

## Daily Report

Monday, 2 November 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 November 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 02 November 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

#### ■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[107051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's guidance is for employers in the event that an employee is unable to go into work as a result of their dependants having been instructed by a school to self-isolate during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

In the first instance, people who are unable to go into work because they have childcare responsibilities resulting from coronavirus should discuss their situation with their employer. It may be that they can come to an agreement which works well for both parties.

Additionally, employees have the right to take time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event. The courts have been clear that a failure in childcare provision can constitute an unexpected event – even if it is known about in advance. Time off for dependants can be taken for a reasonable period of time depending on the particular circumstances.

All employees have the legal right to request flexible working, provided they have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks. Employers can only reject a request where they have sound business reasons for doing so. Having flexible start and finish times, or working from home can help parents to balance work and childcare needs.

#### ■ **Energy Supply: Costs**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[107081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussion he has had with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets on establishing a Right to Local Supply to ensure the costs of supplying energy are proportionate to the size of the supplier.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

A key aim for Ofgem is to ensure that customers retain choice and flexibility in the market and get good value and service from their supplier.

Ofgem can award supply licences that are restricted to a geographical area and has just consulted on how to use this facility more effectively to bring forward innovation. Ofgem's Licence Lite regime also aims to reduce the cost and complexity of entering and operating in the market for suppliers.

Ofgem's Innovation Link helps innovators navigate the sector's arrangements and their Energy Regulation Sandbox enables trials and rollout of new products, services, business models and methodologies without some of the usual rules applying.

## ■ **Fireworks**

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[107031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2020 to Question 1357, what the current status is of The Office for Product Safety and Standards fact-based evidence base on the key issues that have been raised on fireworks.

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[107032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on fireworks in the 2019-21 session of Parliament.

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[107033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to devolve legislation regarding fireworks.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government does not have plans to bring forward additional legislative proposals on fireworks. There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place.

We are taking action to promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks, including a public awareness campaign on fireworks for this season involving safety charities, animal welfare organisations and retail bodies.

Product safety and liability are reserved matters. The regulation of fireworks for these purposes is covered by the Fireworks Regulations 2004 and the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015. The misuse and discharge of fireworks is a devolved matter to Scotland. Northern Ireland has its own fireworks regulatory framework. We continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations to ensure the safety of the public across the UK.

## ■ **Fuel Poverty: Coronavirus**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[107077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will expand the Energy Company Obligation to support fuel poor households who are under greater financial pressure as a result of covid-19.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government has introduced a number of financial support mechanisms to support households who may be under greater financial pressure due to Covid-19. Specifically, on energy efficiency, around half of the £2 billion Green Homes Grant will be targeted at low income and vulnerable households.



In addition, the Energy Company Obligation is providing support worth around £640 million per year to help fuel poor and low income households stay warm while reducing their energy bills.

## ■ Local Restrictions Support Grant

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[107658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) restaurants and (b) other businesses which choose to close in response to a lack of trade in tier 3 local covid alert level areas are eligible for the Local Restrictions Support Grant.

**Paul Scully:**

The Local Restrictions Support Grant is in place to support businesses that are legally required to close in Very High Covid-19 Local Alert Level places.

Additional funding has been made available to all areas moving to Very High Alert Level in the form of a one-off grant allocation to allow enhanced business support, including £60m for Greater Manchester. This can be used by these areas to establish a local discretionary grant scheme that could provide grants to business that whilst not required to close are nonetheless severely impacted. It will be for local partners to agree the priorities and levels of grant awards to be provided.

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[107659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding under the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme has been provided to each local authority in a tier 3 local covid alert level area.

**Paul Scully:**

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) announced on 9 September provides support to businesses affected by localised restrictions to control Covid-19. Eligible businesses in very high local Covid alert level areas will receive grants of up to £3,000 per month.

We are working with impacted local authorities to ensure they receive the enhanced business support they need, and that support goes to as many businesses in scope of the LRSG scheme as possible. In Bolton, for example, we have worked closely with the Council to best calculate the amount of funding required, using business rates data and local business information.

## ■ Renewable Energy: Greater London

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[107080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the consumption of electricity from local, renewable community generation schemes in Greater London.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government recognises the valuable contribution that community energy can make in helping to meet our target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We have

funded the Greater South East Energy Hub to work with Community Energy England to raise the profile of community energy and promote it more widely.

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.

## ■ **Spaceflight: USA**

**Owen Thompson:**

**[107056]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2020 to Question 61542 on Spaceflight: USA, by what process he plans that Parliament will (a) scrutinise and (b) ratify the UK-US Technology Safeguards Agreement.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The 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 section 20 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (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.

The TSA will not enter into force until the enabling legislation (the Space Industry Regulations, published for public consultation on 29 June 2020) is in force, the CRaG scrutiny procedure has completed and following an exchange of notifications between the Parties confirming that all domestic procedures and requirements necessary for the Agreement's entry into force have been fulfilled.

## ■ **Tobacco: Smuggling**

**Martyn Day:**

**[108262]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the IP Crime Group's finding in its IP Crime and Enforcement Report that cigarettes and tobacco products were the most reported counterfeit goods in the UK in 2019-20.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The IP Crime Report highlights that cigarettes and tobacco products were the products most investigated by Trading Standards in 2019-20. However, the IP Crime Report does highlight many operational successes by Trading Standards in removing illicit cigarettes and tobacco products from sale. The Intellectual Property Office also carried out a significant number of investigations into illicit cigarettes and tobacco products.

## ■ USA: Spaceflight

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[107053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Article III point 1(e) 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], whether proceeds from those launches will be able to be used by the UK to create competing enterprises to the US launch vehicles.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Proceeds from those launches will be limited to any charges for licensing (although the Government is not proposing to cost recover for three years) which will be used to cover costs of licensing, and associated taxes.

The Agreement creates no limitation on the Government continuing to provide funding for the development of domestic space launch companies through other means.

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[107054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Article II point 5 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], whether the Government plans to introduce UK regulatory involvement into the administering of segregated areas.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government plans to realise its obligations under the Agreement through the Space Industry Regulations, published for consultation on 29 July 2020 and licence conditions for operators. Regulations 180-181 of the Draft Space Industry Regulations address segregated areas and highlight that the area remains designated as segregated only if there is US technology in that area.

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[107675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Article III point 1 b) 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], what the process is for determining significant quantitative or qualitative inputs of equipment, technology, manpower, or funds.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Assessments are made on a case-by-case basis by the relevant UK Government departments and agencies.

The Government and its regulatory authorities already work closely with UK companies, and in the future will work with UK based launch operators, to understand

the nature and degree of any inputs of equipment, technology, manpower, or funds from countries, in this area especially by those which are not partner members of the Missile Technology Control Regime.

This is in line with the UK's existing international commitments under the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Hague Code of Conduct and other international non-proliferation instruments.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Borders: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:** [\[106397\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, CP226, whether point of entry facilities resulting from requirements under that protocol have been purchased.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The UK Government is committed to implementing the Northern Ireland Protocol. Work is being progressed right across Government and in partnership with the devolved administrations, with ongoing oversight and scrutiny in the usual way. The tender process for the construction of expanded point of entry facilities is being led by DAERA, with UK Government support. The contract has been awarded. We continue to work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to progress this work.

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[107606\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Border Operating Model on the movement of (a) urgent medical supplies and (b) other goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Border Operating Model, published 13 July, covers trade between Great Britain and the EU only. As for goods movements from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, guidance was published on 8 August. That guidance is being updated on an ongoing basis and in response to developments, including discussions in the UK-EU Joint Committee.

As for medical supplies, the Department of Health and Social Care, in consultation with the Devolved Administrations and Crown Dependencies, is working with trade bodies, product suppliers, and the health and care system in England to make detailed plans to help ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products to the whole of the UK, at the end of the transition period. With respect to Northern Ireland, guidance will be set out in due course, taking into account discussions in the Joint Committee as appropriate.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[107135\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure there is a co-ordinated response to the covid-19 outbreak across the UK.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Government is working closely with the devolved administrations. This includes their recent attendance at COBR to coordinate our response to Covid-19 across the UK.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster holds regular calls with the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales and the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and ministers from the devolved administrations are invited to attend the Covid-Operations Committee on a weekly basis to consider those issues that require a coordinated response. This supplements wider joint working by ministers and officials. The purpose is to share best practice and data, coordinate action and work together as set out in the Joint Statement of 25 September, to achieve alignment in approach wherever it is appropriate and possible to do so.

