## EDUCATION

### ■ Children: Disability

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[107047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to implement increased access to respite care for parents and families of disabled children during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

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

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

Local authorities have been allocated a further £4.6 billion to help their communities through the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding is un-ringfenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major COVID-19 service pressures in their local area. This funding can support local authorities to deliver their respite offers (in line with their existing duties) and to address increased costs.

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

We have gathered more detailed examples of innovative ways of delivering short breaks during the COVID-19 outbreak, including using direct payments and carrying out virtual direct activities. We have communicated best practice to Directors of Children's Services and encouraged local authorities to adopt a flexible approach, to ensure that as many disabled children and young people as possible can continue to access these respite services during the COVID-19 outbreak.

### ■ Education: Coronavirus

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[105541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the adequacy of the teaching received by children in (a) the North West and (b) the South East.

**Nick Gibb:**

Getting all children back to school for the start of the academic year has rightly been a national priority. Latest figures show that over 99% of state-funded schools in both the North West and South East are open, and regional teams are working closely

with local areas to address any barriers to attendance. The Government is grateful for all the hard work of teachers and staff in supporting pupils during this time.

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 due to the COVID-19 outbreak. 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. This is 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. The support package can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Routine Ofsted inspections will remain suspended for the autumn term, though Ofsted inspectors are conducting visits in the autumn term. The intention is for Ofsted to resume routine school inspections from January 2021, which will include inspectors assessing the quality of education within schools, with this date being kept under review.

## ■ Further Education

**Gill Furniss:** [106441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the further education White Paper.

**Gillian Keegan:**

As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, confirmed to the House on 1 October 2020 in his oral statement, we will publish our further education white paper later this year.

## ■ Further Education: Extracurricular Activities

**Afzal Khan:** [104768]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase funding for extra-curricular activities in sixth form institutions and colleges.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Since the academic year 2013-14, school sixth forms, colleges, and other 16-19 education providers have been funded for 600 planned hours per year per full-time

student. In addition to time spent pursuing qualifications, these provide time for non-qualification activity which will be helpful for young people such as: work experience and work related activity such as preparing CVs and practicing interview skills and techniques; informal certificates such as citizenship awards or Duke of Edinburgh's Award; university visits arranged by the institution; volunteering activities and community activities; and any activities that offer enrichment to the student such as personal and social development.

We have no plans to offer additional funding specifically for extra-curricular activities. However, in 2019 the government announced increased 16-19 funding of £400 million for the financial year 2020-21 – the biggest injection of new money into 16-19 education in a single year since 2010 - with funding increasing faster for 16-19 than in 5-16 schooling. The 16-19 base rate has increased by 4.7% for the academic year 2020-21 to £4,188.

Full details of fundable activity can be found in the study programme guidance, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-planned-hours-in-study-programmes>.

We are continuing to look at the needs of 16-19 education as part of the current spending review.

## ■ GCSE

**Afzal Khan:**

**[105540]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure pupils are adequately supported ahead of GCSE exams in summer 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

In July, Ofqual consulted on arrangements for GCSEs, AS levels and A levels in 2021, and its decisions on the changes proposed were published on 3 August. Changes to the content of assessments for certain subjects will reduce pressure on teachers and students.

The wellbeing of students is our key concern. Schools and colleges are making extraordinary efforts to ensure pupils get the best possible education this year and catch up on any learning lost. On 12 October, the Department confirmed that exams will go ahead next year and most AS level, A level and GCSE exams will be delayed by three weeks to give pupils more time to catch up on their education. The delay to exams allows extra time for teaching and preparation.

The Government announced a catch-up package worth £1 billion, including a 'Catch Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million. Our expectation is that this funding will be spent on the additional activities required to support children and young people to catch up after a period of disruption to their education. We also announced a new £350 million National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils. This will increase access to high-quality tuition for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackling the attainment gap between them and their peers. As part of this, we announced a 16-19

Tuition Fund, allocating up to £96 million as a one-off, one year, ring-fenced grant to school sixth forms and 16-19 colleges. This will provide small group tutoring activity for disadvantaged 16-19 students whose studies have been disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ **Hindi: GCE A-level and GCSE**

**Gareth Thomas:**

**[105279]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 2 October 2020 to Question 94998, how many people took (a) a GCSE and (b) an A-level qualification in the Hindi language in each year between 2009 and 2015.

**Nick Gibb:**

Hindi is not currently offered at GCSE or A Level. The Department has no record of entries in Hindi at either GCSE or A level in the period 2009 to 2015.

■ **Internet: Safety**

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[105555]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what meetings he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, (b) the Home Secretary and (c) expert organisations on the Online Harms Bill.

**Vicky Ford:**

Ministers have regular meetings and discussions with their ministerial colleagues on a range of issues, including the proposed legislation on online safety.

I and many of my ministerial colleagues and representatives from expert organisations attended the virtual summit on hidden harms, which my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, hosted on 21 May. More details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-ministers-virtual-summit-on-hidden-harms>.

Following the summit, the government reiterated its commitment to introducing a world-leading regulatory framework to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

I will be meeting with my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, to discuss our approach to online harms.

■ **Music: Coronavirus**

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[105549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure the availability of music education in schools during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[105550]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding available to music education in schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government published guidance for full opening of schools this academic year, and makes it 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 Stage 4 and 5, the majority of pupils are expected to continue to study their examination subjects, including those who are due to take exams in music.

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 music safely. The guidance is available here:

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

The Government has announced the biggest funding boost for schools in a decade which will give every school more money for every child. We are investing a total of £14.4 billion more in schools over the next three financial years, with a cash increase of £2.6 billion in 2020-21, and increases of £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to the financial year 2019-20. Schools have the autonomy to use these resources as they see best, to ensure that they teach a broad and balanced curriculum.

In terms of wider support for music in schools, the Government provided £300 million for a network of Music Education Hubs between 2016 and 2020. In January, the Government announced a further £80 million investment in Music Education Hubs for the financial year 2020-21 to ensure all children, whatever their background, have access to a high-quality music education. The hubs continue to provide a range of opportunities for young people, including whole class instrumental teaching, individual lessons, ensembles, choirs and more. Schools should work with their hubs to ensure a quality music education for all pupils this year.

**■ Music: Education****Dr Lisa Cameron:****[105409]**

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

**Nick Gibb:**

A call for evidence on music education was launched on 9 February 2020 and closed on 13 March 2020, 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.

**■ Outdoor Recreation: Coronavirus****Daisy Cooper:****[104772]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the feasibility of safely reopening outdoor activity centres during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department's educational visits advice is in line with guidance from Public Health England, the Cabinet Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and will be reviewed again in November 2020. It can be viewed here:

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

The Department continues to work with representatives of the tour industry, devolved administrations, trade unions and other government departments as it works towards the November review.

**Overseas Students: EU Nationals****Daniel Zeichner:****[106375]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether EU citizens with (a) pre-settled and (b) settled status will be eligible for home fee status, undergraduate, postgraduate and advanced learner financial support from Student Finance England for courses starting in the academic year 2021-22.

**Michelle Donelan:**

EU nationals with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, and who meet the relevant eligibility requirements in force at the time of course commencement, will have access to home fee status and student financial support.

We have agreed with the EU that current EU principles of equal treatment will continue to apply for those covered by the citizens' rights provisions in the Withdrawal Agreement. This means that EU nationals resident in the UK before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 will be eligible for support on a similar basis to domestic students. They have until 30 June 2021 to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

EU nationals (and their family members) living in the UK before the end of the transition period who are migrant or frontier workers, or who are self-employed, as well as those who have the right of permanent residence (settled status), will also be eligible for maintenance support, subject to meeting the usual residence requirements.

**Primary education: Coronavirus****Steve McCabe:****[104689]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will extend the same examination extension announced for secondary schools and colleges in response to the covid-19 outbreak to primary schools administering SATs and other statutory assessments.

**Nick Gibb:**

National Curriculum assessments are an essential part of ensuring that all pupils have the basics of reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them for secondary school. They allow parents and schools to understand pupils' achievements in

relation to the age related attainment expectations outlined in the National Curriculum.

The Department recognises that pupils have missed a critical period of their education due to school closures in the 2019/20 academic year. We are planning on the basis that primary assessments will take place in 2020/21 to allow us to understand the remaining impact of COVID-19 and target ongoing support to those that need it most.

Timings for SATs in 2021 will be confirmed shortly.

## ■ Primary Education: Teachers

**Sir David Evennett:**

**[105292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) male and (b) female teachers there were in state primary schools in each of the last five years in (i) England, (ii) Greater London and (iii) Bexley.

**Sir David Evennett:**

**[105293]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) male and (b) female teachers there were in state secondary schools in each of the last five years in (i) England, (ii) Greater London and (iii) Bexley Borough.

**Nick Gibb:**

Information on the number of teachers by gender in state funded primary and secondary schools for both National and Greater London regions can be viewed at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/8017d78a-c356-4a23-9f5d-84837bae3930>.

Information on the number of teachers by gender in all state funded schools in the Bexley local authority is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/babdd0b6-86b0-4a7c-be31-612a913d2ea1>.

The breakdown by school phase is not explicitly summarised in the publication. It can, however, be calculated from the individual school records which are published as part of the Schools Workforce Statistics Collection. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-workforce>.

## ■ Pupils: Disability

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[107046]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government plans to allocate additional funding to support children with complex disabilities to return to school during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

We know that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), along with their parents, carers and families, will have faced real difficulties during the



COVID-19 outbreak. We have published a range of guidance to support children, families, carers and educational settings.

We are increasing high needs funding for children with complex SEND by an extra £1.5 billion across this year and next year. We are also providing schools with an additional catch-up support worth £1 billion. Of this, £650 million has been committed towards a COVID-19 catch-up premium. This has been introduced to support mainstream and special schools to make up for lost teaching time upon a pupil's return to school.

All pupils have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, so schools' allocations from the catch-up premium will be calculated on a per pupil basis. This will provide each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil and special schools, alternative provision and hospital schools with £240 for each place, across the 2020-21 academic year. We have applied additional weighting to specialist settings, recognising the significantly higher per-pupil costs that they face. However, all schools should use the total catch-up premium funding available to them as a single total from which to prioritise support for particular pupils, including children with SEND or education, health and care plans, according to their needs.

Additionally, the Department for Education has worked with our partners, the Department of Health and Social Care, Health Education England, Public Health England and key voluntary sector organisations, to launch Wellbeing for Education Return. This project, backed by £8 million, is training local experts to provide additional advice and resources for schools and colleges to help support pupil, student, parent, carer and staff wellbeing, resilience and recovery in light of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown. It will give staff the confidence to support pupils, students, and their parents.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[107048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to monitor the safe return to school for children with complex needs during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The COVID-19 outbreak has been extremely challenging for many families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Supporting them continues to be a priority for this government, and their wellbeing has been central to our response throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are monitoring the safe return to school for children with complex needs during the COVID-19 outbreak, through monitoring attendance data and engaging with local authorities where there appear to be issues. We are also working closely with Public Health England to ensure we maintain joint up-to-date guidance about support in schools and colleges, for children and young people with complex needs.

Additionally, the department's SEND advisers and case leads have had regular engagement with all local authorities to support and monitor SEND practice from the

start of the COVID-19 outbreak. They are also providing regular briefings for local authorities, to support their understanding of guidance and help them understand how to use it in practice.

We have also paused area SEND inspections and commissioned Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to deliver a series of interim visits, which began this month, to understand children and young people's experiences and learn from what has worked well for them in this time. These visits help to support local areas to prioritise and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. They also enable learning for all local areas, government and stakeholders on how best to rebuild a better SEND system in future through a series of national reports.

## ■ Pupils: Mental Health

**Christian Wakeford:**

**[107149]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding from the catch-up premium introduced by the Government in response to the covid-19 outbreak is being spent on pastoral support by schools; what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of that funding to support all pupils' mental health and wellbeing needs during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a resilience fund for the 2020-21 academic year to enable schools to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

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. The Department supported this with a range of training and materials, such as webinars 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.

The Government has announced a catch-up package worth £1 billion, including a catch-up premium worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. School leaders have discretion over how to use this funding to best support the needs of their students, but we expect them to prioritise those who need the most catch up support. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) COVID-19 Support Guide is clear that interventions, including those focused on behaviour or pupils' social and emotional needs, are likely to be important to support those who have fallen furthest behind. The EEF guidance is available here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/>.

We will not be assessing how schools use their catch-up premium, but understanding the impact of COVID-19 disruption on attainment and progress is a key research priority for the Government. We have commissioned an independent research and

assessment agency to consider catch up needs and monitor progress over the course of the year.

The £1 billion catch-up package is on top of the £2.6 billion increase this year in school budgets that was announced last year, as part of a £14 billion three year funding settlement, recognising the additional work schools will need to do to help students to catch up. Additionally, the national funding formula (NFF) continues to target funding to areas which have the greatest numbers of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. This year, the NFF will allocate £6.3 billion in funding for pupils with additional needs, or 18% of the formula's total funding.

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

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

#### ■ Schools: North West Durham

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[106511]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding schools in North West Durham constituency have received as part of the (a) National Tutoring Programme and (b) universal catch-up premium for schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The attached table shows the allocations and payments to schools in the North West Durham parliamentary constituency for the COVID-19 catch-up premium.

The values represented in the attached table are the initial payments made in the autumn based on a proportion of a provisional allocation calculated using the published rates and school census data from October 2019. The final allocations will be re-calculated once the October 2020 school census data is available and a further payment made in early 2021. The remaining allocation will then be paid in a final instalment later in 2021.

There is no data currently available for the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). The NTP is not yet live and so we do not have any information about participants. We expect our first group of tutors to be working with schools from November with provision ramping up into the Spring Term. Next month, we will announce a list of

approved Tuition Partners. Schools will be able to approach these partners to access subsidised tuition. We will also be appointing our first wave of academic mentors, matching suitable candidates to schools that have expressed an interest in working with a mentor.

**Attachments:**

1. 106511\_Table [106511\_Table\_COVID-19\_catch-up\_premium\_payments\_to\_North\_West\_Durham\_schools.xls]

■ **Schools: Vocational Guidance**

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

**[105350]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to incorporate assessment of the quality of careers advice in schools into the OFSTED inspection process.

**Nick Gibb:**

Ofsted's school inspections already include an assessment of the quality of careers advice in schools. Ofsted's school inspection handbook states that inspectors should assess the effectiveness of careers programmes in line with the Government's statutory guidance on careers advice. That includes an evaluation of the quality of careers information, education, advice and guidance given to pupils, and an assessment of how well that guidance encourages pupils to make good and informed choices about next steps in the careers to which they aspire.

■ **Sixth Form Colleges: Finance**

**Afzal Khan:**

**[104766]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase the rate for funding for sixth form educational institutions.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The government's Spending Round in August 2019 identified the need to increase funding for 16 to 19 year olds' education to ensure that they fulfil their potential and develop the skills the country needs. That is why we invested an extra £400 million in 16 to 19 education in the financial year 2020-21. We have increased the base rate of funding by 4.7%, from £4,000 to £4,188 for the academic year 2020-21. Over and above the base rate rise, this extra spending also includes new resources for high value and high cost courses, and funding to support those on level 3 programmes to continue to study English and maths where needed. This is the biggest injection of new money into 16 to 19 education in a single year since 2010 - with funding increasing faster for 16 to 19 than in 5 to 16 schooling.

The government's commitment to 16 to 19 funding has contributed to the current record high proportion of 16 and 17 year olds who are participating in education or apprenticeships since consistent records began.

We are continuing to look at the needs of 16 to 19 education as part of the current spending review.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[107049]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that children with SEND have an up-to-date Education, Health and Care Plan before returning to school during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The temporary changes that were made to two aspects of the law on education, health and care (EHC) needs assessments and plan processes, at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak, have now ceased. Any case started, or in progress, since the temporary changes to timescales for EHC plans expired on 25 September, is now subject to the usual statutory timescales, and all therapies and support that would usually be in place for children with EHC plans should now have been restored.

The Chief Nurse of Public Health England has written to all Directors of Nursing advising that professionals supporting children and families, such as health visitors, school nurses, designated safeguarding officers and nurses supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), should not be redeployed to other services. This ensures ongoing support from health bodies towards making sure that all EHC plan assessments and reviews are up to date.

Alongside this, the department has held frequent conversations with local authority SEND and health leaders since March, to explore the challenges they face and to provide support in undertaking their statutory duties for EHC plans. When local authorities have had a need for a Written Statement of Action, identified through their local area inspection, we have continued to work with them throughout the COVID-19 outbreak on improvement through our team of specialist advisors. Each year we also deliver a training programme to local authorities and health and social care staff, on their statutory duties for EHC plans and reviews, and we have continued to do this on a virtual basis.

In addition, we have started a programme of visits by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission working with local areas to understand the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to support local areas to prioritise and meet their needs.

## ■ Students: Finance

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[104202]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for how long the age at which students have been able to obtain public funding for their first Level 3 qualification has been capped at 23.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Grant funding for learners aged 24 and over studying a first full level 3 qualification was replaced with support through Advanced Learner Loans and the loans Bursary Fund in 2013/14.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, recently announced a targeted expansion of the level 3 entitlement, through the National Skills Fund. We are now extending the offer eligibility for a first full level 3 so that adults who are above the age of 23 can also benefit from courses that have the best possible returns for individuals, employers, and the nation.

■ **Teachers: Males**

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[105290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the recruitment of more male teachers.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is working to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce. In October 2018, we published our Statement of Intent, setting out the Department's commitment to increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce. The Department wants to see improved pathways and a workforce that supports the progression and retention of all teachers, regardless of their gender.

The Department's 'Teaching – Every Lesson Shapes A Life' recruitment campaign is targeted at audiences of students, recent graduates and potential career changers inclusive of all genders, and the Department takes every effort to ensure that our advertising is fully reflective of this across the full range of marketing materials we use.

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[105291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to retain male teachers in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is working to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce. In October 2018, we published our Statement of Intent, setting out the Department's commitment to increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce. The Department wants to see improved pathways and a workforce that supports the progression and retention of all teachers, regardless of their gender.

In January 2019, the Department launched the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, which set out several priorities for reform and investment. This included commitments to reduce workload; improved continuing professional development for teachers; and greater opportunities for flexible working. It also included the biggest teaching reform in a generation: the Early Career Framework (ECF) reforms, which will ensure that all new teachers have a mentor and dedicated time set aside to focus on developing the knowledge, practices and working habits to set them up for a fulfilling and successful career in teaching. Early roll-out of the ECF reforms started in Autumn 2020, with full national roll-out starting in Autumn 2021.

In addition, one of the Department's top priorities is to ensure that we continue to attract the high-quality teachers we need, regardless of their gender. We have

announced plans for salaries for new teachers to rise to £30,000 by 2022-23. This will make starting salaries significantly more competitive in the graduate labour market.

## ■ Teachers: Overtime

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[104745]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) paid and (b) unpaid overtime hours worked by (i) primary and (ii) secondary school teachers in each year since 2010.

**Nick Gibb:**

The information requested is not held centrally. Teachers are not paid overtime as part of the national framework of terms and conditions.

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) sets out the terms and conditions, including working hours, of teachers employed in maintained schools in England. The STPCD requires teachers to be available for work on 195 days each year, of which 190 are teaching days (the other 5 being inset days). Teachers are also required to be available for 1265 hours each year to be allocated reasonably across these days. The 1265 hours make up the directed hours, which are available for headteachers to direct the work of teachers. In addition to the directed time, teachers must also work "such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties."

Non-maintained schools, including academies and free schools, are responsible for determining the pay and conditions of their staff themselves. Such schools are not obliged to follow the statutory arrangements set out in the STPCD, although they may still choose to do so if they wish.

The Department collects robust information about teachers' working hours through regular surveys, including time spent on teaching and non-teaching activities.

## ■ Universities: Admissions

**Emma Hardy:**

**[106470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department holds data on the number of university students who have deferred their studies since the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) have published data on the number of deferrals during the 2020 applications cycle.

The latest data, as at 10 September 2020, can be found on UCAS's website at: <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/statistical-releases-daily-clearing-analysis-2020>.

This shows that, at this point, 25,520 of all UK applicants placed at UK higher education providers had deferred their place, which equates to 5.8% of all placed applicants. This is a 0.1 percentage point increase on the previous year; at the same



point in the previous applications cycle (2019), 5.7% of all placed UK applicants had deferred their place.

Applicant data by deferral status for all domiciles can be found at the link provided.

Final figures from UCAS will be published at the end of the year.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

**Dave Doogan:**

**[105543]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will (a) hold discussions with industry (i) bodies and (ii) leaders on the proportion of seasonal agricultural workers that were from the UK workforce and (b) use the results of those discussions when presenting proposals for the future of seasonal agricultural work to the Home Secretary.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra works closely with industry bodies and leaders, regularly speaking with recruiters, growers, unions and associations, and making use of all available information and evidence to understand the labour supply picture for the agri-food supply chain.

Industry reports that supply of seasonal labour has been sufficient across the main horticultural sectors so far this year. Through the 'Pick for Britain' campaign, Defra has collaborated with industry to raise the profile of seasonal work on farms. The Pick for Britain website has received nearly 2 million unique page views since its launch but Defra does not hold any information about specific vacancies, interviews or people in jobs as that information is held by individual companies.

The horticultural sector will continue to be able to rely on EU nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status. Around 3.7 million EU citizens and their families have been granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and the application deadline is not until 30 June 2021. EU nationals who have settled status can continue to travel to the UK to do seasonal work in 2021.

On 19 February, the Government announced that the annual quota for this second year of the Seasonal Workers Pilot scheme would increase from 2,500 to 10,000 places. The Pilot has provided thousands of non-EU workers to farms across the UK this year to undertake seasonal employment in the edible horticulture sector.

Defra will continue to work closely with the Home Office on seasonal agricultural workers and the needs of the sector.

## ■ Buses: Electric Vehicles and Hydrogen

**Paul Girvan:**

[\[105511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on bringing forward the £3 billion investment for 4,000 hydrogen and electric buses announced in February 2020.

**Rebecca Pow:**

My department works closely with the Department for Transport through our shared Joint Air Quality Unit. As a result, officials in both departments have regular engagement to ensure evolving bus policy considers the potential impacts on air quality, including the development of the policy on 4,000 new zero emission buses.

## ■ Cats: Electronic Tagging

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[107106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the compulsory microchipping of cats; and when he plans for those regulations to come into effect.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government is committed to improving the welfare of cats and has a manifesto commitment to introduce compulsory microchipping of cats. In October 2019 Defra published a call for evidence on compulsory microchipping for cats, which attracted over 3,000 responses. We will be publishing a summary of the responses alongside the launch of a public consultation shortly.

## ■ Deer: Conservation

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[107000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to manage the risk posed by sika deer to red deer.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Deer management is a devolved matter and this answer therefore relates to England only.

The Government recognises that sika deer present a threat to native red deer, largely because of the potential for hybridisation. Sika deer occur in localised areas within the North and the South of England with smaller isolated wild populations elsewhere. Studies have shown there has been minimal large-scale hybridisation among populations in the South of England but there is greater evidence of this occurring in the North.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act it is an offence to release Sika deer or its hybrid or allow it to escape into the wild. The responsibility for deer management lies with individual landowners. Where deer are causing damage or pose a health and safety risk, landowners are recommended to participate in local management groups, or to set one up where a group does not already exist. These groups bring together

those with interests in a local area, for example residents, land managers, and conservation groups. Where necessary, action can involve a managed cull to reduce population densities. On the Public Forest Estate deer are managed by Forestry England for example to prevent their range from increasing.

#### ■ **East Suffolk Council: Finance**

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

**[105351]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to provide financial support to East Suffolk District Council to employ additional port health officers at Felixstowe port in the event that the UK and the EU do not reach agreement on their future relationship after the transition period.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Border Operating Model, published on 13 July and updated on 8 October, sets out the new systems and processes required to deliver sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) controls for goods imported from the EU. These will be introduced in a phased approach from January 2021 to July 2021.

Under this approach, port health authorities (PHAs) will not be required to carry out any new SPS checks on EU goods until 1 April 2021. Defra is working with PHAs across England, including Felixstowe, to ensure recruitment and training of the additional staff required is completed in time.

Defra recently launched a fund to assist PHAs, which will be administered as grants provided under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to local authorities in England. The fund closed for applications on 13 September 2020 and we are currently assessing the bids.

#### ■ **Environment Bill**

**Luke Pollard:**

**[105542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many organisations (a) his Department has asked to sign and (b) have signed non-disclosure agreements in relation to the Environment Bill.

**Rebecca Pow:**

No non-disclosure agreements have been signed in relation to the Environment Bill other than by those contracted by the Government to undertake work on the long-term implementation of Bill policies. No non-disclosure agreements have been signed which relate to the drafting of Environment Bill legislation or amendments. Defra has asked two contractors to sign non-disclosure agreements as part of their contracts to undertake work in relation to long-term work on implementation of policies introduced by the Environment Bill. Both of those contractors who have been asked to sign non-disclosure agreements have done so. These are standard non-disclosure agreements for any company or individual carrying out work for the Government.

## ■ Flood Control: Taxation

**Adam Afriyie:**

[\[105348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of bringing forward legislative proposals to allow local councils to raise flood levies.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is investing a record £5.2 billion of capital funding in the flood and coastal defence programme from 2021-27. As well as central Government funding there are a number of other funding sources for flood and coastal erosion risk management. Partnership funding can be secured from a range of sources including through local levy, local beneficiaries, partners and growth funds. The Environment Agency (EA) may issue levies to the lead local flood authority for an area (local levy) subject to approval of the relevant Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. In 2018/19, £35.5 million of local levy funding was raised by the EA in this way.

Coastal authorities may carry out coast protection work in accordance with a works scheme under the Coast Protection Act 1949. This Act provides coastal authorities with powers to levy coast protection charges from those with an interest in the land that would benefit from the coast protection works.

The Government published a long-term Policy Statement in July 2020 setting out our ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. The Policy Statement includes more than 40 actions which we will take to accelerate progress to better protect and better prepare the country against flooding and coastal erosion in the face of more frequent extreme weather as a result of climate change.

As part of this, the Government has committed to consider options to expand and promote the use of local powers which local authorities can access to secure additional funding to manage flood and coastal erosion risk. We have also committed to explore the actions which the Government can take to support the right conditions for local investment where there is appetite to do so.

## ■ Food: Imports

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[107134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure domestic food standards are applied imported products.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK Government will not compromise on our standards. Our manifesto is clear that in all of our trade negotiations, we will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. We remain firmly committed to upholding our high environmental protection, food safety and animal welfare standards outside the EU. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 retains our standards on environmental protections, animal welfare, animal and plant health and

food safety at the end of the transition period. This includes existing import requirements and provides a firm basis for maintaining the same high level of protection for both domestic and imported products.

These import standards include a ban on using artificial growth hormones in domestic and imported products and set out that no products, other than potable water, are approved to decontaminate poultry carcasses. Any changes to existing food safety legislation would require new legislation to be brought before this Parliament.

## ■ **Forests: Wakefield**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[105612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect ancient woodlands in Wakefield constituency.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The irreplaceable nature of ancient woodlands as a habitat is recognised in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

We therefore strengthened the protection of ancient woodlands through the National Planning Policy Framework and guidance to planners. These outline that developments should be refused if they would lead to the deterioration of ancient woodland and veteran trees, unless there are exceptional reasons and suitable compensation measures.

This change reflects the importance of ancient woodlands to native biodiversity, our landscapes, and our communities.

## ■ **Game: Animal Welfare**

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

[\[106514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to encourage the use of alternatives to cages on farms that breed partridges and pheasants.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are committed to maintaining our position as world leaders in animal welfare and want to improve and build upon that record, working in partnership with farmers to support healthier, higher welfare animals. We are exploring options with all the industry sectors, including the gamebird industry, to see how welfare standards can be further enhanced and in a way that is sustainable.

The welfare of gamebirds is currently protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering. This is backed up by the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes, which encourages the adoption of high standards of husbandry.

## ■ Green Recovery Challenge Fund

**Ruth Jones:**

**[106493]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many applications have been made to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund; and what amount of that funding has been applied for to date.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a short-term competitive fund that will kick-start environmental renewal whilst creating and retaining jobs in the conservation sector across England. The fund was launched on 14 September and is being delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. There are separate application processes for grants of over £250,000 and grants of under £250,000. Applicants for the larger grants were required to submit an Expression of Interest in advance of a full application.

We have received 202 Expressions of Interest, totalling £270.6 million. 56 of these, totalling £72.1 million, have been invited to submit full applications for the larger grant size. For the smaller grant size, 565 applications were received, totalling £97.4 million.

I am very pleased that the fund has received such a high level of interest. Defra, National Lottery Heritage Fund and our ALBs are working very hard to complete the assessment process and ensure this money is made available as soon as possible to kick start projects on the ground this winter. This will support our ambitions for a green recovery, delivering nature and climate projects while creating and retaining jobs across the country.

## ■ Incinerators

**Damian Hinds:**

**[106315]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of the former Parliamentary-Under Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of 9 May 2019, Official Report, column 643, whether it remains his Department's assessment that additional residual waste energy capacity above that already planned to 2020 should not be needed.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In developing our Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS), my department considered the amount of residual waste treatment capacity that will be required for England to avoid any negative impact on future recycling ambitions and the major waste reforms we are implementing. The assessment concluded that significant additional residual waste energy recovery capacity such as incineration or advanced conversion technologies – above that already operating or planned to 2020 – would not necessarily be needed to meet an ambition of no more than 10% municipal waste to landfill by 2035, if a 65% municipal recycling rate is achieved by that same year. This assumed refuse derived fuel exports remain at 2018 levels. However, if energy recovery continues to provide a better environmental alternative to landfill, more

investment to reduce tonnages of municipal waste to landfill further would deliver environmental benefits.

In accordance with the commitment given in the RWS we continue to monitor residual waste infrastructure and will publish an updated assessment in the coming months.

## ■ **River Calder: Pollution Control**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[105614]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce pollution in the river Calder.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The River Calder comes under the Humber River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) which provides a framework for protecting and enhancing the water environment. The Environment Agency (EA) is currently updating the RBMP to make it more ambitious in addressing plastic pollution and managing water in a changing climate. The EA is considering responses to a recent consultation on these proposals and will produce draft plans for each catchment, setting out comprehensive measures to protect and enhance the water environment, meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and support regulation of those sectors that may cause pollution. The Lower Calder's (around Wakefield) WFD status is 'moderate'.

To improve water quality, the EA is working on a range of partnership projects with local communities across the Calder catchment. One example is the £1.3 million 'Calder Greening' project near Mytholmroyd. Here the EA is working with Calderdale Council and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to create a wetland area, improve river bank habitats, and is working with landowners to reduce sediment and treat invasive plant species. The EA also supports the River Calder Catchment Partnership, hosted by the Calder and Colne Rivers Trust to deliver strategic catchment plans for the river and wider environment.

To prevent pollution of the River Calder, the EA regulates a wide range of industrial and waste management sites. This includes Yorkshire Water Services Ltd and discharges to the River Calder from their sewage treatment sites. The EA provides 24 hour pollution incident response cover, including attendance at serious water pollution incidents.

The EA also works with Wakefield Council and Canal and Rivers Trust to provide advice and guidance to local businesses to improve water quality through the use of effective surface water management plans.

## ■ **Symphony Environmental: Plastics**

**Theresa Villiers:**

**[105307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Symphony Environmental Technologies' d2p oxo-biodegradable technology.



**Theresa Villiers:**

**[105308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Bio-based and Biodegradable Industries Association's campaign on oxo-degradable plastic.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The government recognises that innovation into biodegradable plastics could help reduce the environmental impacts of plastics if they are disposed of in the right way. However, this is often not the case. We are concerned that, in the absence of robust and comprehensive standards, claims about the biodegradability of plastic-based products cannot be verified leading to potential confusion in the market place, possible increased levels of consumption and potential environmental harm at the point of disposal.

In 2015, a government report concluded that existing biodegradable standards are only applicable to very specific conditions such as industrial composters. A review of oxo-biodegradable plastics has also been conducted by the Hazardous Substance Advisory Committee in 2019. This can be found on their website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/hazardous-substances-advisory-committee>

As a consequence of these concerns, the government published a call for evidence last year to help consider the development of product standards or certification criteria for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics as well as to better understand their effects on the environment and our current waste system. The call for evidence closed on the 14 October 2019 and we are currently analysing the responses received. We will publish a government response before the end of the year. You can find out more information here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-biodegradable-compostable-and-bio-based-plastics-call-for-evidence>

## ■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

**[106399]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the average daily volume of (a) goods and (b) goods requiring documentary paperwork for SPS checks travelling between Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the event that the UK and EU do not reach an agreement on those checks.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra and Daera are working together to ensure that both trade and the movement of goods will continue at the end of the Transition Period. Outcomes from this work, including the process by which controls are conducted, and their frequency (including the level of physical checks required) are being discussed with the EU in the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee. Discussions are based on the context of the provision in the Protocol that both parties must use their "best endeavours" to avoid controls at Northern Ireland ports.

## ■ Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011

**Richard Fuller:**

[\[106951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011; and whether he plans to extend the provisions of those Regulations to include private waste water pumps not otherwise included within the Regulations.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Section 42 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 allows for the automatic adoption of private sewers for new developments by sewerage companies if implemented.

The Government is currently reviewing the economic case for implementation of Section 42 and will take into account the lessons learnt from The Water Industry (Schemes of Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011, which expired in June 2018, when considering the scope of any new regulations and their application to sewerage infrastructure such as private waste water pumps.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Africa: Education

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[102025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding he has allocated to Girls Education Challenge in (a) Ethiopia, (b) Ghana, (c) Kenya, (d) Democratic Republic of Congo, (e) Mozambique, (f) Nepal, (g) Nigeria, (h) Rwanda, (i) Sierra Leone, (j) Tanzania, (k) Uganda, (l) Zambia and (m) Zimbabwe in the 2020-21 financial year.

**James Duddridge:**

The forecasted spend for the Girls' Education Challenge in Financial Year (F/Y) 20/21 in these countries is broken down as follows:

| COUNTRY    | F/Y 20/21   |
|------------|-------------|
| Ethiopia   | £6,292,667  |
| Ghana      | £6,731,469  |
| Kenya      | £15,531,221 |
| DRC        | £4,936,013  |
| Mozambique | £3,165,930  |
| Nepal      | £4,235,398  |

| COUNTRY      | F/Y 20/21          |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Nigeria      | £1,769,365         |
| Rwanda       | £0                 |
| Sierra Leone | £7,230,340         |
| Tanzania     | £2,189,224         |
| Uganda       | £3,253,799         |
| Zambia       | £693,339           |
| Zimbabwe     | £7,520,593         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>£63,549,358</b> |

#### ■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[105329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of (a) whether the (i) closure of Sana'a international airport from August 2016-February 2020 and (ii) other restrictions placed on imports of food and medicine into Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition constitute a pattern indicating the deliberate targeting of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population prohibited by Article 54 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions and (b) the implications for her policies on arms export controls of the conclusion of that initial assessment.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[105330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of (a) whether the use of (i) rockets and mortars and (ii) other indirect-fire weapon systems with wide-area impact by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen (A) at Al-Raqw market in Munabbih between 20 November and 24 December 2019 and (B) on other occasions constitute a pattern indicating the use of indiscriminate attacks prohibited by Article 51(4) of the 1977 Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and (b) the implications for her policies on arms export controls of the conclusion of that initial assessment.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[105331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of (a) whether the beating, electrocution, suspension in painful positions, sexual violence and other forms of ill-treatment committed against detainees of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen at (i) the Mar'ib political security prison and (ii) elsewhere constitute a pattern indicating the use of physical and mental torture against prisoners detained during conflict prohibited by Article 19 of the Geneva Conventions and

(b) the implications for her policies on arms export controls of the conclusion of that initial assessment.

**James Cleverly:**

We take very seriously all allegations of breaches of the Geneva Conventions. The UK urges the parties to the conflict to investigate these allegations and take action to promote and protect international humanitarian law. The Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and assesses all export licences in accordance with strict licensing criteria. We will not issue any export licences where to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria. Whenever the UK receives reports of alleged violations of international humanitarian law in connection with countries to whom arms and military equipment are licensed for export, we routinely seek information from all credible sources, including from Non Governmental Organisations and international organisations.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the written statement of 7 July 2020, Official Report, cols 32-34WS, what assessment he made of the Saudi-led coalition's (a) documented targeting of and (b) restriction of access to food, water and medicine as objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population in Yemen when concluding that the coalition had the capacity and intent to comply with international humanitarian law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of (a) whether the Saudi-led coalition's documented use of (i) rockets and mortars and (ii) other indirect-fire weapon systems with wide-area impact is indicative of that coalition's capacity and intent to comply with Article 51(4) of the 1977 Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and (b) the implications for her policies on arms export controls of the conclusion of that initial assessment.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[105334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of (a) whether the Saudi-led coalition's documented use of physical and mental torture and other forms of ill-treatment against prisoners detained during conflict is indicative of that coalition's capacity and intent to comply with Article 19 of the Geneva Conventions and (b) the implications for her policies on arms export controls of the conclusions of that initial assessment.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government takes extremely seriously allegations of international humanitarian law violations and access restrictions. The UK urges the parties to the conflict to investigate these allegations and take action to uphold their commitments under international humanitarian law.

## ■ Developing Countries: Schools

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[104781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that children in developing countries return to school safely during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is committed to supporting children in developing countries to return to school when it is safe to do so. Through the FCDO's wider education programme response to the pandemic, we have worked with partner countries to ensure they have the knowledge and resources to facilitate a safe return. For example, we have adapted our bilateral education programmes in 18 countries to provide child protection, continuity of learning (e.g. through radio and home learning kits) and to help schools prepare to re-open safely.

The UK is partnering with Kenya to co-host the 2021 Global Partnership for Education (GPE) financing summit, and as the largest donor, supported establishment of a \$500 million accelerated funding window to support countries maintain basic education and put in place key safety measures. As the largest donor to the global fund for education in emergencies Education Cannot Wait, we have supported establishment of a COVID-19 emergency response funding window supporting grants for 33 countries and territories, funding activity including key context-specific safety measures such as hygiene information campaigns and upgraded water and sanitation facilities. We have also provided £5.3 million of new UK funding to UNHCR to enable more than 5500 teachers provide vital education for children in 10 refugee-hosting countries during this critical period.

## ■ Diplomatic Service

**Hannah Bardell:**

**[106415]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will place in the Library a copy of the internal guidance issued to staff when assessing whether people need consular assistance.

**Nigel Adams:**

I was pleased to meet with the Hon Lady on 19th October to discuss the FCDO's consular work.

As part of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) commitment to transparency, details of FCDO's consular assistance are available online on <http://www.gov.uk> in our publication entitled "Support for British Nationals Abroad: A Guide". We consider that there is a strong public interest in protecting the space our staff have to consider and discuss options when making decisions on individual cases, particularly when offering assistance in difficult and distressing circumstances. We consider that their ability to do this, and our overall ability to ensure that we provide a tailored service to those most in need of our help, is likely to

be negatively impacted by placing our internal guidance in the Library, which would not be in the public interest.

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[106417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on the codification of the provision of consular services.

**Nigel Adams:**

I was pleased to meet with the Honourable Lady on 19th October to discuss the FCDO's consular work.

There are no plans to bring forward legislative proposals to make consular assistance a legal right. Even if a right to assistance were to be enshrined in UK law, our ability to assist British nationals abroad would continue to remain dependent on co-operation from host countries and local laws. While there is no duty in international or domestic law to provide consular assistance, we strive to provide the right tailored assistance to those who need our help, doing more for those who most need our help.

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[106418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has plans to ensure joint working between his Department and the Ministry of Justice on complex consular cases involving suspicious deaths, homicide and incarceration overseas similar to the Forced Marriage Unit collaboration between his Department and the Home Office.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) works closely with other departments, including the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), to provide consular assistance to British nationals overseas. The FCDO and MoJ work collaboratively in supporting victims bereaved by suspicious death and homicides abroad through our funded partner Victim Support Homicide Service. To support British nationals detained overseas and their families, the FCDO works closely with the NGOs Prisoners Abroad, the Death Penalty Project and Reprieve.

## ■ Diplomatic Service: Dual Nationality

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[106416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of treating dual nationals as it does people with non-dual nationality status for the purposes of consular support.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are able to provide full consular support to dual British nationals in a third country (a country of which they are not a national). We would not normally provide consular support to dual British nationals in the country of their other nationality, or get

involved in dealings between the individual and the authorities of that state. We may make an exception to this rule if, depending on the circumstances of the case, we consider that the individual is vulnerable and we have humanitarian concerns, for example cases involving a murder or manslaughter, children, forced marriage or an offence which carries the death penalty. However, the help we can provide will depend on the circumstances and the state of the British national's other nationality agreeing to our help.

## ■ Diplomatic Service: Overseas Aid

**Mrs Pauline Latham:**

**[106974]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of his Department's Official Development Assistance budget was spent on frontline diplomatic activity in 2019.

**James Cleverly:**

Statistics on International Development (SID) - which is a national statistic - provides an overview of official UK spend on international development, including a breakdown of types of spend. Frontline Diplomatic Activity is recorded as 'Administrative costs not included elsewhere' using Sector Purpose code 91010. The SID covering spending for 2019 and the accompanying data was published on GOV.UK on 24 September, and can be viewed through the following links:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/927135/Statistics\\_on\\_International\\_Development\\_Final\\_UK\\_Aid\\_Spend\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927135/Statistics_on_International_Development_Final_UK_Aid_Spend_2019.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/921034/Data\\_Underlying\\_SID\\_2019.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921034/Data_Underlying_SID_2019.ods)

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Private Education

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[105324]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding (a) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and (b) the Department for International Development allocated for the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund school places (i) overseas and (ii) in the UK in 2019-20; and how many school places that funding supported in total.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office allocated £14,065,819 to fund school places in the UK under Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) in financial year 2019/2020 and allocated £19,993,202,91 in financial year 2019/2020 to fund school places overseas. The information on the number of school places funded is not held centrally. There were 538 children in CEA in financial year 2019/2020.

The Department for International Development did not offer Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) to staff although in some circumstances education is funded for



children in the UK and abroad. Information on the number of school places funded is not held centrally.

■ **Fossil Fuels: Overseas Aid**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[106312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has plans to announce an end to UK Government financial support for fossil fuels overseas using Official Development Assistance through (a) the CDC Group, (b) the Private Infrastructure Development Group and (c) other multilateral institutions.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK was the first major economy in the world to make a legally binding commitment to reach net zero by 2050. As part of that commitment and global leadership on the issue the Prime Minister announced in January that the UK would end direct Official Development Assistance (ODA), investment, export credit and trade promotion support for thermal coal mining and coal power plants overseas. The UK will also continue to lead by example through aligning our ODA with the Paris Agreement temperature goals. This will include our support for CDC, the Private Infrastructure Development Group and other multilateral institutions.

■ **Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[106419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether as part of the integrated review of foreign policy, defence, security and development he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the 2019 All-party Parliamentary Group on Deaths Abroad report entitled Why UK families deserve better and what can be done.

**Nigel Adams:**

As discussed during the meeting I held with the Honourable Lady on 19th October, we have carefully considered the feedback in the APPG's report and will be pleased to issue a response in the coming weeks. Consular assistance continues to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world, by phone, online and via social media. We will continue our focus on those British nationals overseas who are the most vulnerable, training expert frontline staff to provide assistance in country and offering a wider choice of digital services where these can be provided more effectively online.

■ **Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review: Overseas Aid**

**Mrs Pauline Latham:**

[\[106973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to include an updated UK aid strategy in the Integrated Review.

**James Duddridge:**

In light of the decision to move to a one-year Spending Review, we are considering the implications for the completion of the Integrated Review, and will provide an update in due course

**■ Nigeria: Overseas Aid****Stephen Farry:**[\[107130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether UK development funding for the Nigeria Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme has (a) directly and (b) indirectly been used to support Nigeria's Special Anti-Robbery Squad.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund's (CSSF) Countering Organised Crime and Corruption programme, which supports capacity building of Anti-Kidnap Coordination Units in Nigeria, has not provided any support or training to Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS) units or officers.

Through our CSSF-funded Nigeria Policing Programme, which ended in March 2020, FSARS officers participated in training on amended Nigerian police guidance designed to improve human rights, training on public finance, and community policing workshops. The Nigeria Policing Programme was part of our Security and Justice Reform Programme, which is working to help deliver a criminal justice system that better protects the human rights of all Nigerians. Through our support to the CSSF-funded North East Public Safety and Security Programme (part of which is delivered jointly with USAID) three radios issued to Borno Police Command police units working to improve local security and to counter violent extremist organisations were distributed to the local FSARS Unit. These were returned after FSARS was disbanded. The North East Public Safety and Security Programme is part of our North East Nigeria Security, Conflict and Stabilisation Programme, working to help stabilise one of Nigeria's poorest and most fragile regions.

The UK Government will continue to support police reform in Nigeria, working with the Nigerian Government and international and civil society partners to improve the accountability and responsiveness of the Nigerian Police Force in line with its human rights obligations. The Nigerian authorities must uphold human rights and the rule of law, investigate any incidents of police brutality and hold those responsible to account. We will continue to monitor the response to the recent protests closely.

**■ Nigeria: Violence****Stephen Farry:**[\[107129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what reports he has received on allegations of police violence towards protestors in the Lekki suburb of Lagos on 20 October 2020; and what assessment he has made of the potential

merits of implementing sanctions against the Nigerian Government and officials if they are found to be involved in human rights abuses.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government is deeply concerned by violence during protests in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria, including reports of casualties. We offer our condolences to the families of those affected. The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 21 October calling for an end to the violence and for the Nigerian Government to urgently investigate reports of brutality by its security forces and hold those responsible to account. I reiterated these messages when I spoke to Foreign Minister Onyeama on 23 October. The British High Commissioner in Abuja continues to raise the protests with representatives of the Nigerian Government.

The UK Government has made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting human rights for all. We encourage all parties to work together to enable the people of Nigeria to exercise their rights safely, peacefully and in line with the rule of law. On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. This sanctions regime gives the UK a powerful new tool to target individuals involved in serious human rights violations or abuses. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

■ **Overseas Aid**

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[106364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2020 to Question 102832 on Overseas Aid, which Departments applied for funding from the Integrated Activity Fund for the 13 projects that were subject to Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments.

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[106365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2020 to Question 102832 on Overseas Aid, which Government Departments applied for funding under the Integrated Activity Fund in 2018-19 for the 31 projects where no Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments were conducted.

**James Cleverly:**

During the 2018-19 financial year the Integrated Activity Fund received applications for funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Cabinet Office, the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, the Ministry of Defence, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for International Trade, the Home Office, HM Revenue and Customs and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[106366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2020 to Question 102832 on Overseas Aid, which of the 44 projects delivered through the Integrated Activity Fund in 2018-19 were delivered solely within one country; and what those countries are.

**James Cleverly:**

In 2018-19, the Integrated Activity Fund delivered 29 projects solely within Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

**Mrs Pauline Latham:**

[\[106972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to increase (a) the number of Departments administering Official Development Assistance (ODA) and (b) the proportion of ODA spending administered by his Department, excluding the cross-government funds, over the next five years.

**James Cleverly:**

As with all public expenditure, HM Treasury allocates Official Development Assistance funding to departments at each Spending Review. As announced on 21st October 2020, the Chancellor has decided to conduct a one-year Spending Review in order to prioritise the response to COVID-19, and our focus on supporting jobs. We expect this process to conclude in late November.

## ■ Travel Information: Coronavirus

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[106899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the advice given to travellers and holidaymakers is clear and up to date for every destination abroad during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

FCDO travel advice remains under constant review to ensure it reflects our latest assessment of risks to British nationals and has the key information and advice they need to plan travel. In making decisions about travel advice, the FCDO considers the scientific evidence. Each country and territory is assessed individually. Public Health England and the National Travel Health Network and Centre, the organisations mandated to provide health advice to British nationals travelling overseas, assess the risk to an individual of exposure to the virus in each destination. This assessment is based on a number of key indicators, including virus incidence rates, trends in incidence and deaths, testing capacity, test positivity rates, and other international epidemic intelligence. We also draw on the latest reporting from our network of embassies and high commissions to take account of other risks related to the pandemic.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Abortion: Drugs****Scott Benton:**[\[99756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many abortions have taken place at 10 weeks' gestation and above from 1 January 2020 where either (a) both sets of abortion pills were taken at home or (b) the second abortion pill was taken at home.

**Helen Whately:**

Between January to June 2020, notifications on form HSA4 indicate that abortions took place at 10 weeks gestation or above where both sets of pills were taken at home (out of a total number of 23,061 abortions) and 40 abortions took place at 10 weeks gestation or above where only the second set of pills was taken at home (out of a total number of 30,977 abortions). This is out of a total number of 54,038 abortions where either both sets or one set of the abortion pills was taken at home.

**■ Abscesses: Health Services****Emma Hardy:**[\[104181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve care for patients with venous leg ulcer; and if he will make a statement.

**Emma Hardy:**[\[104182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve accountability within NHS organisations with regards to care for patients with venous leg ulcers; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

The National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) has been commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the prevention and care of pressure ulcers, lower limb ulcers (including venous leg ulcers) and surgical wounds in England.

The NWCSP's mission is to implement a consistently high standard of wound care across England by reducing unnecessary variation, improving safety and optimising patient experience and outcomes.

**■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Coronavirus and Influenza****Derek Twigg:**[\[94337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 July 2020 to Question 64076 on Accident and Emergency Departments: Coronavirus and Influenza, for what reasons the link to the operating framework for urgent and planned services within hospitals can no longer be found.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 28 September 2020]:* The link to the operating framework for urgent and planned services within hospitals contained out of date guidance and was removed as it is being updated.

NHS England and NHS Improvement expect to publish their updated guidance shortly.

**■ Arthritis: Medical Treatments****Vicky Foxcroft:****[106430]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase funding for research into innovative advanced therapies and medicines for (a) rheumatoid arthritis and (b) other inflammatory immune-mediated conditions.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including innovative advanced therapies and medicines for rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory conditions. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. Information on individual projects funded by the NIHR can be found at the following link:

<https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/>

Advanced cellular, molecular and gene therapies will play an increasingly important part in the future of healthcare in the United Kingdom. The Stem Cell Strategic Forum has included advanced therapies in its remit since 2019; it provides high quality clinical and scientific advice to the Department.

**■ Blood Cancer: Coronavirus****Jim Shannon:****[91757]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with a representative of the blood cancer community to discuss the effect of covid-19 on patient care and treatment; and what plans he has to ensure that improvements in patient care across the health sector made during the covid-19 outbreak are maintained.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement want to ensure innovations can be adapted into a sustainable model into the future, to better meets patient needs and provide the best quality of care and ease of access for patients. The new Cancer Recovery Taskforce is overseeing the development of a national cancer recovery plan, which will consider how best to consolidate innovations developed as a result of the pandemic. The Blood Cancer Alliance are represented on the Taskforce.

## ■ Cancer: Diagnosis

**Liz Twist:**

**[104168]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Professor Sir Mike Richard's report on diagnostic capacity across the NHS is planned to be published; and how that report will assess the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on NHS diagnostic capacity.

**Edward Argar:**

The report, 'Diagnostics: recovery and renewal', was discussed at the NHS England and NHS Improvement public Board meeting on 1 October 2020. The report reflects the impact of COVID-19 on diagnostic provision and was published with the Board papers at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/BM2025Pu-item-5-diagnostics-recovery-and-renewal.pdf>

## ■ Childbirth and Perinatal Mortality: Research

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[104740]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for research into (a) miscarriage, (b) premature birth and (c) stillbirth.

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[104741]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department provides for (a) miscarriage, (b) premature birth and (c) stillbirth research.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and is the largest public funder of health research in the United Kingdom.

The NIHR funds a range of research in maternal and neonatal health focussing on the safety of maternity and neonatal services, and the national maternity ambition to halve maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths and brain injury by 2025.

From 2015-2020, NIHR Programmes invested £59.8 million on 61 awards conducting research into miscarriage, premature birth and stillbirth. Additionally, the NIHR Policy Research Programme funds a Policy Research Unit dedicated to Maternal and Neonatal Health and Care research (PRU-MHC) (2019-2023) based at the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, University of Oxford and led by Professor Jenny Kurinczuk.

## ■ Children: Obesity

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

**[105296]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has undertaken a ten year review of the outcomes of the Change4Life programme.



**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* A 10-year review of the outcomes of the Change4Life programme has not been undertaken.

■ **Coronavirus: Clinical Trials**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[104732]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to mitigate the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on clinical trials in (a) dementia and (b) other medical conditions.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* The Government remains strongly committed to supporting research into dementia and the United Kingdom research community is playing a significant role in the global effort to find a cure or a major disease-modifying treatment by 2025.

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) published a framework in May to support the restarting of research paused due to COVID-19 at the following link:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/restart-framework/24886>

The NIHR is supporting the research community to amend study protocols for COVID-19 security. Last week the NIHR published guidance that NIHR-funded research staff should not be deployed to frontline duties except in exceptional circumstances.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Alison McGovern:**

**[100979]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will place in the Library all analysis commissioned by the Government of data relating to the effectiveness of local lockdowns.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* The Joint Biosecurity Centre will shortly be publishing a paper providing further analysis in relation to non-pharmaceutical interventions in local areas. This will add to materials that have already been placed in the public domain, including NHS Test and Trace statistics, surveys from the Office for National Statistics and analytical papers on local measures and non-pharmaceutical interventions presented to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies.

**Jane Stevenson:**

**[102933]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out the criteria for moving a local area from tier two covid-19 restrictions to tier one.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Joint Biosecurity Centre closely monitors a range of data - case rates, hospital admissions, positivity and age distribution - to understand and track the spread of the virus across local areas. This data combined with local insight and professional judgement from local partners and leaders is used to make recommendations on the escalation and de-escalation of areas to Local COVID Alert Levels.

Recommendations for the allocation of areas to Local COVID Alert Levels are made at a weekly meeting of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care-chaired Local Action Committee, with the Chief Medical Officer and senior representatives from NHS Test and Trace, Joint Biosecurity Centre and Public Health England, before decisions are finalised, where necessary, by the COVID-O Cabinet Sub-Committee and the Prime Minister.

**Anne Marie Morris:****[104735]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) short and (b) long term effects of a potential further national covid-19 lockdown on the (i) physical and (ii) mental health of the population.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* When making decisions on any COVID-19 restrictions the Government assess a wide range of data. At the core is an assessment of the rate of transmission, infection and death rate however, a wide range of other impacts are also assessed including the physical and mental health of the population. We understand how difficult the first national lockdown was for people and want to avoid the need for one by taking a localised approach as seen through the local alert levels.

The Government is also absolutely committed to only having restrictions in place for as long as is necessary to protect public health, acknowledging the impact that they have on people's lives.

The evidence considered by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and used to support the Government's response to COVID-19 is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Andrew Rosindell:****[106227]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of raising the age limit for childcare support bubbles to include young teenagers.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government understands that sometimes working parents rely on informal childcare arrangements with friends and family. In local COVID alert level medium, friends and family can continue to provide childcare under the 'rule of six'.

In areas that are in local COVID alert level high and local COVID alert level very high risk areas, households are no longer able to mix. However, families can form a 'childcare bubble', to enable them to continue with informal childcare arrangements for their young children, aged 13 and under.

The intention of childcare bubbles is to ensure families with young children who are not able to look after themselves for short periods of time can continue to use their informal childcare arrangements. The Government wants to balance the needs of families to continue to use informal childcare arrangements with the increased public health risks of inter-house mixing, including limiting opportunities for teenagers to mix together.

**Julian Sturdy:**

**[106330]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the local covid-19 alert levels, whether residents of a Tier 2 area are permitted to stay overnight with friends resident in a Tier 1 area, if social distancing is observed.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Persons resident in a local Covid alert level high area can only meet indoors with a person living in a local Covid alert medium, including staying overnight, whether socially distanced or not, if one of the exemptions apply. This includes where they are in linked households, otherwise known as a social bubble, amongst others.

**Dawn Butler:**

**[55896]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date he plans to published the unpublished recommendations from the report by Public Health England entitled Covid-19: Review of disparities and risks in outcomes.