## ■ Elections: Travellers

**Cat Smith:**

[\[108249\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 100441 on Elections, which stakeholders from the Traveller and Roma community the Government has consulted to ensure reforms are delivered in a way that is inclusive for voters from that community.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[108250\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 100441 on Elections, whether the Government holds data identifying the proportion of the Traveller and Roma community in the UK that is in possession of a form of photographic ID.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[108251\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 100441 on Elections, what assessment he has made of the effect of introducing Voter ID on the Traveller and Roma community's ability to vote in the next General Election.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[108252\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what equality impact assessment his Department has carried out on the effect on blind and partially sighted people of the Government's local authority voter ID pilot schemes.

**Chloe Smith:**

Each pilot authority implemented an equality impact assessment, and our Public Sector Equality Duty was fulfilled. We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders, including charities and civil society organisations, to make sure that reforms are delivered in a way that is inclusive for all voters. The list of approved photographic ID will not be limited to passports and driving licences. For any voter who does not have one of the required forms of photographic ID, a local elector ID will be available, free of charge.

**■ Government Departments: Email****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[107705\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what guidance his Department has issued cross-government on how long emails should be retained by Departments for (a) civil servants, (b) special advisors and (c) Ministers.

**Julia Lopez:**

Departments are responsible for their own record keeping. Record management requirements do not differ between civil servants (including special advisers) and Ministers. The Cabinet Office has not issued cross-government guidance on how long emails should be retained.

**DEFENCE****■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Owen Thompson:**[\[908046\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the potential threat of international disinformation to the security of the UK.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Ministry of Defence takes the threat posed by malicious disinformation campaigns by state and non-state actors very seriously. Working with allies and partners across Government, collectively we monitor such activities closely, assess the risks and take action to counter them if appropriate.

**Craig Williams:**[\[908054\]](#)

What preparations his Department has made ahead of the planned deployment of the Carrier Strike Group in 2021.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The Carrier Strike Group (CSG) will deploy for the first time in 2021, providing tangible reassurance and security to our friends and credible deterrence to those who seek to undermine global security. During this autumn the CSG will be tested through a series of increasingly demanding exercises with allies so that by the end of this year we can declare with full confidence that the CSG has met Initial Operating Capability and is ready for operations.

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[908055\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the effect on the delivery of integrated operations in support of the UK's continuous at-sea deterrent of the move from a single source supplier at HM Naval Base Clyde to multiple contractors.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

As the Future Maritime Support Programme is currently under commercial tender and negotiation, the number of future providers is yet to be finalised. My Department always looks to secure improvements in performance where possible, maximising efficiencies and incentivising delivery to time and cost.

The transition of support services at HM Naval Base Clyde from the existing Maritime Support Delivery Framework will be carefully managed in order to avoid any adverse effect on operations.

## ■ **Armed Forces Covenant**

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[106907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with local authorities on the Government's policy to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Ministry of Defence (MOD) Ministers regularly discuss the Armed Forces Covenant with local authorities and representative bodies. MOD officials have written to Chief Executives and included local authorities from across the UK in group discussions on the Secretary of State's legislative proposals, to gather views and explain the impact of legislation, particularly with regard to new burdens. Individual meetings are also held with local authorities who request them. Collaboration will intensify further, as local authorities work with Government on guidance which will accompany legislation.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[107615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to bring forward proposals to implement the Government's policy on the further incorporation of the Armed Forces Covenant into law.

**Johnny Mercer:**

This Government is committed to introducing legislation to strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant, and it will be brought forward next year in the Armed Forces Bill.

## ■ **Armed Forces: Criminal Investigation**

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[106886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the ways in which the provision for a presumption against prosecution in the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill ensures the prevention of repeated cycles of reinvestigation; and what recent assessment he has made of the adverse effects on (a)



present and (b) former Service personnel who have undergone repeated reinvestigation for alleged offences for which ultimately they were not prosecuted.

**Johnny Mercer:**

I refer the right hon. Member to paragraphs 27 to 29 of the Impact Analysis for the Overseas Operations Bill, which was published on 17 September 2020.

We assess that, over time, as prosecutors become familiar with the presumption against prosecution, they will be able to advise investigators earlier in the process as to whether this new statutory requirement - that it is to be exceptional for a decision to be made to prosecute for an alleged offence - would be met in a particular case. This may therefore reduce the likelihood of investigations being reopened without compelling new evidence.

A thorough investigation is important, as it can serve both to exculpate - which is a good thing for the reputation of our Armed Forces - as well as to incriminate. We do, however, recognise not only the inherent difficulties, but also the adverse impacts on our personnel, of investigations regarding allegations of offences committed on overseas operations. These investigations are all the more difficult when a period of time has elapsed since the alleged incident. It is to the benefit both of alleged victims and alleged offenders that investigations are conducted as expeditiously and effectively as possible, so that decisions on whether or not to prosecute are made without delay in the interest of all parties knowing the outcome of these proceedings.

We have learned lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, and will take the necessary steps to try to ensure that future incidents are reported and appropriately investigated at the time, thereby reducing the risk for our personnel of historical investigations, and reinvestigations, into their conduct.

The Secretary of State for Defence announced on 13 October a judge-led review into how allegations of wrongdoing are raised and investigated. The review will make sure the guidance and policy framework for investigating allegations during overseas operations is fit for the future. This will help ensure that all allegations are taken forward in a timely manner, providing reassurance to victims and closure to innocent personnel caught up in investigations.

■ **Armed Forces: Human Rights**

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

**[106887]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) present and (b) former armed forces personnel have been investigated more than once for allegations of human rights abuses where such investigations have resulted in (i) a prosecution and (ii) no prosecution being brought in each year since 2001 for which figures are available.

**Johnny Mercer:**

There is no criminal offence of "human rights abuse" nor any category thereof, and therefore the records management system cannot be searched for such data.

The information is therefore not held in the format requested.



## ■ Armed Forces: Surveillance

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[107090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which units of the armed forces are trained to run covert human intelligence sources (a) in the UK and (b) overseas.

**James Heappey:**

Two specialist units within the Armed Forces, and each of the three Service Police forces, have CHIS handling capabilities utilising appropriately trained personnel.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[107091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many covert human intelligence sources have been run by the armed forces (a) in the UK and (b) overseas in the last five years.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence does not comment on intelligence operations and does not release information about any numbers or locations of covert human intelligence sources it may have.

## ■ International Military Services

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[107697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2020 to Question 99688 on International Military Services: Legal Costs, when IMS last put the provision of legal services out to public tender; and for how long IMS has had the same principal legal provider.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

IMS has used the same legal advisors (Clifford Chance) since at least 1991.

## ■ International Military Services: Legal Costs

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[107698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2020 to Question 99688 on International Military Services: Legal Costs, what steps he and IMS take to ensure that IMS pays value for money legal fees; and when (a) his Department and (b) IMS last made a comparative assessment of the value for money of (i) IMS costs and (ii) the rates of its legal services provider.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The IMS Board of Directors and the Ministry of Defence keep all such costs under review with the aim of ensuring value for money.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[107699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2020 to Question 99688 on International Military Services: Legal Fees, whether his Department holds adequate information on how much IMS has continued to pay its principal legal provider since IMS ceased operations in 1991; and whether that sum is less than £40 million.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

IMS records show the total legal fees paid by the company since 1991 amount to £26,507,705.42.

■ **Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft****Jamie Stone:**[\[107087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the affordability of his Department's commitment to buy 48 F-35b Lightning jet fighters by the end of 2025.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the Answer given in the House of Lords on 23 September 2020 by my right hon. Friend Baroness Goldie to Lord Campbell of Pittenweem to Question HL8176.

The UK's F-35B aircraft are procured using a 'Block Buy' approach through the US-led Joint Programme Office. The UK has ordered 35 aircraft to date, and procurement of the next 13 has already commenced, these will be delivered through the 'Block Buy 2' Programme (also referred to as Lot 15-17). This will take the UK to 48 F-35B aircraft. Further decisions on procurement beyond the 48 aircraft will follow the ongoing Integrated Review.