**Dawn Butler:**

**[55897]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the third party submissions that supported the report entitled, Covid-19: Review of disparities and risks in outcomes.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to analyse how different factors can impact on people's health outcomes from COVID-19. The resulting report was published last week.

PHE has also been engaging with a significant number of individuals and organisations within black, Asian and minority ethnic communities over the past couple of months to hear their views, concerns and ideas about the impact of COVID-19 on their communities. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) will be building on and expanding that engagement as she takes work forward to better understand the drivers behind the ethnicity analyses in the PHE report.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[99659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason areas with similar infection rates are subject to different infection control measures.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* The introduction of the new local COVID-19 alert levels brings standardisation and consistency to interventions and is intended to make it easier for the public to understand the rules that apply to them. Movement up and down through the levels is not driven solely by the infection rate. Local epidemiology, including rates of change and the demographic profile of cases, and insight including hospital capacity, are all taken into account when making the judgement about whether an area should be moved to a different alert level.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Funerals**

**Crispin Blunt:**

[\[105274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October 2020 to Question 98661 on Funerals: Coronavirus, what is defined as a funeral for the purposes of covid-19 restrictions on attendance, and what the policy is on multiple events for one deceased individual.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The current restrictions on social contact include an exemption for gathering to attend a funeral. Such a gathering can include no more than 30 people and must be held at a COVID-19 secure venue, not a private dwelling.

A 'commemorative event following a person's death' may be held following the funeral including a wake, stone setting or scattering of ashes. Commemorative events are limited to 15 people and also must be held at a COVID-19 secure venue and not a private dwelling.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Health Services**

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[100994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the contracts between NHS England and the private hospital companies which he announced on 21 March 2020 for the provision of healthcare services and facilities to support the covid-19 response.

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[100995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the amounts paid to each of the private hospital companies under the arrangements announced on 21 March 2020 for the provision of healthcare services and facilities to support the covid-19 response.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* A Contract Award Notice in respect of each of the 26 individual contracts entered into by NHS England with independent sector

hospital providers has been published on 16 October 2020 by the Official Journal of the European Union. The Notice can be viewed at the following link:

<https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:492193-2020:TEXT:EN:HTML> Under the agreement, latest figures show that from 30 March until 30 August 2020 over 967,000 National Health Service patient appointments have taken place within independent facilities. We cannot provide a breakdown of the amounts paid to each independent sector Provider, however, the total for this period is estimated at £1 billion.

As part of preparing for winter, the Government has provided an additional £3 billion to the NHS. This includes additional funding to the NHS to allow them to continue to use additional hospital capacity from the independent sector, and to maintain the Nightingale hospitals, in their current state, until the end of March 2021.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Noradrenaline**

**Paul Bristow:** [105570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which individuals and professional organisations issue guidance on the stockpiling of noradrenaline for the treatment of covid-19 to (a) his Department and (b) NHS England.

**Paul Bristow:** [105573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has made to ensure the adequate supply of ICU medicine supplies for the treatment of covid-19.

**Paul Bristow:** [105574]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the outcome was of his 23 July 2020 tender entitled the Supply of Supportive medicines for a UK stockpile of medicines for Covid-19 preparedness.

**Edward Argar:**

In preparation for a second wave of COVID-19 and to protect the security of the supply of critical life-saving medicines and patient health across the United Kingdom, an assessment of intensive care unit and end of life care medicines and antibiotics that should be stockpiled, informed by senior clinicians and those with experience of treating COVID-19 patients, was led by NHS England in May and June and this fed into two Departmental tender exercises. Noradrenaline is one of the medicines that is being sourced by the Department.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [95591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 July 2020 to Question 75298, on how many occasions his Department has been supplied with faulty personal protective equipment products since 1 April 2020 by (a) UK-based and (b) overseas manufacturers; and what redress has been obtained.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 September 2020]:* The information is not collected in the format requested.

■ **Coronavirus: Warrington**

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[102193]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the scientific advice for the decision to introduce covid-19 lockdown restrictions in Warrington.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

On Tuesday 22 September, restrictions were placed on Warrington and several other areas in North West England, West Yorkshire and the Midlands. Warrington was escalated to an 'area of intervention' through the Local Action Committee process.

NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre and Public Health England constantly monitor the levels of infection and other data on prevalence of the virus across the country to inform the Local Action Committee decision-making process. A wide range of indicators are monitored to ensure situational awareness across England. Data on local virus prevalence is published with detailed information provided to local systems, providing an early-warning system to enable early, preventative action.

The epidemiological data for decisions made at the Local Action Committee are published, and the specific data for Warrington at that time is contained here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/919115/Contain\\_framework\\_lower\\_tier\\_local\\_authority\\_watchlist\\_-\\_maps\\_by\\_Lower\\_Super\\_Output\\_Area\\_-\\_18\\_September\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919115/Contain_framework_lower_tier_local_authority_watchlist_-_maps_by_Lower_Super_Output_Area_-_18_September_2020.pdf)

■ **Coronavirus: Wolverhampton**

**Jane Stevenson:**

**[99121]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the covid-19 restrictions in Wolverhampton announced on 22 September 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* The Government is in constant and regular dialogue with local authorities and local Directors of Public Health about the situation across the different areas of England. This engagement and analysis by Public Health England and the Joint Biosecurity Centre ensure measures in all areas are being considered constantly. This allows timely local interventions to bring in stricter measures when needed, and also supports decisions about how and when areas will have restrictions loosened.

Wolverhampton has regulations to prevent household mixing in private homes and gardens because transmission was being driven by households meeting each other. We know that the virus is spread by people, particularly when they are in close

proximity of each other, so these restrictions reduce that risk. From 14 October, the interventions in force in Wolverhampton will prohibit household mixing in any indoors venue but allow people to meet up in groups of no more than six people in outdoor venues including gardens.

## ■ Coronavirus: York

**Rachael Maskell:** [99658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional infection control measures he will take in York in response to its infection rate reaching 114.4 per 100,000.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* York is now in local alert level 'high.' The details of the restrictions within the 'high' alert level is available at the following link:

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

Additional infection prevention and control measures include reinforcing and amplifying the prevention approaches such as reducing contacts, social distancing, hand hygiene, wearing of facial coverings.

**Rachael Maskell:** [99661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Director of Public Health in York since its covid-19 infection rate reached 114.4 per 100,000 cases.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Discussions with the Director of Public Health in York have included regular weekly meetings with Public Health England (PHE) regional team, ad hoc meetings with PHE regional team, monthly call including introduction to Joint Biosecurity Centre and Contain colleagues. These have included detailed discussions on the epidemiology and data analysis of the rates in the city of York, actions being taken locally, and support being provided through PHE/National Health Service Test and Trace.

## ■ Dementia: Research

**Claire Hanna:** [102195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to (a) support research on dementia and (b) ensure that research on that matter continues during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government remains strongly committed to supporting research into dementia and the United Kingdom research community is playing a significant role in the global effort to find a cure or a major disease-modifying treatment by 2025.

The Government's 2020 Challenge contained the commitment to spend £300 million on dementia research over the five years to March 2020. This commitment was delivered a year early with £341 million spent on dementia research over the four



years to 31 March 2019. We are currently working on ways to boost significantly further research on dementia at all stages on the translation pathway including medical and care interventions.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[105404]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure the continuation of progress on dementia research during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government remains strongly committed to supporting research into dementia and the United Kingdom research community is playing a significant role in the global effort to find a cure or a major disease-modifying treatment by 2025.

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) published a framework in May to support the restarting of research paused due to COVID-19 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/restart-framework/24886>

The NIHR is supporting the research community to amend study protocols for COVID-19 security. Last week the NIHR published guidance that NIHR-funded research staff should not be deployed to frontline duties except in exceptional circumstances.

## ■ **Diabetes and Heart Diseases: Research**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[106353]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional funding for research into a possible connection between teenage heart disease and maternal diabetes.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department commissions research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and is the largest public funder of health research in the United Kingdom.

The NIHR funds a range of research in maternal and neonatal health focussing on the safety of maternity and neonatal services. The NIHR is not currently funding any specific research into a possible connection between teenage heart disease and maternal diabetes, but welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made based on the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. It is not usual practice for the NIHR to ring-fence a proportion of its budget for research into particular topics or conditions.

## ■ Diabetes: Coronavirus

**Derek Thomas:** [R] [\[103590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to ensure people with (a) diabetes and (b) at risk of serious consequences from covid-19 are being actively reviewed by suitably qualified healthcare professionals.

**Jo Churchill:**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic diabetes care has remained a priority, and general practitioners (GPs) have supported patients with long-term conditions to access care and support.

The Primary Care Diabetes Society developed the guidance 'How to undertake a remote diabetes review' to support healthcare professionals offering remote diabetes reviews, and NHS England and NHS Improvement and partners supported GPs with the guidance 'Advice for healthcare professionals on COVID-19 and diabetes', for the management of diabetes during the pandemic.

**Derek Thomas:** [R] [\[103591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that integrated care systems and sustainability and transformation partnerships have up-to-date guidance on the increased risk to people with uncontrolled diabetes of covid-19; and what steps he is taking to ensure that regional NHS teams are monitoring their plans to (a) identify and (b) protect those people most at risk.

**Jo Churchill:**

As part of the COVID-19 response from NHS England and NHS Improvement, weekly calls were established with regional Diabetes Clinical Network teams, the Primary Care Diabetes Society, Association of British Diabetologists and Diabetes UK, which supported the development and sharing of a range of up-to-date guidance on the increased risk of COVID-19 for people with diabetes as well as key resources to support clinical teams in the maintenance of essential diabetes services.

To support people living with diabetes during the pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement have also provided a range of tools to support people to manage their condition. This includes making available a new helpline for adults living with diabetes who are insulin dependent, as well as providing access to a variety of online self-management tools.

## ■ Diagnosis: Standards

**Christina Rees:** [\[100507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the capacity and effectiveness of diagnostics throughout the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

Professor Sir Mike Richards was commissioned to undertake a review of diagnostics capacity (NHS Long Term Plan, 3.55). The report, 'Diagnostics: recovery and

renewal', was discussed at the NHS England and NHS Improvement public Board meeting on 1 October 2020. The report was published with the Board papers and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-england-and-nhs-improvement-board-meetings-in-common-agenda-and-papers-1-october-2020/>

## ■ Eating Disorders: Health Services

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[104747]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure access to an NHS eating disorder specialist for all people who need that treatment.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are committed to ensuring everyone with an eating disorder has access to timely treatment based on clinical need. We set up the first waiting times to improve access to eating disorders services for children and young people. By 2020/21, 95% of children and young people (up to the age of 19) referred for assessment or treatment for an eating disorder should receive National Institute for Health and Care Excellence-approved treatment within one week if the case is urgent, and four weeks if the case is routine/non-urgent. Latest figures show the National Health Service is on track to meet that standard.

## ■ Emergency Calls: Coronavirus

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[102956]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has put in place to ensure the safety of staff at emergency call operating centres as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government has published clear guidance on working safely during COVID-19, including advice for staff who work in operational contact centres. This includes robust advice and recommendations for employers on infection prevention and control measures, COVID-19 risk assessments and social distancing requirements.

## ■ Heart Diseases: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[105387]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to restore and maintain planned cardiovascular care during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* On 31 July guidance was issued to local National Health Service providers and commissioners outlining the next phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 and concurrent non-COVID-19 activity. The letter can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/07/Phase-3-letter-July-31-2020.pdf>

The guidance set the ambition for providers to recover elective services in October to 90% of last year's levels for admissions, and 100% for outpatients. These ambitions take into account the need to continue to operate in a COVID-19 environment, with all the necessary infection control measures to keep staff and patients safe.

## ■ Home Care Services: Coronavirus

**Clive Efford:**

**[90029]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure domiciliary care workers are regularly tested for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* Asymptomatic testing for domiciliary care workers (also known as home care workers) is guided by the results from the Public Health England prevalence study into domiciliary care. This study found that COVID-19 prevalence among domiciliary care workers was similar to prevalence in the general population. Regular testing for the domiciliary care workforce is was not advised unless recommended by local risk assessments or in response to local outbreaks. Symptomatic staff should continue to access priority testing via the pillar 2 testing service. We are currently reviewing the implications of increased infection rates for asymptomatic testing in domiciliary care.

## ■ Hospices: Coronavirus

**Olivia Blake:**

**[102963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the level of support available for hospices to respond to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

Hospices have played an important part in the Covid-19 response, supplementing NHS capacity as well as ensuring their valuable work caring for those towards the end of their lives continues.

The Department regularly assesses the effect of the Covid-19 outbreak on the hospice sector, and through NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) is in discussions with stakeholders in the sector about the challenges they face. A range of steps have been taken to support hospices.

On 8 April 2020, the Chancellor announced funding of up to £200 million for hospices over three months as part of the wider £750 million funding package for the voluntary and charitable sector.

Alongside this, hospices benefited from the financial support offered by the Treasury to all charities, such as paying no business rates for their shops next year and applying for a Business Interruption Loan. Charities, alongside other sectors, can also access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and charity shops (which are already

eligible for 80% charitable rate relief) will benefit from the new enhanced retail rate relief at 100%.

We continue to keep the impact of Covid-19 on hospices under review.

## ■ Hospital Beds: Private Sector

**Karin Smyth:**

[97626]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the publication of the contracts on the use of private sector beds in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

A Contract Award Notice in respect of each of the 26 individual contracts entered into by NHS England with independent sector hospital providers was published on 16 October 2020 by the Official Journal of the European Union. The Notice can be viewed at the following link:

<https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:492193-2020:TEXT:EN:HTML>

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Rehman Chishti:**

[104100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of flu vaccine doses available to the NHS in winter 2020/21 are the types generally used for adults (a) at or over and (b) under the age of 65.

**Jo Churchill:**

Information on which vaccines are recommended for the different cohorts is included in the Annual Flu Letter Update 2020/21 which 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)

General practitioners and community pharmacies are responsible for ordering flu vaccines from suppliers, which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults. The Department does not routinely collect information on the different vaccines that have been ordered by local providers.

**Robert Largin:**

[105616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many flu vaccine doses (a) have been administered and (b) will be made available in High Peak constituency for the 2020-21 winter period.

**Jo Churchill:**

The information is not collected in the format requested.

**Andrew Rosindell:****[64096]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that clinically extremely vulnerable people observing strict social distancing can safely receive a seasonal flu vaccination.

**Jo Churchill:**

The flu vaccination programme is a critical part of preparing the United Kingdom for winter. We have been working with NHS England, NHS Improvement and Public Health England on the delivery of the 2020/21 seasonal flu vaccination programme. Operational plans for flu include consideration of the social distancing requirements for vulnerable people, the workforce and providers. Standard operating procedures for healthcare services and guidance on immunisation during COVID-19 have been issued to providers. On 5 August we published the Annual Flu letter 2020/21 update 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)

**Vicky Foxcroft:****[96128]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people who will be aged 65 by 31 March 2021 who have received a 2020 NHS flu vaccine to date.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England (PHE) publishes weekly influenza vaccine uptake reports throughout the flu season for general practitioner (GP) patients, including those aged 65 and over on 31 March 2021. This data is based on automated returns from GP practices. The first weekly report will be published on 8 October on GOV.UK.

PHE also publishes monthly influenza vaccine uptake data on the number of individuals who are aged 65 and over on 31 March 2021 who have been vaccinated with an influenza vaccine. This data will be published on GOV.UK on 26 November 2020.

## ■ Leisure: Coronavirus

**Bill Esterson:****[105359]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons leisure centres, gyms and soft play areas are (a) required to close in the Liverpool City Region and (b) permitted to stay open in Lancashire under the highest level covid-19 restrictions.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* The package of measures to be implemented in the Liverpool City Region when it moved to Local Covid Alert Level 'very high' was developed in close consultation with local authorities, taking into account local circumstances and insight. Following a request from the local authorities to revisit that package we have agreed to re-open gyms and soft play areas in the Liverpool City Region, as they are currently in Lancashire.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Emma Hardy:** [\[87624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will answer the letter of 23rd June 2020 from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Vascular and Venous Disease on the effect of the Covid-19 outbreak on people with vascular disease.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 14 September 2020]:* I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 28 September 2020.

## ■ Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[100335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to lay regulations under Section 6(3)(b) of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[100336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish draft guidance on the operation of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[100337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to enact the changes contained in the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019.

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[100338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to enact Section 4 of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 relating to Codes of Practice.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* The Government aims for full implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS), as set out in the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019, for April 2022.

The Department is drafting a Code of Practice and secondary legislation for the implementation of LPS. Both will be subject to public consultation in spring 2021. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Government plans to lay the Code and regulations before Parliament in the autumn of that year.

The Department is also working with stakeholders from across the local government, health and social care sectors to develop workforce plans to ensure that implementation is a success.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[105408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that paediatric mental health services are financially supported to cope with a potential increase in referrals as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.



**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are committed through our NHS Long Term Plan to investing at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year into mental health services by 2023-24. This will see an additional 345,000 children and young people able to access support through National Health Service-funded services or school- and college-based mental health support teams.

In 2018 we announced the first 25 trailblazer sites delivering 59 mental health support teams in and near schools and colleges with the first becoming operational earlier this year. In July 2019, NHS England confirmed a further 57 areas would develop 123 new mental health support teams and a number of these have been commissioned and training has begun.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People****Jon Trickett:**[\[104037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average time from referral to appointment was for a CAMHS appointment to be provided in each clinical commissioning group area of England in each of the last three years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The information is not collected in the format requested.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**[\[95978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what restrictions are in place on visits to children and young people aged under 25 who are autistic and/or have learning disabilities and who are detained in mental health hospitals located in the (a) Bolton, (b) Greater Manchester, (c) Leicester, (d) Northampton, (Greencore only), (e) North East of England, (f) North West of England, (g) West Midlands and (h) West Yorkshire areas subject to local lockdown regulations.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* There is national guidance on arrangements for visitors on all hospital sites. The current guidance was published on the 5 June 2020 and a revised version is due for publication imminently.

The general guidance has been supplemented by a letter from the NHS England National Mental Health Director and the National Director of Learning Disability and Autism to providers of services for patients with a mental health and/or learning disability and/or autism, which was issued on the 22 September 2020. This letter reinforces the importance of enabling families to visit and stresses the need for risk assessments to be completed if by exception visiting needs to be restricted.

**■ Night Shelters: Coronavirus****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[105424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to section 3.4 of his Department's publication of 13 October 2020 on COVID-19: provision of night shelters

- Operating principles for commissioners and providers of night shelters for people experiencing rough sleeping, whether cohorting is recommended as a response for a person who is (a) symptomatic of, (b) tested positive and (c) is identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for covid-19 in any context other than accommodation for people experiencing rough sleeping.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The document 'COVID-19: provision of night shelters - Operating principles for commissioners and providers of night shelters for people experiencing rough sleeping' was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and recommends cohorting in communal night shelters where isolation is not immediately possible. This approach is intended to mitigate some of the health risks when people do not have access to accommodation that helps to keep them safe from COVID-19, or who need care if they have symptoms or a positive test.

For people in accommodation where they are able to self-isolate, the relevant guidance is available in 'Stay at home: Guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19' at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

■ **Noradrenaline**

**Paul Bristow:**

[105571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the use of noradrenaline throughout the NHS in England in each month of 2020.

**Paul Bristow:**

[105572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an estimate of demand for noradrenaline during the remainder of 2020-21.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement undertake regular monitoring of the demand and supply position for priority medicines including noradrenaline. A table showing this information is attached.

We cannot make accurate projections of demand going forward. However, we have used the information regarding first wave usage to inform mitigations for a second wave, such as stockpiling.

■ **Obesity: Children**

**Paul Blomfield:**

[105358]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on rates of childhood obesity.

**Jo Churchill:**

No assessment has been made.

■ **Pressure Sores**

**Conor McGinn:**

**[106388]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide funding for research into (a) new treatments and (b) preventative strategies for pressure ulcers.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including pressure ulcers. Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. Information on individual projects funded by the NIHR can be found at the following link:

<https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/>

■ **Prostate Cancer: Ultrasonics**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

**[104700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to support the development of the evidence base for high-intensity focused ultrasound therapy for prostate cancer.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 21 October 2020]:* The National Institute for Health Research has funded, and supported, several research studies on high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) therapy for prostate cancer over the last five years. This includes an award of £677,000 for the feasibility of a randomised controlled trial of partial prostate ablation (via HIFU) versus radical prostatectomy in intermediate risk unilateral clinically localised prostate cancer.

■ **Public Sector: Contracts**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

**[104693]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to regulation 32(2)(c) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015, what criteria constitutes an emergency.

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

**[104694]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September to Question 81560, what other approaches were considered in determining where procurement meets the tests for the use of Regulation 32.

**Edward Argar:**

Guidance on how contracting authorities should respond to COVID-19 was published on 18 March at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19>

Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The Department assesses the market conditions for procuring supplies related to any procurement, including those relating to COVID-19, in accordance with procurement guidance and regulations. The Department has to demonstrate on a case by case basis that it is satisfied the tests set out in the guidance permitting use of the negotiated procedure without prior publication have been met. These are summarized as follows:

- you need to respond to the COVID-19 consequences immediately because of public health risks, loss of existing provision at short notice, etc;
- you are reacting to a current situation that is a genuine emergency - not planning for one;
- the COVID-19 situation is so novel that the consequences are not something you should have predicted;
- there is no time to run an accelerated procurement under the open or restricted procedures or competitive procedures with negotiation;
- there is no time to place a call off contract under an existing commercial agreement such as a framework or dynamic purchasing system; and
- you have not done anything to cause or contribute to the need for extreme urgency.

## ■ Social Services

**Anne Marie Morris:**

**[99616]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish a Green Paper on social care.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* The Government's current priority for adult social care is for everyone who relies on care to get the care they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know we need a long-term solution for social care and are looking at a range of proposals as part of our commitment to bringing forward a strategy that puts the sector on a sustainable footing for the future.

**Jane Hunt:**

**[99771]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the White Paper on social care.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government's current priority for adult social care is for everyone who relies on care to get the care they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are committed to bringing forward a plan for social care to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and tackle one of the biggest challenges we face as a society.

## ■ Social Services: Disability

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

[\[94584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with disabled people on the effect of the suspension of the Care Act 2014 in the Coronavirus Act 2020 on access to social care.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 28 September 2020]:* Since the start of the pandemic, I have met frequently with stakeholder groups, Care Act Easements have been discussed.

The Department has used a number of routes to gather evidence on the use and impact of temporary easements to the Care Act 2014. Departmental officials, including the Chief Social Workers, have been working with the Principal Social Worker Network and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) to gather local intelligence and are satisfied that any easements have been considered and communicated in line with the Ethical Framework for Social Care.

ADASS and Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP) have been engaging with local authorities operating under easements, and those that did not, to understand lessons learned from this period. A TLAP Insight Group has been meeting regularly to coordinate intelligence of TLAP partners on the impact and views of people accessing care and support and unpaid carers. TLAP published their report on 13 October.

## ■ Social Services: Finance

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[98775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he plans to allocate to local authorities to support the reopening of social care day centres that closed due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

On 17 September 2020, the Government announced that it would provide a further £546 million to adult social care through the Infection Control Fund, alongside the Adult Social Care Winter Plan. Whilst the majority of this funding is for regulated care homes and community care provision, local authorities may allocate 20% for other COVID-19 infection control measures. This may include expenditure on infection control measures to support the resumption of day services. This is in addition to the £600million Infection Control Fund and £3.7 billion already provided to local authorities to address pressures on local services caused by COVID-19, including adult social care.

## ■ Social Services: Reform

**Jon Trickett:**

**[98874]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 September 2020 to Question 74439 on Social Services: Reform, what the Government's timetable is for publishing its proposals on reforms to the social care system.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government's current one priority for adult social care is for everyone who relies on care to get the care they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are committed to bringing forward a plan for social care to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and to find long term solutions for one of the biggest challenges we face as a society.

## ■ Social Workers: Mental Health

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[99115]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to extend bursaries for student mental health social workers.

**Helen Whately:**

Final year students in receipt of the bursary whose studies were disrupted by the pandemic will receive a pro-rated 2019/20 bursary for the period of their course extension to enable them to complete their studies.

The NHS Business Services Authority administer the social work bursaries and we would encourage any student who needs a course extension to speak directly to their university who can advise on requesting one through the NHS Business Services Authority process.

## ■ Tinnitus: Research

**Alex Sobel:**

**[104184]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will allocate increased funding to tinnitus research.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including tinnitus.

Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. Information on individual projects funded by the NIHR can be found at the following link:

<https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/programmes/>

## ■ Urgent Treatment Centres: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[105388]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage people to not delay seeking urgent medical care during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* The 'Help Us, Help You' campaign was launched on Monday 5 October 2020. The first phase focuses on increasing uptake of the flu vaccine and the second phase, launched on Friday 9 October 2020, encourages the public to speak to their general practitioner if they are worried about a symptom that could be cancer. Further phases will encourage pregnant women to attend regular check-ups and seek advice if they are worried about their baby, and direct people with mental health issues to access National Health Service support. A full range of channels will be used to reach the public throughout the autumn and winter including television, radio, out of home posters, print, digital and social, alongside tailored content delivered through a range of influencers, community ambassadors and partnerships. Local NHS teams will also remind patients to keep their routine appointments.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Agriculture and Food: Exploitation

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[105398]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority licensing requirement in the food and farming sector to protect workers from exploitation.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) operates a licensing scheme for labour providers operating in the agriculture, horticulture, shellfish gathering and associated processing and packaging sectors. The licensing scheme ensures that businesses in these sectors are compliant with UK legislation, and that workers' rights are not breached. The GLAA's licensing standards sets out the legislation and working conditions that these businesses must be adhere to.

Under the Gangmasters (Licensing Authority) Regulations 2005 the GLAA is required to produce an Annual Report and Accounts which is laid before Parliament each year by the Secretary of State for the Home Office. This report, which sets out its activities and financial information for the previous financial year, includes a performance report and analysis of the GLAA's functions, including its licensing scheme.

The GLAA's most recent Annual Report and Accounts is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gangmasters-and-labour-abuse-authority-annual-report-and-accounts-for-2018-to-2019>



## ■ Assaults On Police: Reviews

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[106459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will conduct a review into the reasons for the increased number of assaults on police officers.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Any assault on a police officer is completely unacceptable. In order to improve the accuracy of data on assaults on police officers, from 2017, police forces have included the number of assaults with injury on a police officer as part of their recorded crime data. This has been an important step towards obtaining a much better picture of the total number of assaults on police officers. We also welcome the recent publication of the National Police Chiefs' Council's Officer and Staff Safety Review and will continue to work closely with policing partners to consider the recommendations in the report.

Assaults specifically against emergency workers, including police officers, are punishable by up to 12 months in prison and could be charged as common assault. This Government recently announced our intention to double the maximum sentence for assaults on emergency workers, showing our commitment to ensuring these attacks are not tolerated.

We have also accelerated our work to introduce a Police Covenant, recognising the service and sacrifice of those who work, or have worked, in policing and to deliver the practical support they need. The key areas of focus will be physical protection, health and wellbeing and support for families.

## ■ Asylum: Coronavirus

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[104224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will suspend evictions for people who have been refused asylum in response to the three-tier covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office has started cessations of support in a phased way which will reduce demand on the asylum system while prioritising the safety of those within the asylum system. This means moving people out of Home Office accommodation and ending subsistence payments from the Home Office.

For those whose asylum claims have been rejected and appeal rights exhausted, they will be expected to leave the country, assistance is available to those who opt to leave voluntarily. The Voluntary Returns Scheme will pay for travel and provide a cash amount, and this can and should be utilised whenever possible.

People who are awaiting a Covid test result should not be asked to leave their current dwelling until they receive a negative test result and are symptom free and that those self-isolating due to a positive test result should adhere to the full 14-day self-isolation period for close contacts.

These factors, applied to an individual case, might mean that a failed asylum seeker continues to be eligible to receive support because they are unable to leave the UK or take the necessary practical steps to enable them to leave (for example by attending an interview for the purposes of obtaining a necessary travel document).

We continue to consult public health officials in relation to the application of relevant guidance for supported asylum seekers.

**Tim Farron:**

[\[106944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the electronic submission of accompanying evidence for asylum applications electronically will continue following the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

Covid-19 has created both challenges and the opportunity to explore new working practices for the Home Office. Whilst certain documents have been accepted electronically, we consider it is likely we will still need to see certain original document where appropriate in the future.

However, business practices are kept under review and new ways of working which have been implemented to cope with current restrictions, where they have been successful, may be continued beyond the current Covid-19 related restrictions.

## ■ Asylum: Housing

**Ed Davey:**

[\[102659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she made of the (a) adequacy of the two temporary Ministry of Defence sites being used to accommodate asylum seekers and (b) the effect of ongoing Ministry of Defence work at those sites on the health and wellbeing of those people being accommodated; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office and Ministry of Defence conducted a scoping exercise which identified Napier Barracks and Penally Training Camp as both suitable and available for the temporary accommodation of asylum seekers.

The Home Office has since worked with its provider Clearsprings Ready Homes to put these sites into operation with accommodation provided to the required standards in accordance with the Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts.

Napier Barracks and Penally Training Camp were handed over to the Home Office for use for up to twelve months and so there is no ongoing Ministry of Defence work at these sites.

## ■ Asylum: Interviews

**Cat Smith:**

[\[103558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect of using third-party suppliers for asylum interviews on the level of outstanding asylums (a) claims and (b) interviews.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[103559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the ability of third party suppliers to conduct asylum interviews effectively.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum Operations are exploring many options to reduce the number of outstanding asylum claims. Alongside seeking temporary resource from within the Home Office and other government departments, we are also exploring with third-party suppliers, through a proof of concept, to test the viability of whether they can deliver the support required as a temporary, short term measure. An eight-week controlled mobilisation of testing has been confirmed. Once we have completed the proof of concept exercise, an evaluation will be completed, and this will inform any further recommendations or actions.

Asylum interviews have not been outsourced, and at this stage we are only exploring the potential feasibility. The increased interview throughput will help rebalance the system, but also speed up decision making, reduce the number of outstanding cases and support costs.

Asylum Operations will be looking to source resource with the right competency and recent experience in conducting sensitive interviews. To ensure external suppliers are suitably equipped to carry out the role, third-party interviewing officers will complete a bespoke training package, delivered by the qualified asylum operations training team, that has been designed specifically to meet their needs. Anyone who conducts asylum interviews receives thorough training to ensure they are fully equipped for the role.

To guarantee governance and accountability, mechanisms are in place for the oversight of third-party interviews, the department has a quality assurance process which assesses the quality of decisions, interviews and the application of Home Office policy.

## ■ Asylum: Offenders

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[102208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the tweet on foreign national offenders published by her Department on 9 October 2020, what representations she has received on the potential conflation of the UK's asylum system and the deportation of offenders from EU countries (a) in that tweet and (b) in her Department's social media strategy.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office makes no apology for deporting Foreign National Offenders; it is right that we do so.

This tweet referred to two different groups.

The first group were foreign national offenders who broke our laws and abused our values, who we successfully returned to Lithuania. We are grateful for the ongoing close cooperation of our Lithuanian partners in tackling crime, and for their specific cooperation in this instance which was essential for the removal of the foreign national offenders mentioned in the tweet.

The second group was made up of migrants from outside the European Economic Area who had already claimed asylum in Italy, and who we planned to return under the Dublin Regulation. The Italy leg of the flight did not take place and our efforts to return those who arrived on small boats via illegally-facilitated routes were frustrated by legal claims.

**■ Children: Coronavirus****Peter Kyle:**[\[105467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to page 43 of the 2020 UK annual report on modern slavery, if she will publish the minutes of meetings held by the covid-19 vulnerable children's hub since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Victoria Atkins:**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Home Office's Vulnerable Children Hub was established to ensure close collaboration both within the Department and between government departments to ensure the delivery of effective safeguarding responses for children. In addition to this forum, the PM led, cross-Government Hidden Harms Summit brought together stakeholders to share best practice on proactive policing, improving criminal justice outcomes and improving the intelligence picture on hidden crimes including Modern Slavery, Domestic Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse. A summit report was published in July, detailing clear commitments and ongoing activity to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from hidden harms.

We continue to drive forward this work through the centrally led Cabinet Office processes.

The COVID-19 Vulnerable Children's Hub work relates to the development of ongoing Home Office policy, and as with any internal government discussions we would not publicly disclose records of its discussions.

## ■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the extent of labour exploitation in garment factories in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many completed inspections of garment factories in Leicester have been carried out by (a) the Health and Safety Executive, (b) the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, (c) HMRC and (d) Leicestershire police since 1 July 2020.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the multi-agency local taskforce in Leicester plans to report its findings following its examination of labour exploitation in garment factories in Leicester.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Leicester multi-agency taskforce is taking to tackle labour exploitation in garment factories.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government is committed to tackling modern slavery and will not tolerate the exploitation of vulnerable workers for commercial gain. We have taken a number of steps to deal with the issues in the textiles sector and take the issue very seriously.

As a result of the widespread allegations of labour exploitation in the garment sector in Leicester, a multi-agency taskforce (Op TACIT), led by the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), has been set up to bring together the enforcement bodies to work together to secure robust intelligence to carry out appropriate enforcement activity. The Taskforce is physically based in Leicester and draws in all the relevant enforcement organisations and agencies including, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs- National Minimum Wage; Employment Agencies Standards Inspectorate; Leicestershire Police; National Crime Agency; Health and Safety Executive; Leicester City Council; Department for Work and Pensions; Public Health England; Leicester Fire and Rescue Service and Immigration Enforcement.

While we cannot comment on any ongoing investigations, we can confirm that since 1 July, 116 factory inspections have been undertaken by the taskforce including the Health and Safety Executive, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, HMRC and Leicestershire police.

The Taskforce activity is regularly reviewed and overseen by Ministers to ensure the most appropriate and effective law enforcement response is adopted to respond to emerging threats. The lessons learnt from this taskforce will be taken into consideration as the Government develop the single enforcement body for employment rights.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[106970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is being provided to local police forces to help the enforcement of changing and complex covid-19 restrictions.

**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 has moved quickly to give the police the powers and guidance they need to support compliance with essential measures on social distancing. The department continues to work closely with our operational partners to ensure the new changes are understood by police forces around the country. The police have been kept updated on these changes as we act quickly to address the public health risk.

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 needs.

## ■ Dangerous Dogs

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[105600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the merits of introducing a standardised method of recording dog attacks across all police forces in England.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Attacks where a person or assistance dog is injured constitute specific offences in law and police forces are required to record them consistently as set out in the Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime. Other attacks, such as those on livestock, should be recorded by police when reported to them and we expect forces to be able to use the data to assess the risks in their area and take action accordingly.

## ■ Fire and Rescue Services: Recruitment

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[105535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to increase the number of fire fighters.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Home Office has no role in making decisions on the number of firefighters employed by fire services.

It is the responsibility of each fire and rescue service and authority to ensure that they have the appropriate number of firefighters to deliver their core functions across prevention, protection and response.

■ **Home Office: Twitter**

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[102209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what process of clearance each post for her Department's Twitter account goes through; and what the grade is of the officials who provide sign off on each of those posts.

**Chris Philp:**

Tweets are drafted by the Communications Team and signed off by a manager at grade 7 or above.

Tweets containing new or updated messaging or content are then cleared by ministerial private offices and/or special advisers prior to publication.

■ **Immigration Controls: Ireland (Island)**

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[105593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will put in place plans to ensure that differential immigration systems on the island of Ireland are not exploited by criminal gangs to undermine legitimate businesses in Northern Ireland after the transition period ends.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Common Travel Area (CTA) has never required the UK and Ireland to have entirely harmonised immigration arrangements for non-British or non-Irish citizens. However, everyone entering the UK, regardless of where they enter from, is required to meet the UK's immigration framework. There is a high level of cooperation on border security to ensure legitimate travel, including for business, is facilitated while those who intend to abuse the arrangements are prevented from entering.

The Home Office, Ireland's Garda National Immigration Bureau and Border Management Unit, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other police forces work together to tackle abuse of the CTA by conducting intelligence-led checks and enforcement operations. Anyone identified attempting to circumvent UK border controls is liable to be removed, if they are not lawfully present within the UK.

We also work closely with the Republic of Ireland to secure the external CTA border, including data sharing and operational co-operation to prevent exploitation of our two immigration systems by those not complying with the relevant provisions in each nation.

There is a high degree of co-operation between UK Government departments on all aspects of the CTA.



**■ Immigration: Coronavirus****Tim Farron:**[\[106945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the decision to allow biometric information submitted as part of a person's previous immigration application to be reused in further applications will continue following the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has begun to reuse previously enrolled biometrics in limited circumstances where they are suitable for such use. This includes some students who apply for visas under the new points-based immigration system, to manage the specific demand placed on our resources and to free up biometric enrolment facilities for other applicants. We will consider how best to widen our use of previously enrolled biometrics in due course.

**■ Immigration: EU Nationals****Darren Jones:**[\[107094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the Government's migration policy on the status of EU nationals currently working in the UK as au pairs.

**Kevin Foster:**

EU citizens currently in or resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, including those working as Au Pairs, can apply for UK immigration status under the EU Settlement Scheme, to enable them to continue living and working in the UK after 30 June 2021 in the same way as they do now.

**■ Osime Brown****Jamie Stone:**[\[101049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to (a) ensure that Osime Brown is not deported from the UK and (b) is not detained pending a final decision on deportation; and what assessment she has made of the support he requires for his diagnosed health conditions pending this decision.

**Chris Philp:**

We only ever return those who we and, where applicable, the courts are satisfied do not need our protection and have no legal basis to remain in the UK.

Mr Brown was not detained but released on Immigration Bail at the end of his custodial sentence.

It would be inappropriate to comment further while legal proceedings are ongoing.

## ■ Police: Disciplinary Proceedings

**Mark Pritchard:**

[106525]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers in England and Wales were (a) cautioned, (b) reprimanded and (c) dismissed for viewing political or religious extremist material online in 2018-19.

**Mark Pritchard:**

[106526]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers in England and Wales were (a) cautioned, (b) reprimanded and (c) dismissed for being members of proscribed religious or political organisations in 2018-19.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes information annually on the outcome of misconduct proceedings and criminal investigations involving officers, including the number of officers that have been dismissed following proceedings. However, information on a) the number of police officers issued with a police caution and b) the circumstances that led to a case being brought is not collected centrally by the Home Office

The data on the outcomes following misconduct proceedings, which covers cases in the year ending March 2019, is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-30-september-2019>.

The College of Policing publish data annually relating to those who have been dismissed from policing and placed on the Police Barred List. There are no categories specifically on extremist material or being members of proscribed organisations but, between April 2018 and March 2019, 17 officers were dismissed under the category of 'notifiable association'. This data is available here:

[https://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Documents/Barred\\_List\\_2019.pdf](https://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Documents/Barred_List_2019.pdf).

## ■ Police: Labour Turnover

**Sarah Jones:**

[105505]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve police force retention rates.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Relatively few police officers choose to leave their job before retirement, compared to other public and private sector workforces. Voluntary resignations remain low at 2% of the workforce.

The retention of experienced police officers is a priority for the Home Office. We are working alongside the National Police Chiefs' Council to maximise opportunities to retain police officers who have valuable skills and policing experience.

This Government takes the issue of policing wellbeing very seriously and has invested in programmes which offer help directly to officers and staff including the

National Police Wellbeing Service.. We have also accelerated work to introduce a Police Covenant, which will be enshrined in law to ensure our police get the support they need. The Covenant will focus on health and wellbeing, physical protection and support for families.

■ **Police: Recruitment**

**Sarah Jones:**

**[105504]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to encourage people of a broad age range to apply to join the police.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is delivering on the people's priorities by recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers over the next three years.

The 20,000 officer uplift is a once in a generation opportunity to enable all forces become more representative of the communities they serve. We are already seeing applications from a wide range of candidates with diverse backgrounds and from a range of ages who are bringing unique skillsets and experience to the police service.

We are supporting forces with a variety of attraction and recruitment strategies, whilst delivering a campaign that's been designed to reach the widest and most diverse audience possible including those who have never considered a policing career. Sharing best practice, engagement with police associations, upskilling recruitment teams and enhanced data capture are just some of the efforts being made to improve police diversity.

Amendments to Police Regulations made this year mean that individuals can apply to join the police at 17 years of age for appointment on reaching 18 years, opening the way for candidates wishing to apply to join the police.

**Sarah Jones:**

**[105508]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what strategies have been put in place to encourage under-represented groups to join the police.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The police officer workforce is more diverse than ever before. The most recently published Police Officer Uplift data show that as at 30 June 2020 Black Asian and Minority Ethnic officers represented 7.4% of all police officers.

The Home Secretary has been clear that forces must do more to become representative of the communities they serve. Attracting a broad range of talent, cultures and backgrounds to a career in policing is a core ambition in our drive to recruit 20,000 extra police officers.

We are supporting forces with a variety of attraction and recruitment strategies, whilst delivering a campaign that's been designed to reach the widest and most diverse audience possible including those who have never considered a policing career.

Sharing best practice, engagement with police associations, upskilling recruitment teams and enhanced data capture are just some of the efforts being made to improve police diversity as part of the police uplift.

## ■ Police: Safety

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[105506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Queen's Speech of 19 December 2019, what her timescale is for bringing forward legislative proposals to establish a Police Covenant and ensure the police are able to fully conduct their duties by providing them with additional support and protection.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government will bring forward legislation later this session to place the Police Covenant on a statutory footing.

We are fully committed to recognising the bravery, commitment and sacrifices of those who work or have worked in policing.

We have accelerated work on the Police Covenant and, following the recent public consultation, published the Government's response on 8 September. The Home Office continues to work across government and with partners in policing to establish the Covenant and prepare the necessary legislative provisions. This work focuses on the three themes of health and wellbeing, physical protection and support for families.

## ■ Police: Training

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[106458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to support the mentoring of new officers by experienced officers in the police force.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Training and development for new officers, including mentoring programmes, are carried out in forces in line with national standards set by the College of Policing. We are making £700m additional funding available for PCCs in 2020-21, with a further £50m to be spent on national programmes supporting Police Uplift Programme. This includes the cost of training and induction for new officers to ensure they receive the right level of support on joining

We welcome the work being done by the College of Policing to strengthen leadership and supervision standards at all levels, particularly in support of officers on the frontline – this includes mentoring programmes and a tutor constable programme to ensure new officers receive the support they need.

**■ Skilled workers: Brexit****Chi Onwurah:**[\[104729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to develop skilled workers to administer UK borders (a) prior to and (b) after the end of the transition period.

**Chris Philp:**

Border Force is recruiting sufficient additional frontline staff to ensure full operational readiness at the UK border for the end of the Transition Period and the introduction of new immigration and customs controls from Jan 2021.

New Border Force staff receive a comprehensive package of training prior to operational deployment. comprehensive guidance and training plans have been developed to upskill BF frontline officers in new policy, process and system changes for the end of the Transition Period. Initial training is further reinforced and supplemented by on the job mentoring once new staff have been deployed to UK ports.

**■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[102848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received from legal professional bodies on the effect of her use of the phrase activist lawyers on the safety of legal professionals; when those representations were received; and what steps she took in response.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government rejects the underlying insinuation of this question. Lawyers play an important role in upholding the law and ensuring people have access to justice. They are however, just like politicians, not immune from criticism.

**Stuart C McDonald:**[\[102849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether (a) she, (b) officials in her Department and (c) political advisors in her Department have briefed members of the press with the name of the (i) law firm and (ii) lawyer that represents individuals the Home Office is attempting to remove under the Dublin III regulations in the last six months.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Secretary, Home Office officials and political advisors have not briefed members of the press with either the name of the law firm or lawyer that represent individuals the Home Office is attempting to remove under the Dublin III regulations in the last six months.

The names of law firms and lawyers involved in legal cases are publicly available.

**Stuart C McDonald:**

[\[102850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the (a) Attorney General and (b) Lord Chancellor on the use of the phrase activist lawyers since 1 September 2020.

**Stuart C McDonald:**

[\[102852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she had with the Prime Minister on representations she received from legal professional bodies on the use of (a) the phrase activist lawyers and (b) other language targeting lawyers representing migrants by her Department prior to the Prime Minister's party conference speech on 5 October 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

Home Office Ministers have regular meetings as part of the process of policy development and delivery. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[103494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of her use of the phrase activist lawyers on the personal safety of immigration solicitors.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government rejects the underlying insinuation of this question. Lawyers play an important role in upholding the law and ensuring people have access to justice. They are however, just like politicians, not immune from criticism.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Antisemitism

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[105608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps his Department has taken to tackle antisemitism in (a) Wakefield constituency, (b) West Yorkshire and (c) England.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms. We became the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2016 and we work with the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism which ensures we can respond quickly to the concerns of Jewish communities. We also provide funds to a number of projects that work across the country to tackle Antisemitism; for example we fund the Antisemitism Policy Trust to support their work to tackle online antisemitism and help combat this growing area of concern.

This Government is also providing £14 million this year, and provided over £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings.

### ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Tim Farron:**

[106292]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with leaseholders who are unable to (a) sell or (b) re-mortgage their properties as a result of not having an EWS1 certificate.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Ministers and officials had recent meetings with leaseholder groups and Housing Associations to explore these challenges.

The EWS1 process is not a Government policy or regulatory requirement and the Government does not support a blanket approach in EWS1 use for lower risk properties. Some lenders do not require an EWS1 form, and others seek them for a greater range of buildings than the process was designed for. 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.

### ■ Coal: Carbon Emissions

**Chi Onwurah:**

[105369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his recent decision to refuse planning permission for the coal mine at Druridge Bay, what assessment he has made of whether a coal mine can be carbon neutral; and what the evidential basis is for that assessment.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Secretary of State's conclusions on this case are fully set out in the decision letter of 8 September, which is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/called-in-decision-land-at-highthorn-widdrington-northumberland-ref-3158266-8-september-2020>.

### ■ Coastal Communities Fund

**Peter Aldous:**

[104724]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has for the future of the Coastal Communities Fund; and whether those plans include providing grant for (a) ports, (b) harbours and (c) other infrastructure to support the UK fishing industry.



**Peter Aldous:**

[\[104725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the infrastructure requirements of the UK fishing industry.

**Luke Hall:**

This Government recognises the unique challenges facing coastal communities and is committed to levelling up all areas of the UK. However, whether there is another round of the Coastal Communities Fund is a matter for the comprehensive Spending Review.

## ■ Derelict Land

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[105601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of planning policy on encouraging development of brownfield land.

**Christopher Pincher:**

It is for local authorities to identify brownfield land suitable for housing in their published registers, and to assess and plan how all brownfield land might best be used, in line with chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

It is too soon to calculate the effects of the revised NPPF

Our Land Use Change statistical release provides data on the proportion of new residential addresses created on previously developed land and on other individual land uses as well. In 2017-18, 53 per cent of new residential addresses were created on previously developed land. The proportion of new residential addresses created on previously developed land has remained above 50 per cent since the data was first collected in 2013-14. Statistics for 2018-19 will be published in due course.

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[105602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the merits of designating brownfield sites around cities for residential development over commercial.

**Christopher Pincher:**

It is for local authorities to determine where they meet local housing need, having regard to planning constraints in their area, to other planning goals, and to our National Planning Policy Framework. Local authorities should plan for all strategic priorities, not only the new homes we need but economic development, employment, and vibrant and prosperous town centres. The Framework expects local authorities to prioritise brownfield land for development wherever possible, and to assess and plan which land-use individual sites should serve. Our *Planning for the Future* consultation proposes that, under a reformed system, local authorities would use the plan-making process to categorise all their land as areas for growth, renewal or protection. They could direct development onto brownfield, ensure the continued protection of Green

Belt and other valued countryside, and deliver - through a fast-track process - beautiful buildings that accord with design guidance.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Housing

**Mohammad Yasin:**

**[105497]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to protect (a) vulnerable people and (b) victims of domestic violence from not being able to access their Housing Association properties if they are in rent-arrears through no fault of their own.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Most housing associations are Private Registered Providers of social housing. When providing access to their properties, Private Registered Providers must comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenancy-standard/tenancy-standard-2015> . This requires them to allocate their properties in a fair and transparent way,

taking into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants, with clear application, decision and appeals processes. They must also clearly set out, and be able to give reasons for, the criteria they use for excluding actual and potential tenants from consideration for allocations, mobility or mutual exchange schemes. We have taken unprecedented steps to protect renters, whether they rent from a housing association, local council or private landlord. We have introduced 6-month notice periods. From 29 August, anyone served a notice seeking possession will not have to leave their home over winter, except in the most serious cases such as anti-social behaviour, fraud and egregious rent arrears. The Government has asked bailiffs not to carry out evictions in areas where gatherings are not allowed in homes and bailiffs should not carry out evictions in tier 2 (high) and tier 3 (very high) local COVID alert areas. There will also be a pause on the enforcement of evictions in the run up to and over Christmas except in the most serious circumstances, such as cases involving anti-social behaviour. This will ensure vulnerable tenants are not forced from their homes at a time when public and local authorities may be dealing with the usual level of increased demand for services. For those who require additional support with their rent, Discretionary Housing Payments are available. As announced at the spending round for 2020/21 there is already £180 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for local authorities to distribute for supporting renters with housing costs in the social and private rented sectors.

## ■ Evictions: Coronavirus

**Mark Menzies:**

**[106969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support landlords unable to evict problem tenants responsible for repeated anti-social behaviour during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The suspension of possession proceedings ended on 20 September and landlords can now progress possession claims through the courts. The most egregious cases, such as those involving anti-social behaviour, will be prioritised by the courts.

Additionally, as of 29 August, Coronavirus legislation extending the minimum notice period that must be given before a possession claim can be lodged in court was amended so that in the most serious circumstances, minimum notice period requirements have returned to what they were before COVID. This means that for claims relating to anti-social behaviour, the minimum amount of notice that a landlord must give has returned to four weeks. And for some discretionary grounds relating to nuisance/immoral or illegal use of the property, cases may now be progressed to court as soon as notice is given.

However, in order to further protect renters over winter, the Government has asked bailiffs not to carry out evictions 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. The Government is keeping this approach under review. In addition, the Government has issued guidance to bailiffs that they should not carry out evictions in the weeks leading up to and over Christmas other than in the most serious circumstances.

In parts of the country where bailiffs will not be carrying out evictions due to the need for stricter distancing, the police, local authorities and other local agencies will still be able to rely on the range of flexible tools and powers at their disposal to tackle anti-social behaviour, notably through the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

**■ Housing Associations: Provident Societies****Gareth Thomas:**[\[106892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of housing associations who are registered as Industrial and Provident Societies; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**[\[106893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of homes (a) owned by and (b) being built by housing associations registered as industrial and provident societies; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Organisations that were previously registered as industrial and provident societies are now classified as registered societies, following the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. However, not all registered societies were previously industrial and provident societies, given new entrants to the sector since 2014.

There are 789 private registered providers of social housing that are classified as registered societies. These providers own approximately 2.5 million of the 2.8 million homes owned by private registered providers.

In total, private registered providers as a whole were responsible for delivering 47,040 affordable homes in 2018/2019, of which 44,918 were new build. We are unable to disaggregate between former industrial and provident societies, current registered societies, and private registered providers more generally.

## ■ Housing: Construction Methods

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[106482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department has made of the fire safety of Modern Methods of Construction.

**Christopher Pincher:**

MMC homes have to meet building regulations standards, including fire safety standards, in the same way as homes built using traditional methods of construction. In addition, there are safeguards in place through various assurance and warranty processes to ensure the quality and standard in such homes. We will also be commissioning a research project on modular construction to further understand these new construction technologies.

## ■ Housing: Cooperatives

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[104670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of housing co-operatives; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[104671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of people living in housing co-operatives; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has not made an assessment on the effectiveness of housing co-operatives and we do not hold information on the number of people living in housing co-operatives.

The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector, of which housing co-operatives are an important part, offers significant potential for helping to meet housing need across England. In addition to helping to increase the rate of delivery of new housing, community-led housing will help to deliver a range of benefits including diversifying the housebuilding sector, improving design and construction quality, developing modern methods of construction, and sustaining local communities and local economies. The support and close involvement of the local community enables

the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through speculative development.

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[104672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what fiscal steps he plans to take to support people wanting to form or live in a housing co-operative; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector – of which housing co-operatives are an important part – offers significant potential for helping to meet housing need across England. In addition to helping to increase the rate of delivery of new housing, it will help to deliver a range of benefits including diversifying the housebuilding sector, improving design and construction quality, developing modern methods of construction, and sustaining local communities and local economies. The support and close involvement of the local community enables the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through speculative development.

The principal way in which the Government supported the community-led housebuilding sector in England in recent years was through the Community Housing Fund, making available £163 million in grants over 2018/19 and 2019/20. Budgets for future years will be considered at the Spending Review later this year. Community-led housebuilding organisations that are registered as providers of social housing may seek capital funding from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes programme operated outside London by Homes England.

## ■ **Housing: Heating**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[106382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 97616 on Housing: Standards and with reference to the Future Homes Standard consultation, when his Department plans to bring forward the first part of the proposed regulations on low carbon heating.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As stated in my answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 97616, we will respond to the Future Homes Standard consultation in the autumn.

## ■ **Mining: Health and Recreation Spaces**

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[104779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that miners' welfare and recreational grounds are protected.

**Luke Hall:**

This Government is dedicated to levelling up to ensure that all corners of the UK benefit from growth and prosperity now that we have left the European Union and

make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead. We are committed to improving the prospects of communities in former industrial and mining towns and villages across England. All have distinct competitive advantages that will be essential to shaping our economic future.

This Government has provided funding to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) which seeks to support mining communities in England. Over the last seven years, the Government has provided £22 million in support of their activities, which are designed to assist the CRT in becoming a self-sustaining organisation. The Government also announced in the 2018 autumn budget that we would invest £8 million to support repairs to village halls, Miners' Welfare facilities and Armed Forces organisations' facilities.

The Government has also provided a package of support for regeneration in areas affected by steelworks closures. In January this year, the Government announced £71 million of new funding towards ambitious local plans to turn the former site of the SSI Steelworks in Redcar into a huge business zone, home to world-leading clean energy, manufacturing and tech companies.

The £3.6 billion Towns Fund is also delivering dedicated funding for our towns. Through these Town Deals, an initial 101 towns across England will benefit from investment worth up to £25 million, or more in exceptional cases. Over half of these places are former industrial or mining towns. Funding from the Towns Fund will drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth. The former mining town of Stainforth is one of 101 towns selected to benefit from this investment. Stainforth has just received an initial payment of £500,000 which will help improve the town's parks and green spaces, including new walking and cycling facilities and play areas.

Looking to the future, the Government is also committed to creating the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will bind together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations. It will replace the overly bureaucratic EU Structural Funds – and not only be better targeted at the UK's specific needs, but at a minimum match the size of those funds in each nation. It will be driven by domestic priorities with a focus on investing in people. Further details on the design and operation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be announced following the cross-government Spending Review.

## ■ Night Shelters: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[105423]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's publication of 13 October 2020 on COVID-19: provision of night shelters - Operating principles for commissioners and providers of night shelters for people experiencing rough sleeping, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure local authorities have adequate supplies of personal protective equipment for staff and volunteers working in night shelters.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Rough sleeping services previously had access to emergency PPE supplies via Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). DHSC has now offered to distribute PPE to every local authority directly, or via their LRF where preferred, and the majority of local authorities are now receiving PPE through this route. This PPE can be made available to rough sleeping services as required by Covid-19 guidance.

**Religious Hatred: Islam****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[105609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps his Department has undertaken to tackle islamophobia in (a) Wakefield constituency, (b) West Yorkshire and (c) England.

**Luke Hall:**

Muslims in our country should be able to practice their faith in freedom. We have some of the strongest legislation in the world to tackle hate crime and, where groups incite racial hatred or are engaged in racially or religiously motivated criminal activity, we would expect them to be prosecuted. We have supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with just over £2.8 million between 2016 and 2020 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred. To remain live to the issues facing Muslim communities, we continue to support the work of the cross-Government Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group which provides valuable advice to Government on challenges faced by Britain's Muslim communities and how to address those challenges. We have also established the Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme will support established community groups and civil society organisations to run short projects that champion the government's commitment to building a diverse and tolerant society for all faiths and races. Up to £2 million is available for projects to boost shared values and tackle religiously and racially- motivated hate crime.