**Attachments:**

1. Joint Strike Fighter [HL8176 - Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft.docx]

■ **Ministry of Defence: Companies****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[108276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many companies or entities his Department (a) controls or (b) has significant influence over whose accounts are not audited by the National Audit Office.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The designation order under the Government Resources and Accounts Act for 2019 identified the following entities as falling within the accounting boundary of the Ministry of Defence due to the control/influence exercised by the department. The listing shown is taken from the MOD Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 (Page 205) – Entities within the Departmental Boundary[1]:

ORGANISATION	SEPARATE ACCOUNTS SUBJECT TO AUDIT BY THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE
On-Vote Defence Agencies	
Defence Electronic Components Agency*	Yes
Defence Equipment and Support Bespoke Trading Entity*	Yes

ORGANISATION	SEPARATE ACCOUNTS SUBJECT TO AUDIT BY THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory*	Yes
Submarine Delivery Agency*	Yes
Non-Departmental Public Bodies*	
Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trustee Limited	N/A
National Museum of the Royal Navy*	Yes
National Army Museum*	Yes
Royal Air Force Museum*	Yes
Single Source Regulations Office*	Yes
Advisory Non-Department Public Bodies	
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	N/A
Armed Forces Pay Review Body	N/A
Defence Nuclear Safety Committee	N/A
Independent Medical Expert Group	N/A
Nuclear Research Advisory Council	N/A
Science Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less Lethal Weapons	N/A
Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees	N/A
Other Bodies	
Advisory Group on Military Medicine	N/A
Central Advisory Committee on Compensation	N/A
Commonwealth War Graves Commission*	No – Accounts audited by Grant Thornton LLP
Defence Science Expert Committee	N/A
Independent Monitoring Board for the Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester	N/A
International Military Services Limited*	No – Accounts audited by Price Bailey LLP
Royal Hospital Chelsea*	Yes

ORGANISATION	SEPARATE ACCOUNTS SUBJECT TO AUDIT BY THE NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE
Service Complaints Ombudsman	N/A
Service Prosecuting Authority	N/A
Territorial, auxiliary and volunteer reserve associations established under section 110 of the Reserve Forces Act 1995 c14*	No – Clive Owen LLP

*\* These entities, in addition to being covered by NAO as part of the Departmental audit, also produce their own individual annual report and accounts which are subject to separate audit. For the most part these audits are also carried out by the NAO with the exception of those highlighted in yellow.*

The expenditure, income and assets and liabilities for the entities identified above are consolidated into the Departmental annual report and accounts and subjected to audit by the National Audit Office.

Additional information on the nature of the relationship between MOD and these entities (including governance and control arrangements) can be found in the Accounting Officer System Statement[2].

[1] Link to MOD ARAc<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020>

[2] Link to MOD AOSS[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/929425/20201022\\_MOD\\_AccountingOfficersSystemStatement\\_2020\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929425/20201022_MOD_AccountingOfficersSystemStatement_2020_FINAL.pdf) ”

## ■ Veterans: Compensation

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

**[106885]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it is his Department's (a) plan and (b) assessment that the time-limiting provisions of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill will have the effect of ending any prospect of nuclear test veterans bringing to court with any prospect of success cases for compensation for serious health consequences which emerged many years after the tests in which they were required to participate.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The nuclear test programme of the 1950s and 1960s does not fall within the definition of "overseas operations" which applies to the limitation longstops in Part 2 of the Overseas Operations Bill. This means that any personal injury or death claims brought by the Nuclear Test Veterans will not be impacted by the limitation longstop for those claims.

Nuclear Test Veterans who believe they have suffered ill health due to their service have the right to apply for no-fault compensation under the War Pensions Scheme.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ **Broadband**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[103504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure value for money and protect public investment in broadband network expansion.

**Matt Warman:**

BDUK programmes have a focus on ensuring Value for Money throughout every stage of the programme and procurement lifecycle.

Programmes are designed to target delivery in those areas which will achieve the best outcomes and economic benefit and projects under each programme are assured against these objectives prior to approval.

Procurements for delivery of broadband infrastructure are competitively tendered and assured for compliance with relevant regulations and against cost benchmarking data. Furthermore, contracts include rigorous financial and delivery reporting requirements and, where appropriate, clawback mechanisms to recoup excess funding. As referenced in the recent NAO report, DCMS estimates that £0.9bn of funding will be clawed back to Local Bodies through the Superfast programme.

Finally, programmes are evaluated against their original objectives and the outcomes and lessons learnt from each evaluation are used to inform future programme design.

### ■ **Data Protection: EU Law**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[106997\]](#)

To ask the the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential effect of the European Commission's proposed ePrivacy regulation on the ability of UK Safety technology companies to provide innovative services after the transition period.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The European Commission's proposed ePrivacy Regulation is currently being negotiated. The Regulation will replace the current ePrivacy Directive (2002/58/EC). We do not expect the Regulation to come into force before the end of the transition period and would therefore not be applicable in the UK.

Separately, there is a proposed Regulation due to come into force on 21 December 2020, that derogates from certain provisions of the ePrivacy Directive (2002/58/EC) as regards the use of technologies by number-independent interpersonal communications service providers for the processing of personal and other data for

the purpose of combatting child sexual abuse online. This derogation is currently being negotiated within the European Council and Parliament.

■ **Football Association of Wales: Finance**

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[107709]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Welsh Government and (b) the Welsh Football Association on providing additional funding for the Welsh Football Association.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Although sport is a devolved matter, the Government continues to liaise closely with its counterparts in the Welsh Government.

As part of a promotional deal with the Football Association (FA), the National Lottery has provided a total of £10m in funding for the 66 clubs in the National Football League. This is a promotional deal led by the National Lottery and the Football Association. The National League is responsible for distributing funds and determining how and when the clubs receive this funding.

The National Lottery is now working with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland FAs to explore similar initiatives.

■ **Football Association Premier League: Broadcasting**

**Jane Stevenson:**

**[107739]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Premier League on fair access to viewing football matches during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government has worked closely with the football authorities throughout the pandemic, this saw the Premier League and English Football League as some of the first elite competitions to return "behind closed doors". We also ensured that Project Restart was shared with everyone by getting Premier League football on the BBC for the first time ever.

We will continue to have regular discussions with the Premier League on a range of topics, including viewing access to their matches, and the return of fans when it is safe to do so.

■ **Football: Government Assistance**

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

**[106960]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what criteria his Department used to determine the amount of money given to the Football Association to be distributed to clubs in the National League; and on what basis the National League will distribute that money.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[106961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the grant his Department provided to the Football Association to distribute to National League clubs was intended to replace gate receipts lost as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[106962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the (a) average attendance and (b) annual gate receipts of each club in the (i) National League, (ii) National League North and (iii) National League South was in the (A) 2018-19 and (B) 2019-20 season; and how much the Government's monthly grant in October 2020 was for each of those clubs.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As part of a promotional deal with the Football Association, the National Lottery provided £10m in funding for the 66 clubs in the National League. This initiative is in addition to the ongoing support the National Lottery provides to good causes through the National Lottery Distribution Fund. Funding has been allocated to clubs by the National League using an approach based broadly on past attendance. The National League will keep allocations under review and may amend them if any club suffers acute financial hardship.

The department does not hold records on the average attendance or gate receipts of National League clubs.

## ■ Gambling

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[108285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on supporting people who live with problem gambling.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) work closely together on matters related to gambling harm, including on measures and services in place to support problem gamblers. The government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age and further details will be announced in due course. In addition, at the time of the General Election the government committed to developing a strategy on addictions, including gambling, although this has been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. DCMS and DHSC will continue to work closely together and with wider government in the delivery of these commitments.

## ■ Horse Racing: Coronavirus

**Conor McGinn:**

[R] [\[108255\]](#)

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

**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.

## ■ Performing Arts: Redundancy

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[107097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recent Concert Promoters Association report which states that 26,100 jobs are expected to have been made redundant in the live music industry by the end of 2020 without further Government intervention.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

DCMS continues to engage with HMT to feed into their assessment of the potential impacts of Government support. We will ensure the needs of our sectors are also factored into the developing economic response, and that DCMS sectors, including the live music industry, are supported throughout this time.

An unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the cultural sector has benefitted the creative industries by providing support to venues and many other cultural organisations to stay open and continue operating. So far, over £500m has been announced from the Culture Recovery Fund to protect cultural organisations across England, almost a fifth of which has gone to the music sector. This support package will benefit employment, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances.

As part of this package, £3.36 million has been shared among 136 venues across England who applied for the Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund. This funding has supported grassroots venues to survive the imminent risk of collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic.



The expanded Jobs Support Scheme, announced by the Chancellor on 22 October, will include more generous and frequent cash grants, and more help for the self-employed.

■ **Performing Arts: Self-employed**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[107100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the Government support made available for people who were in temporary and freelance roles in the live music industry prior to start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Over two thirds of eligible people in the cultural sectors have benefitted from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). We've supported the self-employed with over £13 billion in grants and the Chancellor has doubled the generosity of the self-employed grant extension scheme from 20% to 40% of people's profits. The expanded Jobs Support Scheme, announced by the Chancellor on 22 October, will include more generous and frequent cash grants, and more help for the self-employed.

DCMS continues to engage with HMT to feed into their assessment of the potential impacts of Government support. We will ensure the needs of our sectors are also factored into the developing economic response, and that DCMS sectors, including the live music industry, are supported throughout this time.

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.

The £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will benefit freelancers, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances. So far, over £500m has been announced from the Culture Recovery Fund to protect cultural organisations across England, almost a fifth of which has gone to the music sector.

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[107147\]](#)

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 self-employed and freelance people in creative industries.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The government has taken active steps to support the self-employed. We've supported the self-employed with over £13 billion in grants and the Chancellor has doubled the generosity of the self-employed grant extension scheme from 20% to 40% of people's profits. The expanded Jobs Support Scheme, announced by the Chancellor on 22 October, will include more generous and frequent cash grants, and more help for the self-employed.

DCMS continues to engage with HMT to feed into their assessment of the potential impacts of Government support. We will ensure the needs of our sectors are also factored into the developing economic response, and that DCMS sectors, including the live music industry, are supported throughout this time.

The Arts Council England has made £119 million available to individuals (including freelancers and self-employed), with £23.1 million already distributed and £95.9 million currently available to apply for via open funds.

The £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will benefit freelancers, because it will invest in organisations and help them to reopen, and restart performances.

## ■ Sports: Ombudsman

**Damian Hinds:**

**[108218]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of implementing the recommendation in the Duty of Care in Sport independent report to Government by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, published in April 2017, that the Government should create a sports ombudsman or sports duty of care quality commission, with powers to hold national governing bodies to account for the duty of care they provide to all athletes, coaching staff and support staff.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

It is important that the systems elite sports have for dealing with concerns about athlete welfare are as effective as possible, regardless of whether any new service - be that an ombudsman or a different model - is developed. All sports and clubs should have appropriate procedures in place, and when formal channels have been exhausted and a matter remains unresolved, investigations should be conducted independently through an appropriate organisation such as Sport Resolutions UK.

The Code for Sports Governance came into force around the same time as the Duty of Care report was published in April 2017. This imposes clear requirements on all funded sports organisations to have appropriate whistleblowing and safeguarding policies and procedures in place. In addition, UK Sport have proactively worked to strengthen the existing systems, structures and responsibilities for dispute resolution within the high performance system, and introduced numerous measures in the 12 months following the report's publication. These actions included mandating an independent element in discipline and grievance procedures, establishing a dedicated integrity unit, and introducing an annual Culture Health Check survey that monitors athlete welfare and enables issues to be picked up and addressed.

My department will continue to work closely with UK Sport and keep this issue under review, looking to strengthen provision wherever necessary.

## ■ UK Safer Internet Centre

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[107605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what role the UK Safer Internet Centre partnership has in bringing to justice people guilty of abusive online practices.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The government recognises the important role the UK Safer Internet Centre delivers on online safety. This includes the operation of a public hotline for reporting and removing child sexual abuse material online and a helpline to support professionals working with children in the UK with any online safety issues young people in their care may face.

The government engages regularly with the UK Safer Internet Centre, and has previously provided it with funding to develop advice for schools on understanding, preventing and responding to cyberbullying, and an online safety toolkit to help schools deliver sessions about cyberbullying, peer pressure and sexting.

## ■ UK Safer Internet Centre: EU Grants and Loans

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[107587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to provide funding to the UK Safer Internet Centre when its funding from the EU ends.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The government recognises the important work the UK Safer Internet Centre delivers on online safety. The Centre currently receives funding from the European Commission's Connecting Europe Facility programme. Officials regularly engage with the Centre, including on its funding position following the UK's exit from the EU.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Care Leavers and Special Educational Needs: Finance

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[108201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the (a) recommendation on establishing a transitions support bank to centrally hold all funding available to care leavers and young people with Education, Health and Care plans after they reach 18 years old and (b) other recommendations in the Children's Services Development Group's Destination Unknown report; and if he will make a statement.

**Vicky Ford:**

Local authorities are the primary corporate parents for looked after children and care leavers. They are responsible for making decisions about where children and young people live and what additional support that they need in order to make a successful transition to adulthood. The government believes that these decisions are best taken

locally, based on local professionals' judgements about what is needed for each child or young person, depending on their individual circumstances. We do not think it would be feasible for those decisions to be taken by a central team based in central government.

The government does recognise, however, that local authorities cannot do it all on their own. That is why it has established a cross-government Ministerial Board to consider how the government collectively can ensure that its policies and services recognise and respond to care leavers' unique circumstances, and to drive improved outcomes for care leavers.

The government is also taking the lead in providing direct employment opportunities to care leavers, particularly through the Civil Service care leaver internship scheme. This year, the scheme is offering over 500 12-month paid internships to care leavers in over 20 government departments and agencies across the UK.

We also recognise that private businesses and other organisations, such as universities, have a role to play too. That is why we launched the Care Leaver Covenant, which provides a way for organisations from the private and voluntary sectors to set out their offer to care leavers. Details of the organisations that have signed the covenant and their published offers are available here:

<https://mycovenant.org.uk/>.

We are committed to improving the experiences and outcomes of care leavers through the Ministerial Board. It will address many of the concerns that are highlighted in the Children's Services Development Group's 'Destination Unknown' report. This will happen through the Ministerial Board's focus on education, employment and training and addressing care leavers' financial vulnerability.

## ■ Children in Care and Special Educational Needs: Personal Budgets

**Steve McCabe:**

**[108202]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recommendation in the Children's Services Development Group's Destination Unknown report on ensuring that every looked after child and each young person with an Education, Health and Care plan is formally allocated a personal budget to fund all care needs, education needs separate from those covered by the national funding formula for schools and health needs.

**Vicky Ford:**

Any parent or carer of a child, or a young person, may request a personal budget as part of their education, health and care (EHC) plan as a means of delivering the outcomes specified in the plan. However, the Children and Families Act 2014 is clear that whilst a personal budget for an EHC plan can include funding from education, health and social care, the scope of that budget will vary depending on the needs of the individual, the eligibility criteria for the different components and the mechanism for delivery. This means that decisions need to be taken on an individual basis, and a blanket approach cannot be put in place. Local authorities and their health partners

remain responsible for securing the provision specified in an EHC plan, funded where necessary through joint commissioning arrangements.

Some local authorities have provided access to personal budgets for looked after children and care leavers. For example, two of the Staying Close pilots are trialling the use of personal budgets. However, decisions about the provision of personal budgets and other operational matters are for local authorities.

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[108284]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps he has taken to help improve the affordability of childcare.

**Vicky Ford:**

We want parents to have access to a range of affordable childcare, giving them increased flexibility in their working hours and helping children thrive in the crucial early years. That is why the department is investing a planned £3.6 billion in our early education entitlements this year.

We offer parents a range of free early education entitlements for children aged 2 to 4 years old, giving them increased flexibility in their working hours and helping children thrive in the crucial early years. This includes 15 hours a week free childcare for 38 weeks of the year for all 3- and 4-year olds, with an additional 15 hours (30 hours free childcare) for working families. Working parents may also be eligible for help with up to 85% of their childcare costs through Universal Credit Childcare. This is subject to a monthly limit of £646 for one child or £1108 for two or more children, payable in arrears.

Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) is available for children from 0-11 years old, or up to 16 if disabled. The TFC scheme means that for every £8 parents pay their provider via an online account, the government will pay £2. This is up to a maximum contribution of £2,000 per child each year (up to £500 every 3 months), or £4,000 if disabled.

The early years sector has received significant financial support throughout the coronavirus pandemic to provide stability and reassurance. We continue to provide extra security to nurseries and childminders that are open by 'block-buying' childcare places for the autumn term at the level we would have funded before the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of how many children are attending.

In addition, temporary measures have been put in place to protect parents who would normally be eligible for Tax Free Childcare or 30 hours free childcare, or both, but who, due to the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak, temporarily do not meet the income thresholds.

These were introduced in May. On 26 October, the government announced that working parents who are eligible for TFC or 30 hours but have temporarily fallen below the minimum income requirement, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, will continue to be entitled to TFC or 30 hours of free childcare, or both if they are

receiving income from the Job Support Scheme or Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants. This will continue until at least April 2021.

Critical workers who may exceed the income threshold for TFC or 30 hours for the 2020-21 tax year as a result of working more to play a vital role in tackling the COVID-19 outbreak will also continue to be eligible this tax year as a result of these temporary measures.