**Urban Areas: Finance****Scott Benton:**[\[106510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has for further Town Deals in addition to the (a) Towns Fund and (b) Future High Street programmes.

**Luke Hall:**

I am delighted that Blackpool in my Honourable friend's constituency is one of the initial places that yesterday had its Town Deal offer announced for a transformative funding package worth up to £39.5 million. This Town Deal will help give a new lease of life to much loved tourist attractions as well as supporting the local business community to grow and thrive.

My officials are continuing to review Blackpool's Future High Street Fund bid and I hope to make an announcement later in the Autumn.



In due course we will bring forward a further competitive round of the Towns Fund, building on lessons learned from the first Town Deals and Future High Streets Fund. We want to make sure that more places can benefit from investment that will improve our towns and high streets and drive long-term economic growth.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Antidumping Duties: Northern Ireland

**Paul Girvan:**

[\[105512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the termination of anti-dumping duty will apply to companies in Northern Ireland at the end of the UK's transition period with the EU.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Northern Ireland is – and will remain – part of the United Kingdom's customs territory and trade remedies measures will apply on a nationwide basis. At the end of the transition period, those existing EU trade remedy measures that my Department assessed as being without significant producer interest in the United Kingdom will be terminated.

This will reduce the costs for British users of these products, and lead to lower prices for British consumers across the country. This highlights one of the benefits of the United Kingdom being able to operate her own independent trade policy, tailored to the specific needs of our nation.

### ■ Generalised System of Preferences

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2020 to Question 27946 on Generalised System of Preferences, what assessment she has made of the effect of the introduction of the UK Global Tariff in January 2021 on the margin of preference available to countries operating under (a) The General Framework for low and lower-middle income countries that receive the EU's standard Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), (b) The Enhanced Framework for vulnerable low and lower-middle income countries that are part of the EU's GSP+ and (c) The Least Developed Country Framework for least developed countries which currently benefit from the EU's Everything But Arms.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2020 to Question 27946 on Generalised System of Preferences, what estimate she has made of the effect of the introduction of the UK Global Tariff in January 2021 on trends in the level of export quantity from countries operating under (a) The General Framework for low and lower-middle income countries that receive the EU's standard Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), (b) The Enhanced Framework for vulnerable low and

lower-middle income countries that are part of the EU's GSP+ and (c) The Least Developed Country Framework for least developed countries which currently benefit from the EU's Everything But Arms.

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106920]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2020 to Question 27946 on Generalised System of Preferences, what assessment she had made of the potential effect of the introduction of (a) alternative customs procedures, (b) rules of origin requirements, (c) UK border checks and (d) other non-tariff barriers after the end of the transition period on countries operating under (i) The General Framework for low and lower-middle income countries that receive the EU's standard Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), (i) The Enhanced Framework for vulnerable low and lower-middle income countries that are part of the EU's GSP+ and (ii) The Least Developed Country Framework for least developed countries which currently benefit from the EU's Everything But Arms.

**Greg Hands:**

When developing the UK Global Tariff (UKGT), we considered products that are particularly important for developing countries, and where tariffs could be retained to maintain preference margins for developing countries, including those benefitting from Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). Tariffs have therefore been retained, ensuring continued preferential access for GSP countries, on products that are particularly important for developing countries. For example, tariffs have largely been retained on textiles and apparel, goods which made up almost a third of the United Kingdom's £25 billion of imports from GSP countries in 2019. The United Kingdom GSP ensures that developing countries will continue to have preferential access to the United Kingdom compared to countries facing the UKGT.

To ensure consistency for developing countries after the Transition Period, the United Kingdom GSP will replicate the EU GSP rules of origin where possible. This will include, unilaterally, allowing developing countries to continue to use content originating from the EU in their exports to the UK.

In line with the United Kingdom commitment at the World Trade Organisation to reduce the administrative burden for Least Developed Countries, the United Kingdom GSP will maintain a self-certification proof of origin. HM Revenue and Customs are also considering other methods to streamline customs procedures.

## ■ Trade Agreements

**Emily Thornberry:**

**[106260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which of the continuity trade agreements negotiated by her Department since 2016 have been physically signed in person by (a) the Secretary of State for International Trade, (b) Ministers from her Department, (c) Ministers from other Departments, (d) civil servants from her Department and (e) civil servants from other Departments.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* In under two years, HM Government has agreed trade agreements with 51 countries. The Rt Hon. Lady will know that a number of continuity trade agreements cover more than one country, however the number of continuity trade agreements physically signed by Ministers and civil servants referenced are below:

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade: Seven

Ministers from the Department for International Trade: Five

Ministers from other departments: Three

Civil Servants from the Department for International Trade: One

Civil Servants from other departments: Six

**■ Trade Agreements: Africa**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her policy is on continued market access or equivalent support for (a) Kenya, (b) Ghana and (c) Cameroon in the event that continuity agreements with those countries are not reached.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what trade operating framework (a) Kenya, (b) Ghana and (c) Cameroon will be classified under in the event in the event that continuity agreements with those countries are not reached.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of potential additional costs for exporting from (a) Kenya, (b) Ghana and (c) Cameroon in the event that continuity agreements with those countries are not reached.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the potential additional export costs for (a) meat, (b) flowers and (c) beans from Kenya from the introduction of (i) alternative customs procedures, (ii) rules of origin requirements, (iii) UK border checks and (iv) other non-tariff barriers after the end of the transition period.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her department has made of the potential additional export costs for (a) meat, (b) flowers and (c) beans from Kenya in the event that a continuity agreement with that country is not reached.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[106926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the potential additional export costs for (a) meat, (b) fruit and vegetables, (c) fish

and (d) other prepared foodstuffs from Ghana from the introduction of (i) alternative customs procedures, (ii) rules of origin requirements, (iii) UK border checks and (iv) other non-tariff barriers after the end of the transition period.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the potential additional export costs for (a) meat, (b) fruit and vegetables (c) fish and (d) other prepared foodstuffs from Ghana in the event that a continuity agreement is not reached with that country.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

We are working with Kenya, Ghana and Cameroon to secure their continuity trade agreements.

If a continuity agreement is not concluded before the end of the transition period, all three countries would benefit from preferential trading terms under our Generalised Scheme of Preferences after the end of the transition period. However, as lower middle-income countries, this would not be at duty-free and quota-free rate that an Agreement would provide.

We recognise the possible impact that a loss of duty-free and quota-free access after the transition period could have on Kenya, Ghana and Cameroon. Therefore, we continue to engage with all three countries to secure continuity trade agreements, based on those to which we have been party, providing access to our market and ensuring lasting certainty for businesses.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Japan

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[104015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what changes to domestic legislation she plans to propose to implement the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed on 23 October. On 23 October, the full treaty text and supporting documents were made available to Parliamentarians before they were published on GOV.UK.

The Explanatory Memorandum details how the CEPA will be implemented in the UK, including any changes to domestic UK law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many members of staff, at what grades, will accompany her to Tokyo to sign the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement; what the total cost to the public purse is of that visit for all UK attendees; and what the costs are of the (a) flights, (b) accommodation, (c) internal travel and (d) subsistence expenses of that visit.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* The information requested relating to my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State's trip to Tokyo will be published in line with the usual Transparency requirements, and will be available on gov.uk upon publication.

**Trade Agreements: Regulation****Gareth Thomas:**[\[104016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to publish proposals for changes to primary and secondary domestic legislation required to implement trade agreement agreed by the UK.

**Gareth Thomas:**[\[104017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether it is her Department's policy to bring forward implementing legislation for trade agreements that are not roll-over deals.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Parliament already has a statutory role in the scrutiny of treaties under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act. This allows Parliament to approve or resolve against any treaty.

HM Government will always negotiate Free Trade Agreements that will best serve the interests of British businesses, consumers and communities. We will bring forward legislation to implement future such agreements, where existing powers do not exist on the statute book. Parliament is able approve or reject legislation.

The work of HM Government remains subject to scrutiny from Parliament. The Department for International Trade will continue to make sure that future Free Trade Agreements are negotiated and implemented subject to such scrutiny, whilst protecting the national interest.

**Trade and Agriculture Commission****Emily Thornberry:**[\[106257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the summary of the Trade and Agriculture Commission meeting held on 2 October 2020, if she will publish a list of the (a) stakeholder forum events her Department has held since 5 October 2020 and (b) attendees at each of those events.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* The Trade and Agriculture Commission is an independent advisory board. Whilst the Department for International Trade provides logistical and technical support to these events through its Secretariat, these events are run by the Commission, and are led by its Chair, Tim Smith.

On behalf of the Commission I can inform that since 5 October 2020 it has held 7 stakeholder forum events with industry experts, farmers, agri-food business, local food producers and MPs. These events include:

- 2 roundtables with industry experts on the themes of animal welfare and the environment
- 5 evidence gathering sessions with English regions and Devolved Administrations: South West of England, East of England, London & the South East, Northern Ireland and Wales

These events are part of a programme of stakeholder engagement activities the Commission is carrying out to help inform its work.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[106258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the summary of the Trade and Agriculture Commission meeting held on 2 October 2020, if she will publish the series of questions around which her Department's stakeholder forum events have been structured since 5 October 2020.

**Greg Hands:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* The Trade and Agriculture Commission is an independent advisory board. Whilst the Department for International Trade provides logistical and technical support to these events through its Secretariat, these events are run by the Commission, and are led by its Chair, Tim Smith.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Barristers

**Rehman Chishti:**

[\[106323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many criminal barristers there were in each of the last 10 years.

**Alex Chalk:**

The legal services sector in England and Wales is independent of government. The Ministry of Justice does not currently hold this information. As part of the Criminal Legal Aid Review we have been working closely with the Legal Aid Agency, Bar Council and the Crown Prosecution Service to bring together a dataset on publicly funded criminal barristers. We intend to publish the results of this analysis during the next phase of the review.

### ■ Buildings: Security

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[104710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the cost of (a) installing and (b) operating millimetre scanners as part of Enhanced Gate Security measures at High Throughput Establishments in England and Wales.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is taking decisive action to stop mobile phones and illicit substances entering prison and investing £100m to tackle crime

behind bars. As part of this investment we are introducing Enhanced Gate Security (EGS) in approximately 50 priority sites. This includes archway metal detectors, wands, X-ray baggage scanners, drug dogs and any additional staff required to conduct searches and manage these new procedures.

Millimetre wave scanners operate using non-ionising electromagnetic radiation by omitting signals that enable items to be detected on the surface of the body and within clothing. Their current primary use is to screen passengers as part of airport security.

Although we remain engaged with the market on the potential of using millimetre wave scanners in prisons, our assessment from trials is that this technology does not currently meet our operational requirements within the custodial setting and does therefore support our efforts to crack down on the supply of illicit items as well as other enhanced gate security measures currently in use. Due to HMPPS' assessment of the efficacy of this technology within the prison estate, a competitive procurement exercise has not been conducted and there are no contracted costs available.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[104711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of deploying millimetre scanners as part of Enhanced Gate Security measures at High Throughput Establishments in England and Wales in respect of (a) decreasing flows of illicit items and substances into custodial facilities, (b) increasing social distancing during prison visits and (c) increasing comfort for prison visitors; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:**

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is taking decisive action to stop mobile phones and illicit substances entering prison and investing £100m to tackle crime behind bars. As part of this investment we are introducing Enhanced Gate Security (EGS) in approximately 50 priority sites. This includes archway metal detectors, wands, X-ray baggage scanners, drug dogs and any additional staff required to conduct searches and manage these new procedures.

Millimetre wave scanners operate using non-ionising electromagnetic radiation by omitting signals that enable items to be detected on the surface of the body and within clothing. Their current primary use is part of airport security to screen passengers. Although we remain engaged with the market on the potential of using millimetre wave scanners in prisons, our assessment from trials is that this technology does not currently meet our operational requirements within the custodial setting and therefore adequately support us to crack down on the supply of illicit items when compared to other enhanced gate security measures currently in use.

HMPPS recognises that by its very nature, searching of visitors and prisoners can bring staff into close contact. Despite social distancing measures between prisoners and visitors, the risk of conveyance is still present; therefore, searching of visitors remains necessary and HMPPS has developed guidance detailing safeguards for



when close contact is necessary, complementing the Government's social distancing strategy.

## ■ Cemeteries

**Jane Hunt:**

**[105599]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the merits of regulating privately owned natural burial grounds.

**Alex Chalk:**

Guidance on the operation of natural burial grounds and cemeteries is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-burial-ground-guidance-for-operators>. The Government anticipates that those operating private burial grounds will adhere to the standards and principles underpinning the framework of regulation and guidance which applies to local authority burial grounds.

The Law Commission's current Programme of Law Reform includes a project to consider modernising and streamlining the law governing the disposal of human remains, with a view to putting forward a legal framework for the future.

## ■ Civil Proceedings

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[106238]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many civil cases are awaiting a hearing in (a) each and (b) all civil courts in England and Wales; and what the quarterly increase was in cases awaiting a hearing between January and March, April and June and July and September 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

The information requested is not held.

We use a variety of management information to measure the work in the civil courts, including but not limited to, the volume of incoming receipts and defences along with timeliness of case progression. However, specific data relating to backlog is not held. Quarterly statistics are held at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly>

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[106239]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he is making an assessment of the potential effect on (a) the backlog of civil cases and (b) access to justice of a mechanism for the alternative dispute resolution of minor personal injury cases for the new small claims portal.

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[106240]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what modelling he has undertaken on the potential effect of changes in trends in the number of low-value personal injury cases coming before HM Civil Courts in the event that an alternative dispute mechanism is not available through the small claims portal before April 2021.

**Chris Philp:**

Civil claims backlog data is not held by the Department. However, a revised impact assessment in relation to the forthcoming Statutory Instruments will be published in due course.

The Official Injury Claims portal is designed to be simple and easy to use. However, there will be occasions where claimants will need to be able to resolve disputes with the at-fault compensator. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) was initially proposed to resolve these, but as announced in a written Ministerial Statement published on 27 February 2020 no practicable solution for ADR could be found and it would not form part of the service. The full statement can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/implementation-of-the-whiplash-reform-programme>

The Government remains committed to ensuring access to justice, and unrepresented claimants will have access to a new accessible bespoke court process to enable any such disputes to be settled.

We are also working closely with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to understand the operational impacts of these new processes on the civil justice system and we will keep this matter under review, following implementation.

**■ Crime Prevention****Jamie Stone:****[107088]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to provide funding for social policies to (a) reduce crime and (b) improve rehabilitation of offenders.

**Jamie Stone:****[107089]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department makes of the effect of proposed social policies on the reduction of crime.

**Lucy Frazer:**

In the year ending September 2019, 80% of offenders receiving a caution or conviction had at least one previous caution or conviction. Therefore, if we want to reduce crime then we must tackle reoffending.

The drivers of reoffending are complex, which the Criminal Justice System cannot address alone. That is why we are taking a renewed cross-government approach to tackle the drivers of reoffending across both custody and community.

We have already invested in a number of initiatives to enhance rehabilitation and reduce crime. Our £6 million accommodation pilot scheme in Leeds, Pentonville and Bristol operating since August 2019, has enrolled 323 individuals. In July we announced the Prison Leavers Project confirming £20 million of funding, aiming to support local leadership, identify innovative new ways to address reoffending and improve the social inclusion of those leaving prison.

We have also increased the probation budget by 17% this year to over £1.1 billion and will ensure the probation service continues to have the resources it needs to

protect the public and reduce reoffending. Under the probation reform programme, the private and voluntary sector can still bid for a range of contracts for rehabilitation and resettlement support through the Dynamic Framework. We anticipate eventually spending over £100 million a year on these services.

Last year, we announced a £2.5 billion programme to reform the prison estate and provide 10,000 additional prison places. We will deliver four new prisons that boost rehabilitation and cut reoffending, providing improved security and additional training facilities to help offenders find employment on release. This forms a major part of our plans to transform the prison estate and create environments where offenders can be more effectively rehabilitated and turn their backs on crime.

An experimental statistical report showed that among those who committed an offence in the two years prior to engaging with treatment, 44% did not go on to reoffend in the two years following treatment (MoJ, PHE, 2017). Therefore, we support delivery of NHS England's care after custody service, RECONNECT, for prison leavers with vulnerabilities, who would otherwise struggle to engage with community health services.

It is our ambition to go further and build on work that is already underway, focusing on improving accommodation, employment and substance misuse treatment outcomes for individuals that come into contact with the Criminal Justice System.

## ■ Criminal Justice Royal Commission

**Sarah Jones:**

**[105507]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his timescale is for announcing the (a) Chair, (b) timetable and (c) terms of reference of the proposed Royal Commission on Criminal Justice announced in the Queen's Speech of December 2019.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Royal Commission is an opportunity to undertake independent review of key issues in the criminal justice system. It is also an opportunity to learn from the experience of the coronavirus pandemic to ensure that the system is more resilient.

We are carefully considering the scope, timing and Terms of Reference for the Commission and will update the House in due course.

## ■ Criminal Legal Aid Review

**Rehman Chishti:**

**[106320]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the appointment of the Chair of the Criminal Legal Aid Review Part 2 is planned to be announced.

**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.

**Rehman Chishti:**

[\[106321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Criminal Legal Aid Review Part 2 terms of reference are planned to be published.

**Alex Chalk:**

We are working to ensure that the next phase of the criminal legal aid review, the Independent Review, is set up as quickly as possible. We are currently developing the Terms of Reference in coordination with stakeholders, including criminal defence practitioner representative bodies, and will publish these when the Independent Review is launched.

## ■ Demonstrations

**Scott Benton:**

[\[107123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussion he has had with Cabinet colleagues about creating additional legal protections for the right to protest.

**Alex Chalk:**

Peaceful protest is a vital part of a democratic society. It is a long-standing tradition in this country that people are free to gather together and to demonstrate their views, however uncomfortable these may be to the majority of us, provided that they do so within the law.

There is, of course, a balance to be struck. Protestors' rights need to be balanced with the rights of others to go about their business without fear of intimidation or serious disruption to the community. Rights to peaceful protest do not extend to violent or threatening behaviour and the police have powers to deal with any such acts.

## ■ Human Rights

**Scott Benton:**

[\[107122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to review the effectiveness of the right to (a) freedom of expression under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and (b) receive information under Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Alex Chalk:**

The UK is committed to protecting and respecting human rights. We have a longstanding tradition of ensuring rights and liberties are protected domestically and of fulfilling our international human rights obligations.

The Government is committed to upholding the right to freedom of expression. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides a right of access to recorded information held by UK public authorities. We have no plans for a review of these rights.

## ■ Immigration: Coronavirus

**Tim Farron:**

**[106946]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the lodging of applications to the (a) Upper Tribunal, (b) Court of Appeal and (c) Administrative Court online will continue after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

All existing methods for applicants to submit cases for lodgement in the Upper Tribunal, Court of Appeal and Administrative Court will continue both during and after the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## ■ Manufacturing Industries: Clothing

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[105403]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prosecutions and (b) convictions there have been for all forms of labour exploitation in garment factories since 1 January 2016.

**Chris Philp:**

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions, convictions and sentences for offences relating to labour exploitation such as modern slavery, up to December 2019, which is available in the 'Principal offence proceeding and outcomes' data tool, available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx)

Detailed information on the circumstances of cases, including locations or type of labour, may be held on court record but to be able to identify these cases we would have to access individual court records which would be of disproportionate cost.

## ■ Prison Governors

**Philip Davies:**

**[104709]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many district governors there are in the prison system; and what average pay rise those district governors have received in the last three years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Average increases for governor grades in public sector prisons in each of the last three years were:

|                        | NUMBER OF AWARDS | AVERAGE INCREASE (£) |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| <b>2020/21</b>         |                  |                      |
| Prison Group Directors | N/A              | N/A                  |
| Governor (Band 11)     | 77               | £3,437               |

|                        | NUMBER OF AWARDS | AVERAGE INCREASE (£) |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Governor (Band 10)     | 45               | £3,523               |
| <b>2019/20</b>         |                  |                      |
| Prison Group Directors | 17               | £800                 |
| Governor (Band 11)     | 73               | £3,501               |
| Governor (Band 10)     | 38               | £3,047               |
| <b>2018/19</b>         |                  |                      |
| Prison Group Directors | 7                | £540                 |
| Governor (Band 11)     | 66               | £3,411               |
| Governor (Band 10)     | 43               | £2,900               |

As senior civil servants salaries for Prison Group Directors (PGDs) are set by the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB). Increases for other Governor grades are determined through the independent Prison Service Pay Review Body process. No figures are available for 2020/21 as SCS pay awards have not yet been implemented.

Staff numbers based on staff in post as at 31st March who received a pay award that year.

Staff who had left prior to pay award being implemented each year are excluded from figures.

## ■ Prison Officers: Health

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[106265]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of band 3-5 prison officers with (a) five to nine, (b) 10 to 14, (c) 15 to 19 and (d) more than 20 years' experience in the prison service have been unable to continue in their role as a result of the fitness test in the last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

All prison officers who joined the service after April 2001 must pass an annual fitness test in order to remain a prison officer. Staff who do not meet the annual fitness test standard will be provided with advice and support by a fitness assessor on achieving and maintaining the required fitness level. Staff have three attempts to pass before a decision will be required on the individuals' future which may mean dismissal on medical grounds or re-grading.

For the last five years, we are able to give data on the number of people who have taken and failed their fitness test on the third attempt, as shown in table 1. The data

held does not explain how many of these staff were re-graded or dismissed or the length of time they have spent in the service.

Table 2 outlines the number of Band 3 to 5 members of staff who have left the service in the last five years, broken down by their length of service. This could be for a number of reasons, one of which could be that they failed their fitness test and were dismissed.

Table 1 -

| FINANCIAL YEAR | TOTAL FITNESS TESTS TAKEN | THIRD TEST FAILS |
|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 2015 - 2016    | 11,100                    | 12               |
| 2016 - 2017    | 10,790                    | 13               |
| 2017 - 2018    | 11,461                    | 16               |
| 2018 - 2019    | 14,838                    | 19               |
| 2019 - 2020    | 16,614                    | 24               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>64,803</b>             | <b>84</b>        |

Table 2 –

| GRADE | LENGTH OF SERVICE (YEARS) |             |             |             |             |     | 31-MAR - 2020 |
|-------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----|---------------|
|       |                           | 31-MAR-2016 | 31-MAR-2017 | 31-MAR-2018 | 31-MAR-2019 |     |               |
|       | Band 3-5 Officers         | 5-9         | 217         | 252         | 159         | 101 | 57            |
| 10-14 | 233                       | 314         | 264         | 256         | 187         |     |               |
| 15-19 | 158                       | 157         | 143         | 163         | 167         |     |               |
| 20-24 | 210                       | 197         | 143         | 143         | 134         |     |               |
| 25-29 | 193                       | 220         | 213         | 157         | 147         |     |               |
| 30+   | 116                       | 113         | 135         | 130         | 171         |     |               |

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[106266]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of potential disparities in the proportion of band 3-5 prison officers over 60 years of age who have been unable to continue in their current role due to the fitness test.



**Lucy Frazer:**

All prison officers who joined the service after April 2001 must pass an annual fitness test in order to remain a prison officer. Staff who do not meet the annual fitness test standard will be provided with advice and support by a fitness assessor on achieving and maintaining the required fitness level. Staff have three attempts to pass before a decision will be required on the individuals' future which may mean dismissal on medical grounds or re-grading.

For the year 2019 / 20, there were three Band 3 to 5 Prison Officers aged 60 and over who failed their fitness test after three attempts.

**Ms Lyn Brown:****[106937]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make a comparative assessment of the level of band 3-5 (a) male and (b) female prison officers who have been unable to continue in their current role due to the result of a fitness test in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Lucy Frazer:**

All prison officers who joined the service after April 2001 must pass an annual fitness test in order to remain a prison officer. Staff who do not meet the annual fitness test standard will be provided with advice and support by a fitness assessor on achieving and maintaining the required fitness level. Staff have three attempts to pass before a decision will be required on the individuals' future which may mean dismissal on medical grounds or re-grading.

Table 1 shows the number of third attempt failures for 2018-19 for male and female staff members for each quarter. Table 2 shows the same data for 2019 – 20. HMPPS do not currently hold data on how many of these failures resulted in a change of role.

Table 1 -

|                        | YEAR 2018-2019 | 3RD<br>TEST<br>FAILS |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Male</b>            | <b>Female</b>  |                      |
| April – June           | 1              | 4                    |
| July - September       | 2              | 5                    |
| October – December     | 1              | 4                    |
| January – March        | 0              | 2                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>4</b>       | <b>15</b>            |
| % of total tests taken | 0.02%          | 0.10<br>%            |

Table 2 -

|                        | YEAR 2019-2020 | 3RD<br>TEST<br>FAILS |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Male</b>            | <b>Female</b>  |                      |
| April – June           | 2              | 7                    |
| July - September       | 0              | 7                    |
| October – December     | 1              | 4                    |
| January – March        | 1              | 2                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>4</b>       | <b>20</b>            |
| % of total tests taken | 0.02%          | 0.10<br>%            |

The fitness test is designed for the minimum levels of fitness required to perform the role of a Prison officer safely and effectively. Therefore, it is testing physical suitability for the job and is designed to be gender neutral.

#### ■ Prison Service: Disclosure of Information

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, further to the Answer of 14 October to Question 99603, when the consultation with the Prison Officers' Association is planned to commence.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, further to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 99603 on Prisons: Disclosure of information, which (a) trade unions and (b) other sectoral organisations (i) have been or (ii) will be consulted.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Consultation with HMPPS trade unions re-started, following a break due to the current pandemic, on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

Consultation has taken place with the following trade unions: Prison Officers' Association, Prison Governors' Association, PCS, Prospect, GMB, FDA, Napo and Unison. Consultation and engagement has also taken place with diversity & inclusion colleagues, staff networks, nominated officers and counter corruption colleagues across the MoJ and HMPPS.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76676 on Prisons: Disclosure of Information, how many cases are being managed within the existing whistleblowing process.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, further to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76676, what the average time was for a whistleblowing case under management within the existing whistleblowing process, for cases beginning in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019 and (f) 2020 to date.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76676, at what points during the existing whistleblowing process are (a) senior HMPPS officials, (b) senior Departmental officials, and (c) Ministers involved.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76676, whether standards or targets have been set for the conclusion of whistleblowing cases within the existing whistleblowing process.

**Lucy Frazer:**

There are currently no whistleblowing cases from prisons being managed through the existing whistleblowing process.

The information requested on average times for whistleblowing cases is not currently held by the Ministry of Justice. The existing Ministry of Justice whistleblowing policy is currently being reviewed and updated and as part of this process the Ministry of Justice are looking at improving the data recorded on whistleblowing cases.

Staff should, in most instances, raise their concern with their line manager, however, if this is not appropriate or the concern is a serious matter that needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency, they can raise their concern with a more senior manager or with a Nominated Officer. If the employee believes the concern is extremely serious then they can raise their concern with the Permanent Secretary.

The current MoJ Whistleblowing policy states that concerns raised will be dealt with as sensitively and as quickly as possible. The department will aim to update the employee on the progress of the concern within 28 days where possible. However, in the event of a formal investigation or the involvement of police/security, it may not be possible or appropriate to provide full details. The department will confirm when the matter is concluded and, if appropriate, the outcome of the investigation, maintaining security and confidentiality for all parties as far as possible.

## ■ Prison Service: Labour Turnover

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he (a) holds information and (b) has received representations on increased recruitment and retention problems for prisons that are located close to but not within the London weighting qualifying area.

**Lucy Frazer:**

My Department has received representations from prisons that are close to London on their challenge of recruiting and retaining prison staff.

We have introduced several initiatives including financial rewards to address this issue.

We are also investing in the development and training of our prison staff and the infrastructure of our prisons, which will empower the Prison Service to meet recruitment and retention challenges.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential effect of different policy options on levels of recruitment and retention among staff at prisons that are located close to but not within the London weighting qualifying area.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We continue to review policies to ensure that they still meet business requirements. As a result, the performance of HMPPS recruitment has been strong over the past 18 months and we have had regional populated merit lists of eligible candidates for use as needed across all establishments. We have improved other policies to improve staff retention and to ensure that staff continue their career in HMPPS.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on retention of experienced prison staff of the fitness test.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Staff retention is monitored through a number of local and national processes. A retention programme is in place which reviews data and trends of staff leavers and uses exit interviews to understand the reasons for attrition.