## ■ Grammar Schools: Admissions

**Matt Western:**

[107715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the evidence underpinning his Department's guidance to local authorities to postpone Grammar School entry tests until November for 2021-22 entry.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is unlikely that children will have performed at the best of their ability at the beginning of September this year and were likely to benefit from as much time back in education as possible before being assessed. Several studies have shown that disadvantaged children have been disproportionately affected by the period of school closure.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies found that children in higher income families spent more time on home education than those from poorer families and also had greater access to home teaching resources. The Education Endowment Foundation median estimate is that the attainment gap between children from economically deprived households and their peers could widen by 36% as a result of school closures. See here: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14848> and here:

[https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/EEF\\_\(2020\)\\_-\\_Impact\\_of\\_School\\_Closures\\_on\\_the\\_Attainment\\_Gap.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/EEF_(2020)_-_Impact_of_School_Closures_on_the_Attainment_Gap.pdf).

Our guidance is that, in these circumstances, it would be reasonable for tests to be moved back into late October, or to November if local admission co-ordination processes allow, but the decision rests with admission authorities.

## ■ Pupils: Mental Health

**Sarah Owen:**

[107114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding he will provide to schools to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the 2020-21 academic year.

**Vicky Ford:**

I refer the hon. Member for Luton North to the answers I gave on 21 October 2020 to Questions [104035](#) and [104036](#).

## ■ Pupils: Self-harm

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[107661]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of his Department's guidance to schools on supporting students affected by self-harm; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on trends in the incidence of self-harm among students.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Department for Education keeps its guidance to schools under review, including the statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance that all schools must have regard to. Amongst other things, it sets out the role all staff have to play to protect children. This includes being aware of the indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing. Staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. This also includes identifying where mental health concerns are also safeguarding concerns, and making appropriate referrals into early help support services and statutory support services as appropriate.

KCSIE was strengthened on 1 September 2020 and includes additional information for school staff to help them support children with their mental health.

The Department for Education works closely with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) on children's mental health and safeguarding issues, and to understand the impact of COVID-19. Emerging evidence on self-harm is included in the children and young people section of the COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance report, which was published on 8 September 2020. The report is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people>.

DHSC expanded the scope of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in 2017 to include addressing self-harm as an issue in its own right. They fund the Multicentre Study of Self-harm, which is the most in-depth analysis and monitoring of self-harming trends in England.

Children's wellbeing and mental health is a central part of the Department for Education's response to the COVID-19 outbreak and we have taken action to ensure schools and colleges are equipped to support children and young people.

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



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

The NHS Long Term Plan also commits to developing integrated models of primary and community care to support people with complex needs, including self-harming.

From the 2019-20 financial year, we are investing £57 million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long Term Plan. This will see investment in all areas of the country by the 2023-24 financial year to support local suicide prevention plans and establish suicide bereavement support services. We have ensured that the suicide prevention funding for local areas includes addressing self-harm as a priority focus.

### ■ Qualifications: Gender

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[107663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the achievement gap in qualifications between male and female pupils in schools.

**Vicky Ford:**

This government is committed to raising school standards across the country to make sure that all young people leave school with the knowledge, qualifications and skills that they need to succeed in life.

The proportion of children in good or outstanding schools has risen from 66% in 2010 to 86%, meaning that 1.9 million more children are now in good or outstanding schools. Reforms to the curriculum, primary assessment and school accountability arrangements have been designed to ensure that schools are delivering the very best education to all children and young people. In particular, our GCSE reforms mean that we have a rigorous suite of qualifications for all pupils, in line with the standards expected in countries with high-performing education systems.

We know that teacher quality is vital in improving outcomes for all children and young people. That is why we are relentlessly focussed on reforms that will make the biggest difference to the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers. Since 2019, we have built on our Recruitment and Retention strategy, reforming Initial Teacher Training (ITT) content and developing the Early Career Framework (ECF). These reforms set out, for the first time, an evidence-based body of knowledge and skills that all teachers need in order to be effective in the classroom.

We know that the COVID-19 outbreak has affected every child and young person. That is why we have announced a £1 billion catch-up package to provide additional funding to support children and young people whose education has been disrupted by COVID-19. The package includes a National Tutoring Programme, which will provide up to £350 million of targeted support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, as well as a £650 million universal catch-up premium, to support schools to target support for specific groups of pupils. This is in addition to our continued



protection of pupil premium, worth more than £2.4 billion a year, which ensures that school leaders are equipped with the resources that they need in order to support pupils facing educational disadvantage.

## ■ Schools: Mental Health Services

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[107614]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support primary and secondary schools in their provision of mental health support to children and young people.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government is committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people.

We have in particular prioritised children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. Getting children and young people back into school and college is itself key to their wellbeing. We have worked hard to ensure that all pupils and learners were able to return to a full high-quality education programme in September. Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package, with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020-21 academic year, is supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place.

To ensure that staff are equipped to support wellbeing as children and young people returned to schools and colleges, we made it a central part of our guidance both on remote education and on the return to school. We supported this with a range of training and materials, including webinars which have been accessed by thousands of education staff and accelerating training on how to teach about mental health as part of the new relationships, sex and health curriculum, so that all pupils can benefit from this long-term requirement.

To continue this support, we are investing £8 million in the Wellbeing for Education Return programme, which will provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and practical skills they need to support teachers, students and parents, to help improve how they respond to the emotional impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The programme is funding expert advisers in every area of England to train and support schools and colleges during the autumn and spring terms. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wellbeing-for-education-return-grant-s31-grant-determination-letter>.

In the long term, we remain committed to our major joint green paper delivery programme with the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England. This includes introducing new mental health support teams linked to schools and colleges, providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges, and testing approaches to faster access to NHS specialist support. Mental health support teams are part of the commitment made in the NHS England Long Term Plan that funding for mental health services will grow faster than the overall NHS budget, creating a new ringfenced local investment fund for all ages worth at

least £2.3 billion a year by the 2023-24 financial year. This will mean that that by the 2023-24 financial year, at least an additional 345,000 children and young people aged 0-25 will be able to access support via NHS England funded mental health services.

## ■ Schools: Sefton

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[107641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to award grants from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) fund to (a) St Luke's Halsall primary school in Crosby and (b) schools in Sefton.

**Nick Gibb:**

The first window for submitting claims for exceptional costs related to the COVID-19 closed on 21 July. At that time, St Luke's, Halsall had submitted a claim which included £1,651 for costs within the published scope of the funding and £6,025 for costs outside of that published scope. A payment for the in-scope costs of £1,651 was due to be made to the local authority at the end of October 2020 to be passed onto the school in line with the usual practice. The assessment process to determine which types of out-of-scope costs will be included is ongoing and we intend to write out to schools by the end of November to confirm the outcome of this part of their claim.

This applies to all schools who made a claim against this funding. The attached table includes the details of the in-scope and out-of-scope claims made by schools in the Sefton local authority area.

**Attachments:**

1. 107641\_Table [107641\_Table\_COVID-19\_claims\_by\_schools\_in\_Sefton\_LA.xlsx]

## ■ Sex and Relationship Education: Religion

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[108223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether materials from religious organisations are permitted in schools under the Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum guidance published by his Department on 24 September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is committed to supporting all schools to deliver the content of the new subjects of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). When teaching the new RSHE subjects, schools should take into account the age of pupils and their religious background.

Our support package, published on 24 September, is aimed at helping all schools increase their confidence and quality of their teaching practice. This package includes teacher training modules, non-statutory implementation guidance and training led by Teaching Schools.

The Department has made clear that it is important that schools take full responsibility for ensuring lessons and materials they intend to use are age appropriate, suitable and politically impartial, particularly when using materials produced by external organisations. We are aware that there are many resources in circulation to support schools to deliver these subjects.

The Department's 'Plan your relationships, sex and health curriculum' implementation guidance includes advice on working with external agencies. It builds on the content of the statutory RSHE guidance and it includes clear advice on choosing resources. It states that schools should assess each resource that they propose to use to ensure it is appropriate for the age and maturity of their pupils and sensitive to their needs, where relevant. This guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum>.

### ■ **Special Educational Needs: Reviews**

**Steve McCabe:**

**[108200]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made on his SEND review; on what date he plans to conclude that review; and what progress he has made on the implementation of the SEND system leadership board.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government remains fully committed to a thorough and fundamental review of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.

The issues that the SEND system face are complex, but we are determined to deliver real, lasting improvements, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The findings of the review will be published as soon as it is practicable to do so.