All prison officers who joined the service after April 2001 must pass an annual fitness test in order to remain a prison officer. Staff who do not meet the annual fitness test standard will be provided with advice and support by a fitness assessor on achieving and maintaining the required fitness level. Staff have three attempts to pass before a decision will be required on the individuals' future which may mean dismissal on medical grounds or re-grading. Over the last five years 0.12% of all fitness tests undertaken have resulted in a third test failure.

Following a review of the fitness test in 2017, a new reasonably adjusted test (the Chester treadmill walking test) was introduced which replaced the standard bleep test

for staff with lower limb injuries. The bleep test pass level for specialist P.E officers was also reduced as result of this review.

There are a number of other reasons affecting staff retention including resignations, retirement and ill-health. The retention programme is linked to wider activities including employee experience, employee lifecycle and staff engagement at work to support retention.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[106276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the effect on retention of experienced prison staff of instances where the payment of a market supplement to new staff makes new staff better remunerated.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The market supplement was introduced in 2017 in 32 prisons and is being paid to all Band 3 Prison Officers on the Fair and Sustainable pay structures to ensure that new recruits are not better remunerated than our experienced staff.

#### ■ **Prison Service: Pay**

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[106277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the effect of market supplements for new staff on the levels of incentive to (a) move locations and (b) progress within the prison service.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The market supplement was extended to other prisons that had a recruitment and retention challenge to ensure that staff do not move locations to access higher rates of pay. As a result of the introduction of the market supplement, we have changed our people policies to incentivise staff to apply for promotions and continue their careers in HMPPS.

#### ■ **Prisoners Release: Coronavirus**

**Catherine West:** [\[107072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners in prisons and young offender institutions have been granted temporary release under each of the three categories eligible for Covid-19 Release on Temporary Licence on Compassionate Grounds.

**Lucy Frazer:**

On 31 March, we announced that pregnant women and prisoners with their babies in custody will be considered for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) on compassionate grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 30 September, 25 pregnant women and mothers with babies in custody have been released.

In addition, prisoners identified as 'extremely vulnerable' as defined in the NHS guidelines also merit consideration for ROTL on compassionate grounds during the

COVID-19 pandemic. As of 30 September, 29 extremely vulnerable individuals have been released. This brings the total number of compassionate releases to 54.

The Ministry of Justice now publishes a monthly release of Covid-19 related statistics. This includes the number of prisoners that have been released from custody under Covid-19 temporary release schemes. The statistical release can be found here each month: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-prison-and-probation-service-covid-19-statistics-monthly>.

Alongside the careful release of low-risk offenders, we have also implemented our compartmentalisation strategy to manage different cohorts of the prison population, are working to expedite remand cases, and have expanded the estate through the installation of temporary single occupancy units. We will keep those in our care safe by limiting the spread of COVID-19 in prisons, while maintaining public protection.

### ■ Prisoners: Telephones

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [105342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of increased PIN credit provided to prisoners during the covid-19 outbreak on (a) strength of family ties, (b) levels of mental health and wellbeing and (c) levels of risk of outbreaks in prisons.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [105343]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimates he has made of the effect of increased (a) PIN credit and (b) access to in-cell telephony provided to prisoners during the covid-19 outbreak on the number of calls made to (a) family members, (b) support workers and (c) others in the community.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [105344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans the Government has for the (a) provision of PIN credit and (b) cost of making calls in prisons during the next six months of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We fully recognise the importance of family contact for those in custody both in terms of supporting wellbeing and reducing the risk of reoffending. This is why we introduced a range of measures to minimise the impacts of the suspension of visits in March. This included introducing almost 1,300 secure mobile PIN phone handsets which are being used to contact family and friends as well as a range of support lines. We also provided additional pin credit for calls, bolstered support for the Prisoner's Families Helpline and introduced secure video calls which are currently operating in over 100 prisons across England and Wales.

Since 2 April around 455,000 calls have been made using these secure mobile phones, meaning that there has been an average daily amount of just below 4,000 calls.

Prisoners and those in the youth estate can call anyone on their approved PIN phone lists which are not restricted to family or friends. Quantitative assessments have not been carried out in relation to calls made to different groups of contacts. However, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Annual Report 2019–20 noted that 90% of prisoners they surveyed said they were able to use the telephone every day, and that an increasing number of prisons had installed in-cell telephones.

We have reintroduced face-to-face visits in line with the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services with prisons commencing when it was safe to do so in an adapted manner. However, we will continue to provide additional support to enable prisoners to maintain contact and support where prison regimes are restricted and will keep this under regular review.

## ■ Prisons: Coronavirus

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[105347]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 12 June 2020 to Question 54072 on Prisons: Coronavirus, what recent assessment he has made of levels of (a) self-harm, (b) attempted suicide, (c) suicide, (d) violence between prisoners, (e) attacks on prison staff and (f) mental health crises in prisons during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Our most recently published Safety in Custody statistics which contains data on assaults and self-harm, cover the period up to the end of March 2020 and therefore do not cover the majority of the covid-19 outbreak.

These figures show that the number of self-harm incidents increased by 11% in the 12 months to March 2020, although have decreased in the past two quarters, including a 6% decrease in the latest quarter.

Assaults up to March 2020 are down 8% from the 12 months to March 2019, and we have seen reductions in this for the last four quarters. Similarly, assaults on staff have decreased by 5% in the year to March 2020.

In the 12 months to June 2020 self-inflicted deaths in prison custody decreased by 13% from the previous 12 months.

Figures for assaults and self-harm up to the end of June, and deaths to the end of October will be published on 29 October 2020

Safety has remained a priority throughout the pandemic, and we recognise the need to remain vigilant to the risks to prisoners and staff as impacts of the virus continue.

We are continuing to provide care and support to people at risk of self-harm or suicide through ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) case management and provide a range of distraction packs and in-cell activities. We are also working with the Samaritans to ensure that the Listener peer support scheme continues to function effectively.



Our plan for easing restrictions in prisons, and re-introducing them where necessary, is set out in the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services and is guided by public health advice, whilst ensuring we can keep staff and prisoners safe.

## ■ Prisons: Crimes of Violence

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[106278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of rates of assaults on prison staff by custody categories (a) male A, (b) male B, (c) male C, (d) male D, (e) female restricted, (f) female closed, (g) female open, (h) young offender institution and (i) youth custody; and during (i) daytime and (ii) night-time, in each of the last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The rates of assaults on prison staff by prison categorisation is set out in the attached table.

Violence against our hard-working prison officers is unacceptable, and we work closely with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to bring the perpetrators to justice. Additionally, as outlined in our Sentencing White Paper, we will double the maximum sentence for assaulting an emergency worker from 12 months to two years.

We are also giving officers PAVA pepper spray and body-worn cameras to make their jobs safer, as well as access to post incident care teams, occupational health support and counselling for those who need it. More widely, we are spending £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars. This will fund tough airport-style security, body scanners and phone-blocking technology.

### **Attachments:**

1. Table [Copy of PQ 106278 (002).xlsx]

## ■ Prisons: Disclosure of Information

**Gordon Henderson:**

[\[106980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 99603, Prisons: Disclosure of Information; which trade unions have received drafts of the updated policy and supporting guidance documents; and on what date did they receive that information.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Consultation has taken place with the following trade unions: Prison Officers' Association, Prison Governors' Association, PCS, Prospect, GMB, FDA, Napo and Unison. Consultation with HMPPS trade unions re-started, following a break due to the current pandemic, on 21st October 2020.

## ■ Probate

**Darren Jones:**

**[107095]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to (a) resolve conflicts which arise between contract and probate law when the nominated completion date for sale of a property postdates the vendor's death but precedes probate being granted to their beneficiaries and (b) provide for affected contracts to be automatically extended or nullified on the death of the vendor.

**Alex Chalk:**

There are no current plans to bring forward legislation as these cases are exceptional, and the existing law provides for the means of resolving disputes arising in such circumstances. Nevertheless, the Government will keep this area of law under review and would welcome any examples of problems that have arisen.

Generally, where one of the contracting parties to the sale of a property dies before the completion of the sale, their legal responsibilities transfer to their personal representatives. They are able to enter into discussions with the other party to vary the contract (for example extend it) by mutual agreement.

If no such agreement can be reached, the Probate Registry can operate an emergency system to expedite the Grant of Probate or for a limited Grant of Probate to be issued. This may be used to enable the sale of the property to take place with minimum delay.

If probate is unlikely to be granted before a fixed completion date, the personal representatives may agree to allow the buyer into the property on licence pending formal completion.

In addition, Section 113 of the Senior Courts Act 1981 empowers a court to grant probate or administration in respect of any part of a deceased person's estate, limited as a court feels is appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

## ■ Probation

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[105345]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) serious case reviews following serious further offences by people under MAPPA supervision.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[105346]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) serious case reviews following serious further offences by people under MAPPA supervision have been completed in each of the last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Under the statutory guidance, it is for the Strategic Management Board (SMB) of the MAPPA area to commission a serious case review (SCR). The SMB must commission an SCR where a MAPPA offender managed at either Level 2 or 3 is

charged with committing an offence of murder, manslaughter, rape, or attempted murder or rape. The SMB may decide to conduct an SCR, if an offender managed at Level 1 is charged with any of those offences or if the SMB considers that is in the public interest to undertake an SCR where one is not required.

The purpose of an SCR is to determine how effectively the various agencies worked together under the MAPPA framework to assess and manage the risks of the offender concerned and, where there were shortcomings, to identify the improvements needed, either locally or nationally.

Officials regularly revise the statutory guidance, to ensure that it reflects any legislative changes and incorporates best operational practice. As part of the rolling programme of revising the guidance, my officials are currently consulting on whether to make changes to the criteria for mandatory SCRs. Once this is complete, I will ask officials to seek views from SMBs as to the merits of publishing SCRs.

The published MAPPA Annual Report includes data on the number of SCRs the SMB commissioned that year for Level 2 and Level 3 cases. The data for 2019/20 will be published as National Statistics in the MAPPA Annual Report on 29 October 2020. However, the table below shows statistics for the previous 5 years:

Table 1 Number of SCRs for Level 2 and Level 3 cases.

| YEAR    | LEVEL 2 | LEVEL 3 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 2014/15 | 11      | 0       |
| 2015/16 | 11      | 3       |
| 2016/17 | 6       | 0       |
| 2017/18 | 6       | 1       |
| 2018/19 | 9       | 1       |

In addition to the above table, SMBs conducted a number of discretionary reviews for Level 1 cases.

Table 2 Number of discretionary reviews Level 1 cases.

| YEAR    | LEVEL 1 |
|---------|---------|
| 2014/15 | 2       |
| 2015/16 | 4       |
| 2016/17 | 3       |
| 2017/18 | 2       |
| 2018/19 | 2       |

Table notes:

These figures are based on information provided to the National MAPPA Team by individual MAPPA areas.

## ■ Security Industry Authority

**Alberto Costa:**

[\[107036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has been made of the potential merits of including Security Industry Authority licenced security staff in the provisions of the Assault on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018.

**Alex Chalk:**

Everyone has the right to feel safe at work and an assault on any person whilst carrying out their job is completely unacceptable.

The Government has no current plans to extend the definition of the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 to other workers. The Act was specifically created in response to an increasing rise in assaults on front-line emergency workers, those who are enforcing the law or saving lives.

However, a wide range of criminal offences currently exist that cover the type of abuse or violence that could be faced by any worker, including security staff, from common assault to attempted murder. Sentencing guidelines state that where an assault is committed against a person who works with the public this will be considered as an aggravating factor, meriting a higher sentence.

## ■ Small Claims

**Andy Slaughter:**

[\[106241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the small claims portal will be launched to the general public in 2021; what resources he has made available for communications to the public on how to make a minor injury claim under that new regime; and if he will he make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

As confirmed in a Written Ministerial statement on 21 April 2020 the Government remains committed to implementing the Whiplash Reform Programme by April 2021.

The Portal will be accompanied by comprehensive and clear guidance for the public and if at any stage users need assistance, they can call a dedicated Portal Support Centre.

We intend to engage with the public, third sector, representative organisations and professional users during the pre-launch, launch and post launch periods to ensure that those who need to access the service know how to do so.

## ■ Victim Support Schemes: Coronavirus

**Peter Kyle:**

**[107064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to support the welfare of victim support staff during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increase in demand for victim support services, resulting in increased pressure on victim support staff. We recognise the impact the continued delivery of critical support has on providers. The Ministry of Justice is committed to ensuring victims of crime, and the organisations that work with them, receive the support they need during this challenging time. We continue to work across government and in partnership with key stakeholders, including through the Covid-19 Victim and Witness Silver Command Group, which allows us to remain alert, and respond quickly to emerging issues and risks that support services raise including those related to staff wellbeing and resilience.

We have now distributed £22 million emergency Covid-19 funding, benefiting more than 540 charities. An additional £600,000 funding was reallocated by the Ministry of Justice to assist victim support helpline services. Following the Prime Minister's Hidden Harms Summit, the government also committed to developing a Victim Funding Strategy, which aims to place the support sector on a more sustainable footing and ensure victim support staff are able to deliver their vital work.

Much of the emergency funding has been used to provide additional support for staff. For example, for sexual violence and domestic abuse services, investment has been made in increasing IT infrastructure to allow staff to provide support remotely, providing extra clinical and safeguarding support to maintain staff welfare, and funding extra PPE equipment and deep cleaning costs for organisations returning to face-to-face support.

We have also invested in providing support and networking sessions to support Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) through this period of change, so that they can continue to help victims feel informed and supported at every stage of their recovery journey.

**Peter Kyle:**

**[107065]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Question 96135, what plans he has to extend the emergency funding for victim support charities and helplines throughout a second wave of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Chalk:**

We remain committed to ensuring victims of crime receive the support they need during this challenging time and continue to work across government, with the sector and local bodies to identify emerging needs.

In response to concerns, we have extended the funding period from 31<sup>st</sup> October to allow organisations to spend the Covid-19 funding until the end March 2021.

**Peter Kyle:**

**[107066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to provide support to young victims affected by backlogs in the youth courts.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Justice is committed to ensuring young victims of crime receive the support they need during this challenging time.

That is why throughout the pandemic, we have worked closely with criminal justice agencies and victim and witness support services, to ensure victims are kept well informed through regular communications and guidance. We are also working across government and with key stakeholders through our Covid-19 Victim and Witness Silver Command Group, which allows us to monitor and respond to emerging risks and issues, such as those impacting young victims at court.

The Government has also funded Barnardo's See Hear Respond service, offering rapid support for children, young people and families, to help them cope with the Covid-19 crisis.

Alongside this, the Court-Based Witness Service continues to provide emotional and practical support to all witnesses, including children, to help them give their best evidence in criminal proceedings, with young, vulnerable and intimidated witnesses eligible for further outreach support prior to attending court. This will often include home visits, or remote meetings during Covid-19.

In consultation with Public Health England, and Public Health Wales, HMCTS has put in place arrangements for social distancing and mitigation of the risks associated with the pandemic. These arrangements have, since July, enabled Youth Courts to conclude more cases every week than have been received, with the safety of all those involved in these hearings being paramount. We do not currently envisage that it will be necessary to revert to any contingency listing arrangements during a second wave of covid-19.

■ **Wormwood Scrubs Prison: Coronavirus**

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[106235]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of covid-19 have been identified in HMP Wormwood Scrubs; how many of those identified are receiving hospital treatment; how many require intensive care or ventilation; and how many are people who are vulnerable or have an underlying medical condition.

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[106236]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many inmates of HMP Wormwood Scrubs are confined to their cells as a result of covid-19 infection in the prison; and for what period they will remain confined.

**Andy Slaughter:****[106237]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what access inmates of HMP Wormwood Scrubs confined to their cells as a result of covid-19 infection in the prison have to (a) washing and toilet facilities and (b) telephone calls to family members.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Closed settings such as prisons pose particular challenges in managing outbreaks, but we have implemented strong measures to mitigate this risk, guided by public health advice, and with the safety of staff and prisoners remaining the absolute priority.

Between 'five and fewer' required external hospitalisation but it is reported that they were not receiving hospital treatment as a result of covid-19. We do not hold medical records for any individual and therefore cannot disclose underlying medical conditions.

Verified data on the number of prisoners that have tested positive for Covid-19 in September and October is due to be published in November, as part of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) national Covid-19 statistics and workforce statistics on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-prison-and-probation-service-covid-19-statistics-monthly>

As of 23 October a total of 59 prisoners at HMP Wormwood Scrubs were in isolation for a period of 14 days as a result of being symptomatic or similar COVID related conditions. This is in line with the Government contact tracing policies. The establishment continues to isolate prisoners displaying symptoms, as set out in the HMPPS compartmentalisation strategy.

Prisoners, including those who are isolating have unlimited access to washing and toilet facilities. They also have access to in-cell telephony so that they can maintain family contact which is vital for their mental wellbeing and rehabilitation. Since the onset of covid-19, all prisoners have been provided with additional telephone credit to encourage contact with their families. Those in isolation have also been given further credit during this period.

**■ Youth Offending Teams: Training****Peter Kyle:****[105465]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to page 9 of the 2020 UK annual report on modern slavery, if he will publish the (a) dates and (b) content of the guidance and training on criminal exploitation provided to Youth Offending Teams.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We are clear that tackling child criminal exploitation is key to ensure improved outcomes for children.

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are run by local authorities which are responsible for putting in place training to meet the needs of their area. The approach of the Crown



Prosecution Service in providing training in relation to criminal exploitation and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 has been to engage with YOTs locally, often alongside local community policing. This training has included explaining how the defence under section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 operates, and the role that YOTs have in that process. There are no plans to publish further details of individual training with YOT teams across the country.

The CPS has not contributed to any new guidance for YOTs.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Independent Commission on Information Retrieval

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[105438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland establishing the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval, how many discussions he had with his Irish counterpart on addressing Northern Ireland legacy issues, on the information retrieval provisions contained in that statement.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Ministers and officials regularly meet with counterparts in the Irish Government to discuss a range of issues, including legacy. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials from the Northern Ireland Office last met with the Irish Government's Minister for Foreign Affairs and his officials on 8 October 2020.

### ■ Infrastructure: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[106400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 52 of the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, what assessment he has made of the Government's progress on turbocharging infrastructure delivery in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* The UK Government is committed to working with the Executive to turbocharge infrastructure delivery in Northern Ireland, including through the £2bn New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) deal. Alongside this, the Government will be undertaking an ambitious review of connectivity within the United Kingdom through the Union Connectivity Review, which will look at the opportunities for strengthening connections throughout the Union.

Further to this, the Government has also committed £562m to the City and Growth Deal programme in Northern Ireland and £55m for the Inclusive Future Fund to regenerate the North West. This funding aims to have a positive and lasting impact on employability and skills, infrastructure, tourism and regeneration.

The Government's £2 billion NDNA financial package includes: a £1bn Barnett-based investment guarantee from the UK Government, £60m for a Graduate Entry Medical School in the North West and £50m to support the rollout of ultra-low emission public transport. The Government has already provided the Executive with £553m from this financial package to support our commitments. We will continue to work through the Joint Board to drive the delivery of NDNA.

In the light of Covid-19, it is all the more important that we work closely with the Executive to enable the strongest possible economic recovery. The Government has provided unprecedented assistance to businesses and households through the UK and has provided the Executive with significant additional resources to respond to the crisis. We will be equally committed in driving forward economic growth, building back better and enabling Northern Ireland to seize the opportunities presented by our new trading relationships.

### ■ **Mental Health Services: Northern Ireland**

**Louise Haigh:**

**[106402]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the commitments set out in the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, how much funding from the public purse the Government plans to allocate for mental health in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* The UK Government committed £2 billion over five years to facilitate NDNA commitments, which includes around £245m to support the transformation of public services and £140m to address Northern Ireland's unique challenges. The UK Government has also guaranteed a further £2.4billion in additional funding in response to Covid-19.

The allocation of funding for public services, including the prioritisation of physical and mental health services is a devolved matter, within the competence of the Northern Ireland Executive.

Given the serious impact Covid-19 has had on mental health, Minister Swann launched a Mental Health Action Plan on 19 May. The Mental Health Action Plan is the first in a series of steps taken by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland, to ensure those suffering from mental ill health will be able to access the services they need. The action plan includes a dedicated Covid-19 response plan, which outlines the psychological wellbeing and mental health response to the pandemic.

In addition to this, Professor Siobhan O'Neill, Professor of Mental Health Sciences at Ulster University was appointed as interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland. Professor O'Neill is one of Northern Ireland's leading experts in the field of mental health, and is at the forefront in developing responsive services for those affected by trauma and mental illness.

**■ Non-departmental Public Bodies: Northern Ireland****Carla Lockhart:****[107137]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Executive on the number of quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations operating in Northern Ireland; and what assessment he has made of the effect on costs to the taxpayer of those organisations.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is in regular contact with the First and deputy First Minister and members of the Northern Ireland Executive where a range of issues are discussed. The Executive's arms-length bodies, including their funding arrangements, are a matter for the Executive.

**■ Stormont House Agreement****Louise Haigh:****[106401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020, what estimate he has made of the funding required to implement the Stormont House Agreement mechanisms outlined in that document.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

*[Holding answer 23 October 2020]:* The Government has made substantial financial commitments to help implement legacy reform. We remain committed to introducing legislation to address the legacy of the troubles in a way that focuses on reconciliation, delivers for victims, and ends the cycle of re-investigations that has failed victims and veterans alike.

**■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland****Louise Haigh:****[105439]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the (a) attendees, (b) dates and (c) outcomes of meetings his Department has held with victims' groups in relation to the Government's Northern Ireland legacy proposals.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Since March, a number of calls and virtual meetings have taken place with victims' groups, as well as the Victims' Commissioner and the Victims and Survivors Forum, at ministerial and official level. Despite the challenging circumstances presented by the ongoing Covid-19 situation, engagement continued throughout the summer months and continues to take place where possible. The UK Government remains committed to making progress on legacy issues, and recognises the importance of working with all parts of the community in Northern Ireland as part of this process.

The Government is committed to publishing details of ministers' meetings with external organisations on a quarterly basis. Publications for the Northern Ireland Office can be found on Gov.uk.

**Louise Haigh:**

**[105440]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 41538, on Northern Ireland Government, what engagement has taken place with a range of stakeholders on the legacy proposals, including victims' groups, the Northern Ireland parties and the Irish Government.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Ministers regularly meet with Northern Ireland party leaders, and with counterparts in the Irish Government to discuss a range of issues, including legacy. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials from the Northern Ireland Office last met with the Irish Government's Minister for Foreign Affairs and his officials on 8 October 2020.

Since March, the Secretary of State and officials from the Northern Ireland Office have met various community groups, including victim support groups, religious leaders and groups from across academia and civic society. Despite the challenging circumstances presented by the ongoing Covid-19 situation, engagement continued throughout the summer months and continues to take place where possible. The UK Government remains committed to making progress on legacy issues, and recognises the importance of working with all parts of the community in Northern Ireland as part of this process.

**Louise Haigh:**

**[105441]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals in relation to Northern Ireland legacy.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government has been clear that it will bring forward legislation to address the legacy of the troubles that focuses on reconciliation, delivers for victims, and ends the cycle of investigations that has failed victims and veterans alike. We are committed to making progress on this as quickly as possible.

## ■ UK Government-Northern Ireland Executive Joint Board

**Carla Lockhart:**

**[107138]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 97062 on UK Government-Northern Ireland Executive Joint Board, what assessment he has made of the progress being made on transformation in the areas of (a) health, (b) education and (c) justice.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Those matters are of course devolved and a matter for the Executive.

We have, however, seen the ending of the nurses' pay dispute and the Executive reaching political agreement on the creation of a new Northern Ireland Graduate Entry Medical School in Derry/Londonderry.

The Executive's focus, rightly and understandably, has been on Covid-19. But the pandemic has highlighted the need for urgent health reform in NI and as a result, the

Rebuilding Health & Social Care Strategic Framework was published by Minister Swann on 9 June.

The UK Government supports the Executive's commitment to speed up the criminal justice system, benefitting victims and witnesses. We also support the Executive's progress towards building a shared and integrated society, including educating children from different backgrounds in the classroom.

A further meeting of the Joint Board took place on 21 October. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland discussed the importance of delivering transformation in public services and establishing an independent fiscal council to support the Executive in developing long-term spending plans with the First and deputy First Minister.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Acceleration Unit

**Stephen Hammond:** [R] [[106280](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) mission statement and (b) objectives are of his Department's Acceleration Unit; and for what reasons that Unit was established.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Acceleration Unit was established with the overall objective of accelerating key transport projects and programmes. The work of the Acceleration Unit is driven by the need to build back better, to level up the country and to decarbonise transport.

### ■ Acceleration Unit: Accountability

**Stephen Hammond:** [R] [[106283](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to help ensure the accountability of his Department's Acceleration Unit.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Acceleration Unit will be directly accountable to the Secretary of State and is expected to engage with key stakeholders and colleagues across the department, government, and industry on a range of projects and programmes at varying stages of their lifecycle to deliver the best possible outcome from accelerating their delivery. The Acceleration Unit Director, Darren Shirley, will assess the effectiveness of its activities and report weekly to the Secretary of State.

### ■ Acceleration Unit: Public Appointments

**Stephen Hammond:** [R] [[106281](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the post of Director of his Department's Acceleration Unit was advertised; and what the remuneration is for that post.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Director of the Acceleration Unit has been appointed on a fixed term basis in line with Civil Service Recruitment Principles. The remuneration for the post is in line with Senior Civil Service Pay Scales.

**■ Acceleration Unit: Recruitment****Stephen Hammond:****[R] [106282]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the role of member of his Department's Acceleration Unit was advertised; what the required skills are for that post; and what the remuneration for that post is.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

While the unit is established current appointments have been made on a temporary basis. Role profiles setting out the skills and experience needed within the unit were developed. Potential candidates were assessed against these criteria, this included an internal expression of interest, identified named individuals and applications from wider transport organisations who would join the department on secondment. Where fair and open competition has not been used, all appointments have been in line with the agreed Exceptions to the Civil Service Recruitment Principles. Remuneration for posts is in line with DfT Pay Scales.

**■ Acceleration Unit: Staff****Stephen Hammond:****[R] [106938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the non-Government specialists working for the Transport Acceleration Unit.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Acceleration Unit will be assisted in its work by an expert panel with industry experience including Highways England's Director of Complex Infrastructure projects, Chris Taylor and Mark Reynolds Chief Executive of Mace.

**■ Alternative Fuels: Investment****Kevin Hollinrake:****[106403]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on levels of investment in the production of non fossil fuels for transport in the UK of removing derogation c from paragraph 6.84 of the 2018 RTFO Carbon and Sustainability Guidance in the updated guidance published in January 2020; what steps he is taking to incentivise the production of non fossil fuels for transport in the UK; and what commitments he has made to the decarbonisation of the public transport network.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department's Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation Guidance version 2020, Part One and Part Two, still provides that "derogation c." applies. The Department has no current plans to remove the derogation, but it is now in Part One, paragraph 3.43, of the guidance.

Non-fossil fuels, including renewable hydrogen, are incentivised under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), a certificate trading scheme. Renewable hydrogen is categorised as a development fuel, which potentially benefits from a higher tradeable certificate value.

At the end of March, we published a document “Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge”, kicking off our work on preparing a Transport Decarbonisation Plan. This holistic and cross-modal approach to decarbonising the entire transport system, including public transport, will set out a credible and ambitious pathway to delivering transport’s contribution to carbon budgets and meet net zero by 2050.

### ■ Aviation: Government Assistance

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

**[106300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to help prevent job losses in the aviation sector.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department for Transport is actively monitoring the impact on jobs in the aviation sector from Covid-19 at the national and regional level, with support from other government Departments.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been available to businesses affected by COVID-19 to pay wages. The Job Support Scheme will replace the scheme from 1 November, where businesses can also take advantage of the Job Retention Bonus.

### ■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

**[106298]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to support coach (a) operators and (b) manufacturers experiencing reduced demand as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We have announced several measures available to UK businesses, including coach operators and manufacturers, and this includes further measures announced by the Chancellor on 24 September as part of the Winter Economy Plan and support for businesses in local lockdown areas.

In addition, we are supporting coaches to be used for school transport and public transport, where appropriate. The Department for Education has provided over £70 million to local transport authorities to provide additional dedicated school and college capacity in our transport system, including coaches.

We continue to work closely with representatives from the coach sector including the Confederation of Passenger Transport, and with other Government Departments, to understand the ongoing risks and issues, including demand considerations and how these could be addressed.



**Sara Britcliffe:**

[\[107127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will put plans in place to provide financial support to the coach industry.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We have announced several financial support measures available to UK businesses, including the coach industry. This includes measures announced on 24 September as part of the Winter Economy Plan. Further support was announced by the Chancellor on 22 October for businesses in local lockdown areas, in addition to changes to the Job Support Scheme (JSS), and increased business grants.

In addition, we are supporting coaches to be used for school transport and public transport, where appropriate. The Department for Education has provided over £70 million to local transport authorities to provide additional dedicated school and college capacity in our transport system, including coaches.

We continue to work closely with representatives from the coach sector including the Confederation of Passenger Transport, and with other government departments, to understand the ongoing risks and issues, including demand considerations and how these could be addressed.

#### ■ **Bus Services: West Yorkshire**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[105610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much of the additional £30 million in bus funding announced on 3 April 2020 will be spent in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority, which includes Wakefield, has been provided with £1,086,414 from the additional £30 million bus fund.

#### ■ **Buses: Alternative Fuels**

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[106263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to make available the funding announced under the Better Bus Deal for Bus Users to provide for alternatively fuelled vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Better Deal for Bus Users commitments from 2019 included a commitment to fund £50 million towards the UK's first All-Electric Bus Town. We hope to announce the bid(s) progressing to the next stage of the All-Electric Bus Town competition soon.

In addition to this, on 11 February 2020 the Prime Minister announced £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycle links for regions outside London. This additional investment will include at least 4,000 new Zero-Emission Buses. The funding of which will be announced in due course after the Spending Review.

## ■ Cycleways

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[105537]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for the provision of cycling routes and facilities alongside HS2.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

In October 2018 the Government published a feasibility study looking at the possibility of a cycleway associated with the HS2 scheme. The study identified a series of cycle routes that would provide connectivity benefits to local communities. The Government has also invested £22 million in developing National Cycle Network cycling and walking paths. Many of these are within the HS2 corridor, and will deliver improved surfacing, new traffic-free routes, and more accessible transport links in local communities. Further funding for the National Cycle Network and other cycling routes and facilities will be considered as part of the Spending Review.

**Mark Menzies:**

**[106971]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure both safe vehicle access and cycle safety when introducing new cycle lanes.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

On 28 July the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking, with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. The plan includes a number of commitments which will deliver increased safety for cyclists, including the roll-out of segregated cycle lanes in towns and cities, a big increase in cycle training, higher safety standards for lorries and improved Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance.

The management of local roads, including provision of cycle lanes, is the responsibility of individual local traffic authorities. It is for them to ensure their streets are designed to provide safe movement for all road users. Design advice for cycling infrastructure, including cycle lanes, can be found in Local Transport Note 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' which is at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120).

## ■ Cycling: Wakefield

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[105603]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to encourage cycling as a means of transport in Wakefield constituency since the covid-19 outbreak began.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

On the 9th May the Government announced a £2bn package of funding for cycling and walking. This included a £225 million Emergency Active Travel Fund from which West Yorkshire Combined Authority was allocated £2,513,000 in the first tranche, and indicatively allocated a further £10,053,000 from tranche 2. The Department will be confirming final allocations for tranche 2 of the fund shortly.

Decisions on the allocation of the rest of the £2 billion will be for the Spending Review in due course. The majority of this funding will be provided to local authorities in order to deliver local cycling and walking plans.

## ■ Driving Licences: Internet

**Martyn Day:**

[\[107057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to tackle websites which charge excessive fees for helping drivers to renew their licence; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) strongly advises drivers only to use Gov.Uk when applying for or renewing a driving licence.

The law allows third-party websites to offer a front-end application provision to some Government services and to set their own fees. These websites are overseen by OFCOM and the Phone Paid Service Authority (PSA). Websites that do not operate within the OFCOM and PSA guidelines, or which are misleading or malicious, can be removed from the internet by these organisations.

Where websites are found to be misleading or acting maliciously there are procedures in place which allow them to be taken down quickly. However, no action can be taken against sites that are operating within the rules even though they may charge fees for services that the DVLA provides more cheaply or free of charge.

Tighter guidelines for third party websites were introduced by OFCOM and the PSA in October 2019. The guidelines stipulate that all promotional material must be distinct in appearance from that of the organisation being sought by the consumer. Promotions must not use descriptions, colour, typeface, logos or marks which imitate, or may be perceived to imitate the organisation the consumer is seeking, nor should any official logos or marks of those organisations be used. Promotions are also prohibited from implying that the information being provided cannot be obtained elsewhere.

## ■ Driving Tests

**Damian Hinds:**

[\[106524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people are waiting for a (a) theory and (b) practical driving test; how many of those tests are available; and what steps he has discussed with the DVSA to increase the availability of those tests.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is restoring its testing services with new COVID safe procedures in place to keep people safe and help stop the spread of coronavirus. As the DVSA has been unable to provide its normal level of service for the past seven months, demand for theory and practical driving tests are higher than usual.

As of 20 October 2020:

- 346,966 candidates in the UK have a car theory test booked and are waiting to sit the test.
- 370,984 candidates in the UK have a practical car test booked and are waiting to sit the test.

The DVSA is working with its theory test supplier to extend opening hours and add additional days where local lockdown restrictions allow. There are over 709,000 theory tests available for candidates to book until the end of January 2021, and an additional 151,290 test slots up to the end of February 2021. In remote areas of Scotland, where possible, the DVSA has replaced the Mobile Testing Vehicle (MTV) with alternative venues to provide theory tests, and increased availability of appointments by extending opening/closing times with landlord agreement. In Wales, the DVSA has made an additional 82 theory test slots available (week commencing 19 October) to compensate for the lack of testing in the next fortnight due to the Welsh fire-breaker. It is reducing the levels of potential reschedules by allowing candidates to move tests forward.

The DVSA has also made over 375,000 practical car slots available to the end of January 2021, and an additional 85,000 test slots up to the end of February 2021. From 19 October, driving examiners increased the number of tests they conduct from five to six per day, which should help to reduce waiting times.

#### ■ Emergency Services: Coronavirus

**Neil Coyle:** [\[105384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the average increase in journey times of emergency service vehicles that have been caused as a result of road closures to facilitate social distancing during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[105385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on whether any lives have been lost as a result of delays affecting emergency service vehicles that have been caused as a result of road closures to facilitate social distancing during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Neil Coyle:** [\[105386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to mandate the removal of temporarily imposed restrictions on road space for traffic introduced under emergency provisions during the covid-19 outbreak in the event that it is shown that those restrictions are causing deaths that would have been avoided without their imposition; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has made no assessment of how the emergency services have been affected by the introduction of new road layouts. It is for local authorities to

ensure that any changes they propose to make to road layouts are delivered in line with relevant legislation, and consultation and noticing requirements.

Where road closures require a Traffic Regulation Order, the emergency services must be consulted as part of the order-making process, to ensure any concerns are addressed and that access is maintained. Emergency services have been generally supportive of road layout changes, such as low-traffic neighbourhoods and, in some cases, their access has improved because narrow, unsuitable roads are no longer full of traffic.

## ■ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum: Correspondence

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[106474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has responded to the letter of 1 October 2020 from the Chairs of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Department for Transport (DfT) officials are in regular contact with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and have been working closely with HM Treasury to consider the funding issues raised by Hampshire and other LRFs. On 21 October HM Treasury approved funding for a small number of LRFs with high volume EU facing Roll-on Roll-off ports within their jurisdiction, including for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LRF. DfT will write to affected LRFs to confirm details shortly.

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[106475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the (a) veracity and (b) implications for his policies of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum estimate that 480 lorries will be queuing outside naval bases in Portsmouth in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal included in its response to his correspondence of 23 September 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has made its own estimates of the potential for disruption around key ports at the end of the transition period. In the case of Portsmouth Port the DfT estimates suggest that even under a reasonable worst case scenario queues of HGVs attempting to enter Portsmouth Port would be considerably lower than the 480 referenced in the question. Nevertheless, there remains a risk of disruption at several ports, including Portsmouth, at the end of transition period. The Department for Transport is working closely with Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) across the country, including the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LRF, as they develop locally appropriate plans to manage any potential disruption.

**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Business****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[106225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of setting a minimum threshold for the involvement of UK companies in the High Speed Two project.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department for Transport has not assessed the potential merits of setting a minimum threshold for the involvement of UK PLC in HS2. UK procurement law does not permit public sector bodies to set targets for goods and services based on country-specific locations. However, HS2 Ltd has an excellent track record of supporting British businesses; over 2,000 businesses have delivered work so far on HS2, of which 98% are UK-based, and 70% of which are SMEs.

The project already has 13,000 workers in the UK employed on it and the construction of Phase One will see HS2 create and sustain a further 22,000 jobs over the coming years, with many more in businesses and factories around the country through an estimated 400,000 supply chain contract opportunities. HS2 Ltd estimate that 95% of those contract opportunities will be won by UK based businesses, with around two thirds being SMEs. HS2 Ltd continues to undertake procurement activity in line with the established legal framework governed by the Utilities Contracts Regulations under which it operates.

**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[106226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Treasury's Green Book provides scope for his Department to prioritise the UK supply chain in the High Speed Two project.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd operates in line with current UK public procurement law, specifically the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016. It is therefore a legal requirement that, across the project, it conducts all procurement activity on a fair, equal and transparent basis that does not discriminate by location. While complying to these principles, the High Speed Two project continues to provide significant opportunities for the UK supply chain with 97% of businesses in the supply chain being UK businesses.

**■ Large Goods Vehicles: Alternative Fuels****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[106264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding his Department is providing for alternative fuel sources for large vehicles that travel long distances.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department's £20 million Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial launched in 2017, supporting industry-led research and development projects, including for

alternative fuels. The £23 million Hydrogen for Transport Programme, launched in 2017, funded the deployment of hydrogen vehicles and refuelling stations.

The Department's Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition has made up to £20m of capital funding available to projects that will produce low carbon waste-based fuels to be used in aeroplanes and lorries.

The Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation incentivises the supply of low carbon fuels to all modes of road transport, including HGVs.

Further plans for decarbonising freight will form part of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

### ■ **Medway Valley Line**

**Tom Tugendhat:**

**[106392]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the compliance of the decision by Southeastern to curtail the majority of services on the Medway Valley Line at Paddock Wood instead of Tonbridge with Appendix 4 to Schedule 1, Schedule 1.1, Part 2, Paragraphs 11, 11.1 b i and ii of the Southeastern Emergency Measures Agreement with his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As part of COVID related timetable changes, to protect performance across the network during the pandemic and ensure key workers can continue to move across the network, some Medway Valley services now turn at Paddock Wood, to avoid interactions with Main line services and to reduce the need for unplanned skip-stopping on the Main line.

The services that were removed had an average loading of 5 passengers at Tonbridge; the change has resulted in approximately 12 minutes additional travel time for these passengers. However, the current service delivers an overall significant performance improvement for a much larger number of passengers across the network.

### ■ **Motor Vehicles: Wakefield**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[105611]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) electric vehicles, (b) petrol fuelled vehicles and (c) diesel fuelled vehicles are registered to addresses in Wakefield constituency.

**Rachel Maclean:**

At the end of June 2020, vehicles licensed to an address in the Wakefield constituency comprised (a) 134 battery electric vehicles, (b) 27,773 petrol vehicles, and (c) 27,166 diesel vehicles.



## ■ Motorcycles: Noise

**Ruth Cadbury:**

**[105392]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to bring forward legislative proposals on tackling unlawful levels of noise from motorbikes.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government takes the impact of traffic noise on health, wellbeing and the natural environment seriously. Vehicles are required to meet strict noise limits before being placed on the market and police already have powers to act if they suspect an exhaust has been altered to increase noise.

The Department is continuing to research whether noise enforcement can be made more effective using acoustic camera technology. A review of the current vehicle noise legislation may need to be considered if acoustic camera systems prove to be a reliable and efficient enforcement method.

## ■ Railway Stations: Hedge End

**Paul Holmes:**

**[105579]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of passengers using Hedge End train station in each of the last ten years for which figures are available.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Office of Road and Rail (ORR) publish annual estimates of the number of entries/exits and interchanges for Hedge End, and all other stations in Great Britain.

This information is openly available on the ORR data portal

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>.

## ■ Railways

**John Redwood:**

**[106882]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of potential future patterns of rail demand; and what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the rail industry on anticipating future demand.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department has made no formal assessment of future rail demand. The Department has conducted some rail demand scenarios which take a range of assumptions on potential drivers including economic forecasts and the potential duration of Covid restrictions. These assumptions are subject to ongoing update, refinement and review.

The Department has had discussions on different approaches to assessing rail demand with Network Rail, Train Operating Companies and Sub-National Transport bodies.

## ■ Railways: Arundel

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[105622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the proposed Arundel chord rail connection.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Arundel Chord could provide some limited and infrequent benefits as a 'diversionary route' – a view confirmed in Network Rail's Spring 2020 West Sussex Connectivity Study. As such, there is no active consideration of the Arundel Chord proposals.

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[105623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to announce a decision on the Arundel chord rail connection.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The second round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund received 51 applications and the expert Panel have made recommendations on which schemes should be considered for funding.

We will be announcing the outcome of the second round of the Ideas Fund in the coming weeks.

## ■ Railways: Concessions

**Derek Thomas:**

[\[105490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to train operators operating limited timetables as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, whether the Government will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to permit railcards not previously permitted to be used at peak times to be used during peak times to assist employees with the costs of commuting.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

My Department took immediate action at the outbreak of the pandemic to support passengers and the rail industry by keeping the services people depend on running, protecting jobs, delivering refunds and removing charges for cancellations. In this context we must ensure the demands placed on taxpayers are fair and balanced and that Government focuses its investment on maintaining services, to enable social distancing and support our economic recovery.

All passengers are eligible to buy season tickets, offering significant savings for those who regularly commute on peak-time services. Additional provisions have been made for younger and lower-income commuters, with both the 16-17 Saver Railcard and the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card offering discounts on season tickets. While we have no plans at this time to offer further subsidies for peak-time travel, the Government recognises that the pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behaviours. My Department has proactively worked with the rail industry, and is currently

considering proposals received from train operators, to try to ensure better value and convenience for part-time and flexible commuters.

## ■ Railways: Fares

**Steve Double:**

[\[106383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reform the regulations governing rail fares to reflect changes in working patterns throughout the UK.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government remains committed to modernising rail fares and ticketing and recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns which could have long-term effects on commuter behaviours. We are actively considering how we can modernise our fares and ticketing offer, to develop more convenient and better value options for passengers.

However, these are unprecedented times and our immediate focus is on ensuring that we keep the railway available and safe for those who rely upon it.

**Steve Double:**

[\[106384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to make rail fares more flexible for commuters in (a) St Austell and Newquay constituency and (b) throughout the UK to reflect the change in working patterns (i) during and (ii) after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Government recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behaviours.

In response, the Department for Transport has proactively worked with the rail industry, and is currently considering proposals received from train operators, including Great Western Railway, to try to ensure better value and convenience for part-time and flexible commuters.

## ■ Railways: Passengers

**John Redwood:**

[\[106884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of rail journeys made in (a) peak and (b) off peak fare times in the last quarter of (a) 2020 and (b) the same quarter in 2019.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department does not hold this information.

Information on the number of rail passenger journeys by ticket type is collected within the rail industry's LENNON (Latest Earnings Network Nationally Over Night) ticketing and revenue database, for which the Department has an access agreement.

However, information about the time and date a journey took place is not recorded as many tickets, such as season tickets, offer flexibility in travel times.

## ■ Railways: Passengers and Tickets

**John Redwood:**

**[106883]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on (a) passenger volumes and (b) ticket revenues on the rail network in (b) March to October (a) 2020 and (b) 2019.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Information on the number of rail passenger journeys and ticket revenue is collected within the rail industry's LENNON (Latest Earnings Network Nationally Over Night) ticketing and revenue database, to which the Department is granted access on a strictly confidential basis.

The information requested is not currently available in the public domain, however with the agreement of the rail industry some information is made available, which you may find of interest.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department publish data comparing daily rail journeys since March 2020 to an equivalent day last year. This information is updated on the website below on a weekly basis:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

Additionally, The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) publish data on journey numbers and revenue in a quarterly statistical release. The latest statistics, which cover up to the end of June 2020, can be found on their website:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/passenger-rail-usage/>

## ■ Roads: Death

**Jim Shannon:**

**[106347]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to prevent road death among people over 60.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Older Road Users are one of the Department for Transport's four priority groups for road safety as outlined in our 2019 Road Safety Statement. Action focuses on support and advice for older people, and a programme of research including a review of the recommendations from the Older Drivers Task Force.

The Department continues to fund and support a number of organisations to help older people to continue to drive safely, to deliver advice and support to older drivers and to develop an Approved Driving Instructor training course that is specific to the needs of older drivers.

**■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance****Mr David Davis:**[\[105289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Highways England road improvement projects have had their pedestrian element cancelled as a result of an estimated economy saving in each of the last five years.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Highways England includes provision for Non-Motorised Users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, as standard in all its scheme designs. The number of schemes that have had pedestrian elements removed can only be provided at a disproportionate cost for this answer.

**■ Taxis: Licensing****Tom Tugendhat:**[\[106390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many local authorities have (a) offered structural payment plans and (b) provided three month delays to payments for annual taxi licence renewals since March 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department for Transport has encouraged all licensing authorities to consider ways in which they can support the trade to continue to operate and provide essential travel. Any measures that authorities elect to introduce are a matter for them. The Department does not hold any data on payment plans or payment deferrals offered by licensing authorities.

**■ Transport for London: Finance****Theresa Villiers:**[\[106910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is his policy that the additional funding for Transport for London which his Department is negotiating will include capital projects.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We are currently in discussions with Transport for London and the Mayor on a further extraordinary funding agreement. The Mayor has many choices to make to balance the books of Transport for London over the long term. When he has made those choices, they will become conditions attached to support from the UK taxpayer. It would be inappropriate to disclose any further details while those discussions are ongoing.

**■ Travel: Coronavirus****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[105405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to provide covid-19 funding support for (a) light rail, (b) buses and (c) active travel.

**Rachel Maclean:**

On 8 August, the Government announced funding at up to £27.3 million per week to support the bus sector, through the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG) Restart scheme, until a time when the funding is no longer needed. On 22 October, the Government also announced funding of up to £35.4 million for light rail services over the 12 weeks from 27 October, and a further indicative allocation of up to £32.4 million for the 11 weeks thereafter, subject to a Government review of funding requirements.

This latest round of funding – key to ensuring these vital services can continue running safely – means total support during the pandemic for bus and tram services will reach at least £900 million.

The Government has made a commitment, set out in the Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan launched in July, to invest an unprecedented £2 billion in active travel over the remainder of this Parliament. £250 million of this is being made available in the current financial year

**TREASURY****■ Agriculture: Diversification****Jane Hunt:**[\[106517\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the fiscal framework on farmers who have diversified from farming activity.

**Jesse Norman:**

A longstanding feature of the UK tax system is that a person's UK farming income is treated as one trade. When a farming business diversifies, any non-farming activities are treated as separate sources of income that need to be declared separately on the tax return. The Government recognises that this creates additional administrative burdens. However, taxing diversified rural businesses as one unit would carry a risk that uncommercial activities might be grouped together with profitable trades. The Government keeps all taxes under review but has no plans to change the current tax rules for diversified rural businesses.

**■ Attendance Allowance: Mobility****Caroline Lucas:**[\[105349\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of to Question 99582, if he will take steps to allow a mobility vehicle purchased by a person in receipt of Attendance Allowance to be registered for taxation purposes as a disabled vehicle; for what reasons such vehicles are registered as private light goods vehicles for taxation purposes; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is committed to supporting disabled people and is determined that support should be focused on people who need it most. Therefore, individuals in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioners Mobility Supplement and the enhanced mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) qualify for an exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty (VED). A fifty per cent reduction in VED is available to those in receipt of the PIP standard rate mobility component.

There are currently no plans to extend the qualifying criteria for exemption from VED for disabled people to include receipt of Attendance Allowance. As with all taxes, VED remains under review.

**■ Beekeeping: Equipment****Luke Pollard:**[\[106490\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to adjust the rate of VAT applied to bee keeping equipment after the end of the transition period.

**Jesse Norman:**

VAT is a broad based tax on consumption and the twenty per cent standard rate applies to most goods and services, including on equipment used for bee keeping. Businesses that are registered for VAT will usually be able to reclaim the VAT they incur when they purchase these items for business purposes.

Changing the rate of VAT on bee keeping equipment would come at a cost to the Exchequer. Although the Government keeps all taxes under review, the Government has no current plans to change the VAT treatment of such goods.

**Luke Pollard:**[\[106491\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the contribution to the public purse of VAT duties paid by bee keepers for bee keeping equipment in the last 12 months.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC do not hold data on VAT collected specifically from the activities of bee keepers.

HMRC record and publish annually details of VAT receipts and liabilities across trade sectors and subsectors, but not of activities at this level of detail.

HMRC do not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products or services because businesses are not required to provide figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.



## ■ Beer: Excise Duties

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[106409\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative assessment he has made of the effect on breweries that produce 2,100hl of (a) the Government's proposed changes to small brewers' relief and (b) comparable small producers schemes provided by EU member states.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Further information will be published alongside the technical consultation on Small Brewers Relief later this Autumn.

## ■ British Nationals Abroad

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105410\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to provide funding for an international mobility scheme equivalent to Erasmus+.

**Steve Barclay:**

Decisions on funding for budgets beyond 2020-21 will be considered at future spending review processes, including Spending Review 2020 which will set out 2021-22 departmental budgets in November.

## ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[105516\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 99086 on Business: Coronavirus, what assessment he has made of the effect of the VAT reduction policy on businesses that are prevented from trading as a result of covid-19 restrictions.

**Jesse Norman:**

In order to support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and to protect 2.4 million jobs, the Government has applied a temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors. This relief is estimated to be worth over £3 billion to the tourism and hospitality sectors.

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chancellor has announced a range of measures to help individuals and businesses through the crisis, including grants, loans and relief from business rates. For those businesses which are legally forced to close, such as in Tier 3, the Chancellor recently expanded the Job Support Scheme to support businesses.

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[106304\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the potential merits of reopening business support grant funding schemes for allocation by local authorities.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Chancellor recently announced that we will be providing additional funding to Local Authorities in Tier 2 areas to allow them to make grants of up to £2,100 per month to hospitality, leisure, and hotel/B&B businesses affected by the restrictions on socialising in those areas.

In addition, any business across England which is legally closed will receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month.

Finally, additional funding has been provided local authorities in Tier 3, to enable them to support businesses which can remain open but which are nonetheless severely affected by restrictions on socialising.

**Stephen Farry:**[\[107132\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing additional lending schemes for (a) hospitality and (b) other businesses experiencing an immediate and open-ended erosion of their business viability as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and associated restrictions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Through the Chancellor's Winter Economy Plan, the Government continues to protect jobs and struggling businesses across the most impacted areas of the UK. As part of this plan, the Chancellor announced that we have started work on a new, successor loan scheme, set to begin in January.

The Chancellor also announced an extension to the application deadlines for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme (CBILS), the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme (CLBILS), the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) and the Future Fund to a single date, 30 November. This provides additional time for businesses who need support to apply for government-backed finance.

The Government recognises that the necessary restrictions introduced through the Tier system have been disruptive for businesses. That is why we have set out an expanded package of support for businesses who are legally required to close, as well as for those who are not forced to close, but who face reduced demand due to additional restrictions on socialising.

The Job Support Scheme will now 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.

Hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses in Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas will now also 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.

## ■ Carbon Emissions: Taxation

**Alan Brown:**

[\[106395\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to phase out the Carbon Price Support Cap; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

At Spring Budget 2020, the Government announced that the Carbon Price Support rate would be frozen at £18/tCO<sub>2</sub> in 2021/22. The Carbon Price Support rate is recognised as one of the main drivers of the significant decline in electricity sector emissions and coal generation in Great Britain over recent years, and it continues to support the decarbonisation of electricity across the country and the Government's Net Zero commitment.

HM Treasury keeps all taxes under review, and announcements on the future rate of the Carbon Price will be made as appropriate at fiscal events.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Northern Ireland

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[107133\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of subsidising the employers' wage contribution element of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for businesses unable to trade in Northern Ireland between 17 October and 31 October 2020 before the Job Support Scheme is implemented.

**Jesse Norman:**

The CJRS employer contributions are small in comparison to employee costs; if an average claim lasted 8 months, the total cost of employer contributions would represent about 5% of the total gross employment costs an employer would have incurred had the employee not been furloughed.

For employers who may need more support, there is a range of continuing support including the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. For employees who may need more support, the Government has introduced temporary welfare measures including a £1,000 a year increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[105620\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of automatically allocating additional financial and economic support to areas where covid-19 risks and associated restrictions are increased and prolonged relative to the rest of the UK.

**Stephen Farry:**

**[105621]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing scaled, automatic additional financial support to regions which move into (a) high and (b) very high covid-19 local alert levels.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

As measures to control the virus change, government support has evolved.

The government continues to take a flexible approach and recognises the evolving situation with the pandemic and health restrictions, and the impact this is having on areas. Which is why on 22 October, the Chancellor announced a package specifically for those businesses which are not forced to close, but face reduced demand due to additional social distancing restrictions:

- o Two changes to the Job Support Scheme (JSS): there will be a significant reduction in the employer contribution to employee wages. And there will be also a reduction in time required for an employee to be in work. Both changes will benefit employers, provide greater flexibility and help protect more jobs.

- o An increase in the generosity of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme to mirror the new generosity of the JSS for employed workers.

- o Additional funding to allow Local Authorities in Tier 2 areas to make cash grants to businesses that can remain open. These grants are primarily aimed at hospitality, leisure and accommodation business premises and are worth 70% of the value of the grants provided to closed businesses in Tier 3.

Moreover, in July we announced an unprecedented guarantee that the devolved administrations would receive at least £12.7 billion in additional resource funding this year to help them respond to Covid-19. As of 9 October, we have now uplifted that by £1.3 billion, to at least £14 billion. This means a total increase this year of at least £2.4 billion for the Northern Ireland Executive, on top of their Spring Budget 20 funding. This is in addition to the UK-wide measures that have directly supported the people and businesses in Northern Ireland. We continue to work with devolved administrations to support them contain the spread of Covid-19.

We continue to review our policies to ensure we are providing the right support to local areas under increased restrictions.

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

**[106303]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) conduct and (b) publish an equality impact assessment of the (i) financial and (ii) social measures the Government has taken to support people during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Treasury takes care to pay due regard to the equality impacts of its policy decisions relating to the Covid-19 outbreak, in line with all legal requirements and the Government's commitment to promoting equality. There are internal procedural

requirements and support in place for ensuring that such considerations inform decisions taken by Ministers.

## ■ Exports: VAT

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[105406\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the effect on the number of jobs in the tourism sector of ending the VAT Retail Export Scheme; and what steps he is taking to ensure the retention of jobs in that sector after the end of that scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the challenges the tourism sector is facing and is spending billions of pounds supporting people, families and the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chancellor announced the Winter Economy Plan on 24 September. This includes an extension to the temporary 5 per cent reduced rate of VAT on goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors from 12 January to 31 March 2021. This alone provides continued support for the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and protection for 2.4 million jobs in the tourism and hospitality sectors. This is in addition to the 100% business rates holiday for many businesses, which is worth over £10 billion, and a £1,000 job retention bonus for bringing furloughed employees back to work. The Winter Plan also provides further support to businesses and jobs over the coming months, including through the Job Support Scheme which will protect millions of jobs.

## ■ Food: Wholesale Trade

**Carolyn Harris:**

[\[106404\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide financial support to food and drink wholesalers to ensure continuity of food supply to the public sector.