The SEND System Leadership Board was established in 2019 to improve joint commissioning across education, health and social care services. The board meets on a termly basis and is chaired by Tony McArdle, former Chief Executive of Lincolnshire County Council and the department's Lead Commissioner in Northamptonshire County Council.

### ■ **Universities: Coronavirus**

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[107731]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assurances his Department has received from universities in (a) tier 3 and (b) tier 2 areas of measures put in place to mitigate (i) covid-19 transmission levels and (ii) related public health risks.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) and the wider community is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission in this unprecedented situation.

Our system of HE tiers, as set out in guidance, intends to help universities identify the appropriate restrictions to impose on their educational provision in response to a

COVID-19 outbreak. This is particularly important when there is a change to the local COVID alert level. This guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>.

We have worked to ensure that all universities have outbreak plans. These have been shared with local Directors of Public Health and continue to be reviewed and updated based on emerging lessons and local situations, including changes to the local COVID alert level. The plans cover a range of scenarios and will ensure that HE providers are prepared to respond quickly to an outbreak in their educational setting or wider community.

Implementation of these plans is for the universities themselves, working with local public health and local authority colleagues.

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[107732]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional (a) resources and (b) funding to universities in (i) tier 3 and (ii) tier 2 areas to mitigate (A) covid-19 transmission levels and (B) related public health risks.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students in higher education (HE) and the wider community is always our priority. The government is doing all it can to minimise the risks of transmission in this unprecedented situation.

We are working across the government, and closely with the HE sector, to provide both practical and financial support through the COVID-19 outbreak. On 4 May, we announced the HE stabilisation package which reprofiled public funding and introduced measures to stabilise admissions with a view to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on HE providers' finances. This package, along with the government-backed business support schemes, provided substantial support to the HE sector. On 27 June, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced further support to preserve research capacity and capability in the Research Stabilisation Package. On 16 July, we also announced further information about the Higher Education Restructuring Regime, which will review providers' circumstances and assess the need for restructuring, financial support and come with strict conditions to align with wider government objectives.

Further to this, we have also published reopening guidance to universities informed by advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies. We are lifting caps on domestic medicine and dentistry courses for the 2020/21 academic year and providing both additional capital and teaching grant funding. Importantly, we are supporting providers to protect students' mental health and wellbeing, having clarified that providers can use funding worth £256 million for the academic year 2020/21, starting from August, towards student hardship funds and mental health support. Additionally, the Office for Students has provided up to £3 million to fund the Student Space platform to bridge gaps in mental health support for students.

We will continue to draw upon the expertise of the Higher Education Taskforce to identify COVID-19 related challenges faced by HE providers and students. We will keep policies under review as the situation evolves, based on the latest advice from Public Health England and evidence of the effectiveness of interventions and support for students and providers.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Animal Welfare

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[108246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals on animal sentience before the end of the transition period.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government is committed to further strengthening our world-leading animal welfare standards. We have committed to bringing in new laws on animal sentience following a clear manifesto commitment. Any necessary changes required to domestic legislation will be made in an effective and credible way and will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows.

In the meantime, the Government's policies on animal welfare continue to be driven by our recognition that animals are sentient beings. We ensure animal welfare needs are met by placing direct obligations on keepers of animals under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Our commitment to the protection of animal welfare is demonstrated by the Government's continued support for the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill, sponsored by Chris Loder MP, which passed its second reading in the House of Commons on 23 October.

### ■ Animals: Exports

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[106987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of additional veterinary professionals required to process animal health export certificates prior to consignment after the end of the transition period in the event that a deal is not reached with the EU.

**Victoria Prentis:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr on 5 October 2020, PQ 96843.

[<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-29/96843>]

## ■ Disposable Wipes and Sanitary Protection: Labelling

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[107676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that all (a) sanitary and (b) toilet products are accurately labelled as flushable.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Most sanitary products and many toilet products are not flushable. If disposed of by being flushed down a toilet, they can cause sewer blockages and harm to the environment. The water industry has conducted research into blockages, which suggests baby wipes are one of the main items causing them.

In November 2016, a Defra Ministerial roundtable meeting with the water industry and the wipe manufacturers' representative body was held to address sewer blockages. It resulted in improved industry labelling to indicate more clearly those wipe products, particularly baby wipes, that should not be flushed.

Since then the water industry has also devised a new 'fine to flush' standard for wipe products, covering largely moist toilet tissue. If products pass strict industry standards, manufacturers of wipes can feature an official water industry 'Fine to Flush' symbol on their packaging. This symbol is starting to be seen on an increasing number of products.

This standard requires that these products do not contain plastic and break up upon entering a sewer, therefore entering the sewage system without causing blockages or harming the environment.

## ■ Flour

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[107744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK milled flour fortified in line with the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 will be recognised as compliant with EU rules after the transition period.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As a matter of public health, national measures contained in UK Bread and Flour rules require the mandatory addition of minimum levels of calcium, iron, niacin and thiamine to most wheat flour (except wholemeal) sold in the UK. As food is a devolved matter Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are responsible in their respective nations.

The EU does not have an equivalent ruling on bread and flour, but it has laid down harmonised measures on the addition of vitamins and minerals to food more generally. There is nothing within the existing national rules on bread and flour that prevents businesses wishing to export goods to the EU from also complying with EU rules.

It is the Government's future intention to review domestic requirements on bread and flour further to ensure they continue to meet national interests fully.

## ■ Landfill

**Colleen Fletcher:**

**[107010]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to public purse of sending waste to landfill in each of the last three years.

**Rebecca Pow:**

My department does not estimate the costs to the public purse of sending waste to landfill.

Information for England on the amount of Local Authority collected and managed waste sent to landfill is as follows:

YEAR	000s TONNES
2016/17	4,136
2017/18	3,213
2018/19	2,756

Data on local authority costs of waste disposal, which would include waste to landfill, is published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 'Revenue Outturn Cultural, Environmental, Regulatory and Planning Services (RO5).

Costs for 2016/17 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2016-to-2017-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

Costs for 2017/18 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2017-to-2018-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

Costs for 2018/19 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2018-to-2019-individual-local-authority-data-outturn>

## ■ Offshore Fixed Structures: North Sea

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[41435]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions officials in his Department held with their counterparts in the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the decision not to comply with the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 and the 1996 London Protocol to that Convention in relation to the (a) steel jackets and (b) concrete bases remaining in-situ underneath decommissioned Brent oilfield platforms (i) Bravo, (ii) Charlie and (iii) Delta east of Shetland.



**Rebecca Pow:**

The Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED), part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), consults with a number of other Government departments and agencies including Defra regarding proposals for decommissioning offshore platforms.

Defra officials have had extensive discussions with OPRED and have examined the decommissioning proposals for the platforms in the Brent field, and were content that the decommissioning proposals offered the best, most practicable option for protecting the marine environment.

In these discussions with OPRED, Defra officials have been assured that any approval to leave in situ the footings of the Brent Alpha steel jacket and the concrete gravity based installations for Brent Bravo, Brent Charlie and Brent Delta will be consistent with our international obligations.

**Seas and Oceans: Pollution Control****Peter Kyle:**[\[107061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Environment Agency undertaking year-round water testing at English beaches.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA) is required to follow the monitoring requirements set out in the Bathing Water Regulations (2013). These specify a fixed bathing water season between 15 May and 30 September. Monitoring is required to take place within these dates, except for the first sample of the season which is to be taken shortly before the start of the season. This monitoring is used to produce a classification scheme set out within the Regulations.

No systematic assessment has been carried out by the Environment Agency of the impact, or merits of going beyond current statutory monitoring requirements.

Changes to these requirements to produce a classification would require the legislation to be changed and the Environment Agency to be appropriately funded to deliver the sampling needed.

**Wildlife: Trade****Tracey Crouch:**[\[64147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if the Government will take steps to (a) help tackle the causes of the covid-19 pandemic, (b) advocate for a global inter country trade ban of wildlife and wildlife products at the G20 meeting in November 2020 and (c) ban the import and export of wild animals and wild animal products coming into the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are clear that poorly managed and illegal wildlife trade (IWT) poses threats to animal health and welfare, diminishes our biodiversity, undermines governance, and



can result in serious public health issues. However, well managed, sustainable trade can contribute to biodiversity conservation and livelihoods, and can help meet the nutritional needs of local and rural communities in developing nations.

The UK Government is fully committed to tackling the environmental drivers of pandemics, including by reversing global biodiversity loss, tackling both unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade, and pressing for significantly higher standards in live animal markets around the world. We are actively considering the many complex issues around the global trade in wildlife, including its relationship to Covid-19 and will support swift policy interventions where these are shown to be effective in mitigating future risk of zoonotic diseases.