**Carolyn Harris:**

[\[106405\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take immediate steps to prevent job losses and site closures in the food and drink wholesale sector which supplies specialist food to care homes.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has provided unprecedented levels of support for workers and businesses to protect, as much as possible, against the current economic emergency. Food and drink wholesalers have been eligible for a number of these support schemes, with the most relevant likely to include:

- The Job Support Scheme designed to protect viable jobs in businesses who are facing lower demand over the winter months due to Covid-19;
- £10,000 cash grants for all business properties in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief and Rural Rates Relief;

- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme for small businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000, with no interest payments or fees for the first 12 months.

Food and drink wholesalers have also benefited from the recent Eat Out to Help Out Scheme which provided over 100 million half price meals during August and helped to protect the livelihoods of the 1.8 million people working in the hospitality sector.

**Carolyn Harris:**

**[106406]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend business rates relief to wholesalers servicing public sector food and drink contracts.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has provided enhanced support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors. Business rates are devolved in Wales, and so are a matter for the Welsh Government.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including wholesalers, has also been made available.

## ■ Free Zones

**Nick Fletcher:**

**[106515]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Department's news story entitled Government outlines new plans for Freeports to turbo-charge post-Brexit trade published on 7 October 2020, how many of the planned freeports are expected to be inland.

**Steve Barclay:**

The government plans to establish Freeports across the UK. These will be national hubs for trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK. Freeports will spread jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country by unleashing the economic potential of our ports.

We recently published our response to the Freeports consultation, clearly outlining a wide range of measures to create vibrant, innovative Freeports which are attractive to domestic and international investors looking to start or grow their UK operations. The Freeports consultation response is publicly available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/freeports-consultation>

As outlined in the consultation response, we are inviting ports of all modes (air, sea and rail), and businesses, universities and local authorities from across the country to reach out to each other, collaborate and begin to build a strategy for how their region can best meet our ambition.

Specific locations will be chosen in due course according to a fair, transparent and robust bidding process; details of which will be published in due course.

## ■ Inland Waterways: Freight

**Alex Sobel:**

**[105529]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and (b) Secretary of State for Transport 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.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Chancellor and HM Treasury ministers have regular conversations with the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Department of Transport in respect of a wide range of capital investment schemes. Any specific bids from departments for capital investment will be discussed at the Spending Review.

## ■ Job Support Scheme

**Stephen Farry:**

**[107131]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of expediting the implementation of the enhanced Job Support Scheme in areas where covid-19 restrictions have been escalated and businesses have closed.

**Jesse Norman:**

Employers can use the furlough scheme until 31 October to help them through this difficult period and can then get support through the new Job Support Scheme from 1 November to ensure there is no gap in support, including in areas where COVID-19 restrictions have been increased and businesses closed. The scale of support that the Job Support Scheme provides has also been increased to reflect the evolving situation. This is just one part of a wider package of support for livelihoods across the UK including rental support, mortgage holidays, and extra funding for the welfare safety net to help those without access to other forms of support.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[107143]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Job Support Scheme will be based on the percentage of monthly hours worked and not weekly hours worked as per the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

Details of the Job Support Scheme are set out in the JSS Policy Paper published on 22 October 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-job-support-scheme/the-job-support-scheme>. Further details will be set out in full guidance shortly.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[107144]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what communications are required from employers with their employees who will be placed on the Job Support Scheme for the purposes of (a) record-keeping, (b) administration and (c) claims.



**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. Employers will be able to make a claim online through GOV.UK from 8 December 2020.

Communications requirements from employers with employees on the Job Support Scheme are set out in the policy paper published on 22 October:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-job-support-scheme/the-job-support-scheme>.

HMRC will publish further guidance by the end of October.

**■ Manufacturing Industries: Clothing****Dr Lisa Cameron:****[105402]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) prosecutions and (b) convictions there have been for non-payment of the national minimum wage to garment factory workers since 1 January 2016.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC enforces the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) in line with the law and policy set out by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Breaches of NMW legislation are normally a civil (non-criminal) matter which attract penalties of up to 200% of the identified wage arrears and public naming.

Prosecutions can be lengthy and cause delays in recovering arrears for workers and do not necessarily guarantee payment. HMRC therefore balance recovering NMW arrears for workers as quickly as possible with the robust enforcement of the NMW when deciding whether to pursue prosecution. Consequently, prosecution is reserved for the most serious NMW offences involving obstruction, falsifying of documents or wilful failure to pay workers the minimum wage, and such cases are referred to the CPS who decide whether to prosecute.

There have been no prosecutions or convictions for the non-payment of the NMW to textile factory workers since 1 January 2016.

However, between 1 January 2016 and 19 October 2020 HMRC's NMW team has investigated more than 100 textile trade employers recovering over £190,000 in wage arrears for over 400 textile workers, and issued penalties amounting to over £330,000.

HMRC recognise that there are a range of cross-agency risks in the textile sector supply chain, and have participated in a number of joint operations with other Government departments including the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority, Police, the Health & Safety Executive, Home Office Immigration Enforcement, Department

for Work and Pensions and the National Crime Agency, to investigate all forms of labour exploitation.

## ■ **Medicine: Research**

**Lee Anderson:**

[\[107108\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on sectoral support for charity-funded medical research during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Medical research charities are an integral part of the United Kingdom's world-leading life sciences sector and we welcome the interest of honourable members in this area. The government is monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on the work of medical research charities. To this effect, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Department of Health and Social Care is closely liaising with the Association of Medical Research Charities, as well as individual charities, to understand the impact of the pandemic on this sector and identify how best the Government and charities can work together to ensure that patients continue benefiting from charity funded research.

## ■ **Music: Teachers**

**Valerie Vaz:**

[\[105366\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional support the Government will provide to self-employed peripatetic music teachers who remain unable to work and whose support from the Self-employment income support scheme will reduce to 20 per cent from 1 November 2020.

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[105618\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making the proportion of previous earnings in the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme the same as that in the Job Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the impact that the changing path of the virus has had on the self-employed, including those in peripatetic professions, and has taken action to increase the level of support available.

The support given to the self-employed via the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension (SEISS GE) will now be doubled, increasing the amount of profits covered from 20 per cent to 40 per cent. This means the maximum grant available has increased from £1,875 to £3,750. This will provide a further £3.1 billion of support to the self-employed through November to January alone, with a further grant to follow covering February to April. The Government is now providing broadly the same level of support for the self-employed as is being provided to employees through the Job Support Scheme (Open).

For those requiring further assistance, the SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of financial support for the self-employed. The Government has temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor for the duration of the pandemic meaning that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly fallen, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, the self-employed also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

### ■ Ports: North Cornwall

**Scott Mann:**

[\[104757\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to process imports that are retained in port so as to avoid demurrage charges being imposed on businesses in North Cornwall constituency.

**Jesse Norman:**

Demurrage charges are applied to the consignee by the shipping line when a container stays in the port for longer than a set period of time. The period of time is determined by the shipping line, which varies between 5 to 7 days. This is a standard procedure at all ports across the UK.

A reason why the container might be held at the port is if it has been held to be checked by customs. The charges are applied daily, at a rate of £40 to £60 per day. In order to avoid demurrage charges on businesses in the North Cornwall constituency, the Government is minimising delays and ensuring a smooth running of the border port.

### ■ Public Expenditure: Coronavirus

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[105619\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the International Monetary Fund's October 2020 Fiscal Monitor, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a programme of public investment to help economic recovery from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

In responding to the Covid-19 outbreak the government has announced unprecedented support for families, businesses, and self-employed people. The immediate focus for the government's economic and fiscal strategy continues to be on supporting workers and businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government is conducting a one-year Spending Review, which will set departmental resource and capital budgets for 2021-22 and Devolved Administrations block grants for the same period. Alongside providing enhanced support for public services and certainty for departments to tackle Covid-19 and deliver our Plan for Jobs to support employment, the SR will invest in infrastructure to keep up the

momentum of our ambitious plans to unite and level up, drive our economic recovery and build back better. Multi-year NHS and schools resource settlements will be fully funded, as will priority infrastructure projects. The Spending Review will conclude in late November.

## ■ Renewable Energy: VAT

**Tim Farron:**

[\[106284\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing VAT on (a) domestic renewables and (b) installations to help (i) grow the green economy and (ii) stimulate the uptake of microgeneration on domestic properties.

**Tim Farron:**

[\[106285\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will remove VAT on (a) domestic renewables and (b) installations for a period of 10 years to help (i) stimulate the green economy and (ii) the uptake of microgeneration.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under current VAT rules, the installation of water and wind turbines is subject to the standard rate of VAT. However, the installation of other energy saving materials that generate domestic energy, such as solar panels and micro combined heat and power units, are subject to the reduced rate of VAT when certain conditions are met.

Although there are no current plans to extend the scope of the relief already in place, the Government keeps all taxes under review.

## ■ Repossession Orders

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[106354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent steps his Department has taken to support people at risk of having their homes repossessed.

**Steve Barclay:**

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. The Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) guidance on mortgage payment holidays from 2 June also included a lender ban on repossessions until 31 October 2020, meaning that no-one will lose their home throughout this difficult period.

The FCA published further 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.

We have also ensured that regulations concentrate on helping people avoid repossession, including protection in the courts through the Pre-Action Protocol which makes it clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders.

The Government also has support in place for qualifying borrowers that cannot afford their mortgage interest. Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) provides financial help to homeowners who qualify for an income related benefit. Claimants must be in receipt of Universal Credit for nine assessment periods (nine months), before receiving support through the SMI scheme. The loan is then repayable upon sale of the property. The primary purpose of SMI is to enable people to stay in their homes without fear of repossession.

### ■ Self-employed: Coronavirus

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[106302\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support self-employed people not eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is helping those that have been adversely affected by COVID-19, and has already provided over £13 billion of support. Those not eligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented package of financial support available. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants. All 11 million UK self-assessment taxpayers will also be able to benefit from the recently enhanced Time to Pay 'self-service' facility to form a 12-month, interest-free payment arrangement for up to £30,000 of self-assessment debt.

Furthermore, the Chancellor has announced additional funding to support cash grants of up to £2,100 per month primarily for businesses in the hospitality, accommodation and leisure sector who may be adversely affected by the restrictions in high-alert level areas. These grants will be available retrospectively for areas which have already been subject to restrictions, and come on top of higher levels of additional business support for Local Authorities moving into Tier 3 which, if scaled up across the country, would be worth more than £1 billion. These grants could benefit about 150,000 businesses in England, including hotels, restaurants, B&Bs and many more which are not legally required to close but have been adversely affected nonetheless by local restrictions.

### ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Morley and Outwood

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[106427\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people are in receipt of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme in Morley and Outwood constituency.

**Jesse Norman:**

By 31 July 2020, 3,500 individuals in the Morley and Outwood constituency had claimed the first grant for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

By 30 September 2020, 3,100 individuals in the Morley and Outwood constituency had claimed the second grant for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

These figures were taken from the Self Employment Income Support Scheme statistics published on 21 August and 22 October respectively.

## ■ Sports: VAT

**Julian Knight:**

**[107026]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing temporary VAT registration for non-profit sports organisations.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under the current VAT rules, bodies that have a turnover in excess of £85,000 must register for VAT. However, bodies that are below the VAT registration threshold may register for VAT voluntarily.

Bodies that are VAT registered are required to charge VAT and are also able to recover any VAT costs that they incur in the course of their taxable business activities.

## ■ Taxis: VAT

**Tom Tugendhat:**

**[106391]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have had with independent taxi operators on reducing VAT to five per cent.

**Jesse Norman:**

The current structure of VAT rates raises a significant amount of revenue for the Government, raising over £130 billion in 2018/19. This plays an important part in funding the Government's spending priorities including hospitals, schools, and defence.

Changes to the current rate of VAT on the transport service provided by independent taxi operators would come at a cost to the Exchequer, and that cost would have to be balanced by increased taxes elsewhere, or reductions in public spending. Although the Government keeps all taxes under review, the Government has no current plans to change the VAT treatment of such goods.

## ■ Unemployment

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

**[106305]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the adequacy of funding for support for the unemployed.

**Steve Barclay:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the written answer I gave on 16 October 2020 to Question 102900: [questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102900](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-13/102900)

**■ Unemployment: Training****Yasmin Qureshi:****[106301]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the adequacy of (a) funding for education and (b) skills provision to support the unemployed.

**Steve Barclay:**

Treasury Ministers regularly meet with the Secretary of State for Education to discuss education funding. The Government has committed to a £1 billion package to help students catch up on lost learning and £100 million to boost remote education. This is in addition to the £7.1 billion of core funding for schools announced at the 2019 spending round.

On skills provision to support the unemployed, in his Plan for Jobs, the Chancellor announced: new incentives to boost apprenticeships, funding to triple the number of traineeships and sector-based work academy placements, additional investment in the National Careers Service to support more adults with high quality careers guidance, and funding for school and college leavers to study high value courses when there are not employment opportunities available to them.

Additionally, from next April, adults who do not have a full Level 3 qualification will be able to take Level 3 qualifications in high value subjects for free. This support complements existing support for unemployed adults, funded through the Adult Education Budget.

**WALES****■ Credit Unions: Wales****Gareth Thomas:****[106215]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will hold discussions with the Welsh Government on encouraging employers in Wales to offer payroll deductions to enable employees to join a credit union; and if he will make a statement.

**Simon Hart:**

Credit unions play a vital role in the financial wellbeing of their communities, providing an ethical home for their members' savings, and affordable loans to those who may otherwise have to resort to high-cost lenders. The Government is committed to seeing a strong and resilient credit union sector. That is why the Chancellor announced at Budget 2020 that the Government will bring forward legislation to enable credit unions to offer a wider range of products and services.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales and I have frequent discussions with the Welsh Government and other UK Government Departments on a wide range of issues, including how best to support households with the cost of living.



## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Commission On Race and Ethnic Disparities

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[101323\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities is taking to ensure people in (a) the UK and (b) Dudley North constituency can engage with the work of the Commission.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Since the Prime Minister established the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in July of this year, the Commission has been busy meeting with key delivery partners and agencies from around the UK in each of its priority areas of health, education, employment and enterprise and crime and policing. They have also held evidence gathering sessions with a range of external stakeholders and influencers, and will shortly be setting out a public call for evidence; details of which will be announced in due course.

Its work will be crucial in informing and improving the national conversation on race and ethnicity, and demonstrates this government's mission to level up opportunity for everyone whatever their background.

### ■ Equality Act 2010

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[102157\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Written Statement of 22 September 2020 entitled Government Equalities Office Update, HCWS462 what steps she is taking to help ensure that (a) her Department, (b) the Equality and Human Rights Commission and (c) other public bodies produce statutory guidance on the provision of single-sex exemptions consistent with the Equality Act 2010.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The government believes that the protection of single-sex spaces, as provided for in the Equality Act, is important. The Act makes clear that providers have the right to restrict the use of spaces on the basis of sex, and exclude transgender people, with or without a Gender Recognition Certificate, if this is justified.

At this stage, we are not proposing further legislative guidance but we will keep this under review. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is independent of the government and makes its own decisions in relation to drafting the guidance that it creates and publishes.

### ■ Sexual Harassment

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[95142\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when her Departments plans to publish the Government's response to the Government Equalities Office consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, which concluded on 2 October 2019.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace focussed on ensuring that laws to protect people from harassment at work are operating effectively.

We are considering the responses we received and will publish our response to this consultation in due course.

**WORK AND PENSIONS**■ **Chronic Fatigue Syndrome****Marco Longhi:****[107121]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reclassifying (a) myalgic encephalomyelitis and (b) chronic fatigue syndrome as a disability rather than as an illness for the purposes of (a) benefit assessments and (b) employee rights.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Entitlement to health and disability-related benefits is determined by the functional effects of a person's disability or health condition. Classification of the disability or condition is irrelevant for the purposes of benefit assessment.

With regard to employee rights, though they are not automatically treated as a disability under the Equality Act 2010, people with myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) and chronic fatigue syndrome can be treated as disabled depending upon the effect it has on their daily life. ME is specifically listed amongst "impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects" in the 2010 Act Guidance document

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/85010/disability-definition.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85010/disability-definition.pdf).

Any employment rights would then flow from being classified as disabled under the Equality Act 2010.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus: Bosworth****Dr Luke Evans:****[106501]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to help ensure adequate staff resources in (a) her Department's and (b) Jobcentre Plus's teams covering Bosworth constituency.

**Mims Davies:**

The department is continually impacting and assessing the service being offered to customers and we continue to keep staff numbers under review as part of our response to the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market. Work Coach recruitment campaigns have been launched across the country, including Bosworth constituency, as the department doubles the number of Work Coaches from 13,500 to 27,000.

## ■ Employment: Coronavirus

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[106900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is being made available for people who are required to self-isolate and not able to access (a) statutory sick pay or (b) the £500 covid-19 self-isolation grant.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

People who are infected with Covid-19, or self-isolating in line with Government guidance are eligible for ESA, subject to the normal conditions of entitlement. We have removed the waiting days and claimants will be treated as having Limited Capability for Work in ESA without the requirement for fit notes or a Work Capability Assessment from day one. Households may also be able to claim Universal Credit where eligible. New claim advances are available urgently if a claimant needs financial support. These advances allow claimants to receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. The Budget already announced that claimants will be able to access advances via phone or online, instead of having to attend the jobcentre. This applies to all claimants, including those who are required to self-isolate.

## ■ Food Poverty: Coronavirus

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[106310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on trends in the level of food insecurity among children since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

This Government is committed to supporting the most vulnerable in society. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions engages regularly with her counterparts, including the Secretary of State for Education.

Secretaries of State will continue to talk across government to ensure all the levers available are used to tackle poverty, including for the most disadvantaged children and families. The Department for Environment and Rural Affairs also established a cross-government Task Force on Food and Other Essential Supplies for Vulnerable People.

We have taken unprecedented action to support and protect jobs, with over 9.5 million people having been supported through the furlough scheme. The Department for Work and Pensions quickly introduced a package of support, including welfare changes worth £9.3bn this year to help people with the financial consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government established a £500m local authority hardship fund to protect people, by banning evictions, securing mortgage holidays and helping with energy bills. It has provided a further £63m to local authorities in England for their Welfare Assistance schemes to help those families struggling to afford food and other essentials.

**■ Kickstart Scheme****Jonathan Gullis:****[105580]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there is an upper limit on the number of placements that can be created through the Kickstart Scheme; and if she will publish data on the number of employers signed up to that scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

The Kickstart Scheme is a £2 Billion programme, planning to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs for young people aged 16-24 at risk of long term unemployment, there is no upper limit on the number of placements. I confirm that the house will be updated on statistics from the Kickstart scheme.

**■ Pension Wise****Christian Wakeford:****[106521]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to clauses 18 and 19 of the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018, what take-up targets are being set for Pension Wise guidance usage when non-advised savers access defined contribution pension benefits, in the context of the findings of the Money and Pension Service's stronger nudge trials.

**Guy Opperman:**

We want to increase awareness of Pension Wise guidance, present taking guidance as a natural part of the customer journey, and make it easier to book an appointment. Based on the results of the stronger nudge trials, we would expect that implementation of the nudge would lead to an increase in the take up of Pension Wise guidance.

We do not intend to set a target for the number of Pension Wise guidance sessions, or the number of members accessing pension savings in a given period who receive Pension Wise guidance. We will continue to monitor the use of advice and guidance when accessing pension savings, and take further action to encourage their use if appropriate.

This is part of a number of measures aimed at increasing awareness of Pension Wise, which includes advertising campaigns and engagement with employers both nationally and locally.

**■ Pensions: Advisory Services****Christian Wakeford:****[106522]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the impartial pensions guidance rules covered by Clauses 18 and 19 of the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018 are planned to be introduced.

**Guy Opperman:**

We will be publishing a statement of policy intent shortly which will set out how we plan to implement the stronger nudge (Section 19 of the Financial Guidance and Claims Act) for occupational pensions.

Following this, we will consult on draft Regulations which will come into force at the earliest opportunity.

We are working closely with the FCA who will consult on rules for personal and stakeholder pensions, which will also come into force at the earliest opportunity

**■ Pensions: Coronavirus****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[106220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have accessed and transferred their pension early since the start of the covid-19 outbreak; and how many of those have been classified as an unauthorised payment from their pension fund.

**Guy Opperman:**

This government is committed to safeguarding consumer savings. We have introduced, with other departments, measures that assist all savers to understand their choices and the possible risks of the choices they make along with legislation to protect those most vulnerable to scams.

There is currently no information available about pension unauthorised payments since the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak. This is because administrators of a registered pension scheme must tell HMRC when certain reportable events occur; reportable events include unauthorised payments. The scheme administrator does this by completing and submitting an Event Report for a tax year, these must be received by HMRC by the 31<sup>st</sup> of January after the end of the tax year to which the Event Report relates. Therefore, reports for the period March to date are not available.

The data available from the industry has so far revealed little evidence of an increase in transfers or scams since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak. Similarly, independent regulators report less of a problem. We will continue to monitor and assess if there has been any increase in pension scams activity as a result of the crisis.

**■ Pensions: Fraud****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[106219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the number of pension scams during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP is working across government and with regulators to monitor and respond to any increases in transfers or pension scams. To date, this monitoring has revealed little evidence to demonstrate an increase in either transfers or scams across the

industry as a whole as confirmed by the independent regulator. This has been confirmed by responses from industry. The Government will continue to monitor and respond to any emerging evidence.

The Government established Project Bloom, a cross-government taskforce that brings together law enforcement, government and industry to share intelligence, raise awareness of and the reporting of scams through public communication campaigns, and take enforcement action where appropriate.

Please see links below for more information about the joint statement from Regulators and the Money Advice Service, and help available, produced by the Pension Protection Fund and supported by government.

<https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/covid-19-savers-stay-calm-dont-rush-financial-decisions>

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/sites/default/files/file-2020-05/COVID-19-and-your-pension.pdf>

The Government continues to work with Regulators and enforcement agencies to prevent scams and take appropriate action. In the period March - July 2020, 116 reports of possible pension fraud were received by Action Fraud, compared to 179 for the same period in 2019.

Project Bloom has identified that the methodology of scammers is continually evolving, moving away from the traditional type of theft of peoples pensions through setting up a sham scheme, towards investment related fraud. Investment related fraud includes persuading individuals to invest in ventures that do not exist or using multiple charging structures that the member is not aware of.

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

**[106221]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have (a) contacted Action Fraud regarding potential pension scams and (b) booked a Pension Wise guidance session since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Guy Opperman:**

In the period March – July 2020 116 reports of pension fraud were received by Action Fraud, compared to 179 for the same period in 2019. In recognition of the potential impact of Covid-19 on individual's pensions savings the Department convened a cross-government and regulator group, to closely monitor and respond to any increase in transfers and scams. All of the participating organisations have confirmed that to date no evidence has emerged to demonstrate an increase in either transfers or scams, based on their internal monitoring of the industry. Although this is encouraging Government recognises it needs to continue to monitor and react to the changing environment.

To ensure that people are able to fully access support and make informed decisions, a collaborative approach has been taken with the TPR, the FCA and MaPS in communicating to savers, to use Pension Wise or the Pensions Advisory Service channels for guidance before making decisions about retirement. There have been a total of 79,967 bookings for a Pension Wise guidance session between March 1<sup>st</sup> –

October 20<sup>th</sup> 2020. The government is also taking action with the Pensions Schemes Bill.

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

**[106222]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase public understanding of the risks of pension scams.

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

**[106223]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of implementing a training programme for pension and finance professionals to ensure they can more readily identify scam risks.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Government is committed to safeguarding consumer savings. The Government is raising public awareness of scams through ongoing communications directly from DWP and with other organisations.

Joint and independent communications from the FCA and tPR spelling out the dangers, what to watch out for and giving clarity to trustees and providers on the boundaries between guidance and advice have been issued since April this year ( <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/covid-19-savers-stay-calm-dont-rush-financial-decisions> ). Prior to Covid-19 the FCA and tPR conducted regular campaigns, through the ScamSmart branding, to raise awareness of pension scams and what to watch out for, these have been deemed very successful, over 222,000 visited the ScamSmart website to find out how to identify a scam scheme as a result of the most recent pre Covid campaign, July – November 2019.

In addition, Government is actively monitoring the numbers of transfers and scams and preparing further policy responses. At the onset of the covid-19 pandemic, the Department convened a cross-government and regulator group to closely monitor and respond to any increase in transfers and scams. The group includes DWP, HMT, both the Pensions Regulator and the FCA as well as the Money and Pensions Service and the Pension Ombudsman. All of the participating organisations have confirmed that to date no evidence has emerged of an increase in either transfers or scams, based on their internal monitoring of the industry.

DWP continues to communicate regularly on social media to set out the warning signs of a scam and has made multiple posts referencing Pension Scams and #ScamSmart in total across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn in the period March to September 2020.

The Pension Schemes Bill was amended by Government in the House of Lords to add to the example conditions that can be placed on the statutory right to transfer by regulations. This amendment makes it explicit that the regulations can require that in certain circumstances the member demonstrates they have taken information or guidance before the transfer can proceed to ensure they are informed of the risks.

The Government wants to support all pension savers aged 50 and over in the lead up to accessing their pension savings, to make informed choices about their retirement



income, which includes making them aware of Pension Wise through communications from their pension scheme trustees. We intend introducing Single page summary and single page risk warnings from age 50 and then every 5 years until the point they access their pension savings.

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) conducted trials to establish different ways to encourage more people to take Pension Wise guidance before accessing their pension savings under Pension Freedoms. These trials found that a nudge developed using behavioural science principles significantly increased take-up of Pension Wise guidance among those wishing to access their pension savings under pension freedoms. The evaluation report was published in July 2020. We are working to develop the most effective and proportionate way to implement this nudge to pension guidance. We intend to publish our proposed way forward shortly.

In addition, we have banned cold calling and seek to provide and prosecute and publicise the conviction of all who commit pension scams.

#### ■ **State Retirement Pensions: Females**

**Simon Fell:**

[\[106497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing women born in the 1950s to be able to access their state pensions early.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Secretary of State has made no such assessment.

Unlike a personal or workplace pension, it has always been the case that nobody can claim their State Pension before they reach their State Pension age.

We have no plans to reverse changes to State Pension age. Changes to State Pension age were made over a series of Acts by successive governments from 1995 onwards, following public consultations and extensive debates in both Houses of Parliament.

#### ■ **Unemployment: Coronavirus**

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[106426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to tackle unemployment in Morley and Outwood constituency as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mims Davies:**

The department is increasing unemployment support for people in all areas of the country, including Morley and Outwood, through the Plan for Jobs package. Kickstart and Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) were recently launched with the Job Finding Support Service to follow. In addition, 13,500 extra Jobcentre Work Coaches are being recruited to support claimants to find or re-enter employment.

**Philip Davies:**

**[106931]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on levels of unemployment in (a) the Shipley constituency, (b) the Bradford district and (c) West Yorkshire of being in Tier (i) 1, (ii) 2 and (iii) 3 of covid-19 restrictions.

**Mims Davies:**

The latest data on the level of unemployment available for Shipley, Bradford and West Yorkshire is for the period July 2019-June 2020. This is before the introduction of the tiered system of local COVID Alert Levels in England

The department is increasing unemployment support for people in all areas of the country, including Shipley, Bradford and West Yorkshire, through the Plan for Jobs package. Kickstart and Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) were recently launched with the Job Finding Support Service to follow. In addition, 13,500 extra Jobcentre Work Coaches are being recruited nationally to support claimants to re-enter employment.

■ **Universal Credit: Wakefield**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[105607]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims from Wakefield constituency have been rejected in the (a) 2019-20 financial year and (b) 2020-21 financial year to date.

**Will Quince:**

There are a number of reasons a Universal Credit (UC) claim may be unsuccessful. These can include ineligibility, nil entitlement, insufficient evidence, claim withdrawal and non-compliance with the UC process.

In the 2019-20 financial year, in the Wakefield constituency, 1,380 UC claims were unsuccessful before reaching payment.

In the 2020-21 financial year (up to 31st August 2020), 500 UC claims, in the Wakefield constituency, were unsuccessful before reaching payment.

Notes:

- Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 cases.