### ■ Zoo Animals Fund

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[108233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many zoos have (a) successfully made a claim from the Zoo Animals Fund and (b) had an application rejected from that scheme.

**Victoria Prentis:**

21 applications for the Zoo Animals Fund have been received so far and none have been rejected. 3 grants have been awarded and the other applications are being processed. The Fund is open for applications until 16 November 2020 and provides support up until March 2021. We encourage zoos who are experiencing severe financial difficulties and need support in caring for their animals to apply.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[107682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to paragraph 11 of the Foreign Affairs Committee report, Flying Home: The FCO's consular response to the covid-19 pandemic, published on 28 July 2020, for what reasons British citizens stranded abroad during the covid-19 pandemic have been advised to crowdfund for support for their repatriation and have not all received support from the Government's £75 million allocated to fly people back to the UK.

**Nigel Adams:**

I was pleased to meet with the Honourable Lady on 19th October to discuss the FCDO's consular work. Advice on financial assistance for British Nationals abroad is longstanding and sets out all possible options British nationals may explore given the FCDO is not funded to provide financial assistance. We have recently reinforced to consular staff that while individuals may choose to crowdfund this is not an option we require them to explore before they seek an emergency loan to return home. The £75 million referred to was a maximum limit, not a target. We do not accept the Foreign Affairs Committee's suggestion that unspent funds meant those in need did not

receive the repatriation support that they needed. The FCDO spent against the funding limit where needed to keep HMG charter flights affordable, in particular where there were fewer British travellers and where there was a need for connecting flights or significant ground transport. Our policy meant that we subsidised flights where it was necessary.

**Hannah Bardell:**

**[107683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on what basis the decision was made to publish advice on his Department's website that British citizens stranded abroad during the covid-19 pandemic should crowdfund if they could not afford to travel back to the UK.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

Advice on financial assistance for British Nationals abroad is longstanding and sets out all possible options British nationals may explore given the FCDO is not funded to provide financial assistance. We have recently reinforced to consular staff that while individuals may choose to crowdfund this is not an option we require them to explore before they seek an emergency loan to return home.

#### ■ **British Nationals Abroad: Death**

**Hannah Bardell:**

**[108261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Foreign Affairs Committee's Third Session Report 2019-21, Flying Home: the FCO's consular response to the COVID-19 pandemic, whether the unused funds from the repatriation efforts during the covid-19 outbreak can be put towards assisting the families of British nationals who are (a) murdered or (b) die in suspicious circumstances overseas.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

The £75 million mentioned in the Foreign Affairs Committee's report was an upper spending limit agreed specifically to support repatriation operations in response to COVID-19. It was not a funding allocation and is not therefore available to other areas of consular assistance.

The FCDO provides tailored assistance to those who need our help. In addition the FCDO contributes funding, via the Ministry of Justice, to the Victim Support Homicide Service to provide support to eligible families bereaved abroad.

## ■ British Nationals Abroad: Detainees

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[107690]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of its failure to gain access to British citizens arbitrarily detained on the human rights of those citizens.

**Nigel Adams:**

Some states do not recognise dual nationality nor grant consular access to British national detainees. The UK government, in these circumstances, will press for consular access and any appropriate medical care. The welfare of British nationals arbitrarily detained overseas is a top priority for this government. We will continue to raise such cases at the appropriate level.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[107694]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Answer of 5 October 2020 to Question 97662 and Answer of 12 October 2020 to Question 99691, whether his Department has KPIs focused on the (a) overseas imprisonment of British citizens and (b) protection of British citizens from torture overseas.

**Nigel Adams:**

Consular Directorate's commitments are set out in a Customer Charter published in 'Support for British nationals abroad: A guide':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-summary>. We aim to make every effort to contact vulnerable customers within 24 hours of being notified of their situation, including those imprisoned overseas. For all British nationals seeking consular assistance, including those imprisoned or facing possible torture, we aim to provide effective assistance based on their individual circumstances and local conditions. The FCDO takes all allegations of torture or mistreatment extremely seriously. Torture prevention remains central to the FCDO's human rights work and we will continue to actively contribute to international efforts to prevent torture globally.

## ■ Cameroon: Human Rights

**Zarah Sultana:**

**[107756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to ensure an independent international fact-finding mission takes place in Cameroon to investigate allegations of human rights violations in that country.

**James Duddridge:**

The Government is deeply concerned about the situation in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon including reports of human rights abuses and violations by both armed separatists and security forces. We continue to call for investigations into all such reports. As the UK's International Ambassador for Human

Rights set out at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, those who have abused and violated human rights in Cameroon, as anywhere else in the world, must be held responsible. We regularly discuss the human rights situation with our international partners and in multilateral fora, calling for support to peacebuilding efforts and engagement by regional partners.

## ■ China: Sanctions

**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**

[\[108256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the evidence base for that country's imposition of Magnitsky sanctions on Chinese officials for the abuse of Uighur minorities in Xinjiang; and what recent assessment he has made of whether evidence against those officials meets the threshold required for imposition of UK sanctions.

**Nigel Adams:**

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated under this sanctions regime in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We are aware of the US designations under their regime, and we keep all evidence and potential listings under close review. The UK has taken a leading international role in holding China to account for its human rights violations in Xinjiang, both at the UN and by raising our concerns directly with Chinese authorities. Most recently, on 6 October, the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York expressing deep concern at the situation in Xinjiang, including the mass detention of Uyghurs in detention camps.

## ■ Department for International Trade: Private Education

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[107616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 22 October 2020 to Question 105323 on Department for International Trade: Private Education, how much funding was allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund school places for children of staff deployed overseas by other Government departments (a) overseas and (b) in the UK in 2019-20; how many school places that funding supported in total; and how those figures are broken down by Department.

**Nigel Adams:**

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.

## ■ Developing Countries: Economic Situation

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[107078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to update DFID's Economic Development Strategy to promote greater consultation with civil society and tackle the structural inequalities faced by women and girls.

**Wendy Morton:**

No decision has been taken on whether to update DFID's Economic Development Strategy in the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The former DFID's Economic Development Strategy put women and girls at the heart of the UK's approach to economic development. This included working closely with a range of civil society organisations, including local women rights groups across a range of countries. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will take advantage of our newly merged diplomatic and development capability, harnessing our strategic engagement with civil society to ensure we continue to tackle the deep structural inequities that need to be overcome so that women and girls can reach their full economic potential, including gaining equitable access to quality jobs.

## ■ Developing Countries: Health Services

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[108237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) strengthen his Department's expertise on global health and (b) help ensure effective coordination with other development partners globally.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has excellent global health expertise. Health advisers, who are accredited public health professionals, are central to delivering the FCDO's work on global health and undergo continuing professional development to strengthen their expertise. Health advisers work closely with staff across FCDO and share learning with other sector specialists (such as education and humanitarian advisers); as well as engaging with external experts to strengthen the Department's expertise.

FCDO uses its full range of health, development and diplomatic expertise to support better coordination on global health with our development partners bilaterally, and at a global level through the WHO and the wider UN system.

■ **Diplomatic Service**

**Hannah Bardell:** [\[107677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what method his Department uses to assess the vulnerability of citizens requesting consular assistance; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using a matrix approach as used by the Australian Government for that purpose.

**Nigel Adams:**

I was pleased to meet with the Hon Lady on 19th October to discuss the FCDO's consular work. Our consular staff provide tailored assistance and advice to British nationals according to the individual circumstances of each person based on the needs they have, based on who they are, where they are, and their situation. Our staff will make an assessment of the vulnerability of a British national, aiming to assess their needs promptly, making every effort to contact vulnerable British nationals within 24 hours of being notified of their situation.

■ **Diplomatic Service: Pandemics**

**Hannah Bardell:** [\[107681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is developing contingency plans to improve its (a) consular and (b) repatriation support for British nationals overseas in the event of another pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

As part of our overall approach to crisis preparedness in the FCDO, we continuously review our plans and processes to ensure that they reflect lessons learned from recent crisis responses. Our learning from the COVID-19 pandemic response has led to us increasing our capacity to plan for pandemics of this scale in the future, including the provision of consular services and the repatriation of British nationals overseas. We have set up a Repatriation Taskforce which is continuing to monitor future repatriation risk, build future FCDO capability and is able to run more charters if needed. Going forward, planning for large scale repatriations will be incorporated into the FCDO's core crisis response capability.

■ **Diplomatic Service: Passports**

**Hannah Bardell:** [\[107678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the cost of a passport contributes to his Department's budget for consular services.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

The FCDO receives a consular premium of £15.50 which represents 21% of the cost of a standard adult passport (£75.50) to fund its non-fee bearing consular services.

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[107679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the Consular premium on passports contributes to his Department's budget.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

The FCDO receives 96% of the Consular premium on passports to fund its non fee bearing consular services.

The remaining 4% is added to the Emergency Disaster Relief Fund (EDRF) and the FCDO is able to draw on the EDRF to fund its response to major crises on a cost recovery basis.

#### ■ Diplomatic Service: Sanctions

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[107607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2020 to Question 105294 on China: Embassies, what sanctions are available if a diplomatic and consulate mission fails to abide by their obligations under the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations and UK law.

**Nigel Adams:**

We expect diplomatic and consular missions in the UK to respect our laws and regulations in line with their obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and UK law. We encourage parties to any disputes to resolve differences through dialogue, but the Vienna Conventions and UK law provide for a number of sanctions, including placing limits on the size of diplomatic missions and consular posts, declaring members of the mission or consular post *persona non gratae* or not acceptable and, ultimately, breaking off diplomatic or consular relations. Questions of law relating to diplomatic, consular and state immunity are for the courts to determine.

#### ■ Diplomatic Service: Standards

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[107693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October 2020 to Question 99691, whether his assessments of satisfaction with consular services include (a) a requirement that the outsourced survey team interview a sample of British citizens imprisoned overseas or their families, (b) a minimum sample size to capture feedback from British prisoners overseas or their families and (c) disaggregated results so that his Department is able to identify and learn from the satisfaction levels expressed for that area of support.



**Nigel Adams:**

It is not a requirement that the outsourced survey team interview a sample of British citizens imprisoned overseas or their families. Rather, the FCDO and the external market research agency aim to include as wide a range as possible of case types within our customer satisfaction tracking survey. We aim to mirror the prevalence of the consular case types as far as is practicable. Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are aggregated based on the total number of consular customers surveyed and results are statistically robust. No disaggregated results are available to identify and learn from satisfaction levels expressed specifically among British nationals detained overseas, as in part because the low number of detainees precludes robust statistical reporting.

■ **Females: Education****Sarah Olney:**[\[107079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that gender equality in respect of girls' education remains a strategic priority of his Department.

**Wendy Morton:**

Advancing gender equality and women's and girls' rights are a core part of this Government's mission and Global Britain's role as a force for good in the world, including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education. The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to this agenda.

The UK outlined our commitment to gender equality and girls' education through our intervention at the High-Level meeting on the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women at UNGA at the beginning of the month. Next year we will be co-hosting the Global Partnership for Education Replenishment which will be a key step in ensuring every girl receives a quality education. We will also use our G7 Presidency to rally the international community around girls' education.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Email****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[107706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how long emails are retained by his Department for (a) civil servants, (b) special advisors and (c) Ministers.

**Nigel Adams:**

Decisions about retaining emails are based on the importance of their content, including whether they are of historical interest and need permanent preservation at The National Archives. Following the merger of DFID and FCO on 2 September 2020 to form FCDO, legacy departmental email systems remain in operation pending a wider integration of IT systems. Emails on the former DFID system are automatically retained for 90 days before deletion, though staff can decide to store important emails for longer. In the former FCO there is no automatic retention or deletion of emails.

### ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Gender

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[108293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff of his Department are working on gender-based projects.

**Nigel Adams:**

This information is not held centrally. The UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 makes a consideration of gender equality in all UK development assistance a legal requirement. The Act puts the UK ODA commitment to gender equality on a statutory footing and ensures that gender equality remains at the heart of the UK's and the FCDO's ODA work.

### ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Labour Turnover

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[107691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the (a) level and (b) target level of staff turnover was in (i) his Department and (ii) the consular directorate in (A) 2019-20 and (B) 2018-19.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) had a turnover of 5% between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, and a turnover of 7% between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and former FCO do not have a target number for turnover.

FCO employees are usually appointed in roles for an agreed number of years. The average time someone stays in a role based in the UK is 3 years. The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of employees in Consular Directorate increased by 14% in the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. In the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 the Directorate remained at the same staffing levels.

### ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Reorganisation

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[107643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 103495 on Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Reorganisation, what estimate he has made of the costs to date of the merger of his Department with the Department for International Development.

**James Duddridge:**

Work on the estimates of the costs of the merger is in hand and, as advised in my response to her previous question 103495, initial figures will be published in the FCDO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21.

**■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[107085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will wait for the publication of the Integrated Review before conducting any staffing restructures following the merger of his Department and the Department for International Development.

**James Duddridge:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was formed on 2 September and work is already underway to fully bed-in the merger, including on staff structures. This work will take account of the decision to move to a one-year Spending Review and the ongoing Integrated Review.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[107086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people were employed by his Department on 1 September 2020; and what assessment he has made of the number of employees needed to fulfil the functions of his Department.

**Nigel Adams:**

On 1 September the Foreign Secretary was responsible for 13,500-13,999 staff working for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK based & Local Staff). On the 2nd September, following the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs was responsible for 16,500-16,999 members of staff.

The future size and shape of the FCDO is yet to be established. This will be determined in coming months through the ongoing organisational design work, and the outcome of the spending review and the integrated review .

**■ G7: Health Services****Neil Coyle:**[\[108236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to use the UK's forthcoming presidency of the G7 to increase (a) investment and (b) coordination in global health systems strengthening in order to help (i) tackle covid-19 and (ii) ensure better preparation for future pandemics.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is working closely with other Government departments to define the objectives for the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021. These will be shared in due course.

Strengthening global health systems is a priority for the Government. As the Prime Minister made clear to the UN General Assembly, the UK will use its G7 Presidency to create a new global approach to health security based on a five-point plan to protect humanity against another pandemic. The 2021 UK Presidency is an opportunity to collectively support a recovery from COVID-19 and pursue our vision

for a safer, healthier and more prosperous world, including protection against future pandemics and other health threats.

## ■ Government Departments: Overseas Aid

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[107083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 4 September 2020 to Question 82256 on Government Departments: Overseas Aid, whether he currently has final sign-off of Official Development Assistance spending proposed by other Government Departments.

**James Cleverly:**

As with all public expenditure, HM Treasury allocates ODA funding to departments at each Spending Review. Final sign off of ODA spent through other Government departments rests with the Secretaries of State of those departments. The FCDO will continue to work closely with HM Treasury on overall effectiveness of ODA across Government.

## ■ Hong Kong: Human Rights

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[106894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what advice his Department has provided to businesses based in London on ensuring that their businesses do not support the abuse of human rights in Hong Kong under the provisions of the National Security Law imposed on that formerly autonomous city by the Chinese Communist Party.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are in close contact with a wide range of businesses with interests in Hong Kong, but it is for businesses themselves to make their own judgement calls. We would always advise businesses to conduct appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support, or risk being seen to be supporting, any human rights violations or abuses.

## ■ Hostage Taking

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[107692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government benchmarks its hostage recovery performance against the performance of the US and other allies; and what other steps his Department takes to assess the effectiveness of its performance in this area.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government regularly speaks to the US and other allies to share best practice and exchange information on kidnap response in order to enhance its performance.

**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[107695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 99694 on Hostage Taking, when he last made an assessment of the effectiveness of UK hostage policy; and whether that assessment was made internally or by an external evaluator.

**Nigel Adams:**

We keep all our consular policies under continual review. As set out in our guide on 'support for British nationals abroad', last updated on 26 February 2019, the UK can provide consular support to the families of British nationals kidnapped overseas, including remaining in contact with the family and keeping them up to date with the situation as far as possible. We will do everything we properly can to ensure kidnapped British nationals are released safely.

**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[107696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 99694, on what date the Government's hostage policy was last updated; and if he will place a copy of that policy in the Library.

**Nigel Adams:**

Consular policies are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. As set out in our publically available guide on 'Support for British nationals abroad', last updated 26 February 2019, the UK can provide consular support to the families of British nationals kidnapped overseas.

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

**Wayne David:**[\[108208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; and whether the Government plans to publish that review by the end of November 2020.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign Secretary has regular discussions with his cabinet colleagues on the Integrated Review. In light of the decision to move to a one-year spending review, the Government is considering the implications for the completion of the Integrated Review and will provide an update in due course.

**Wayne David:**[\[108209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy will continue to be aligned with the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review.

**James Cleverly:**

In light of the decision to move to a one-year spending review, the Government is considering the implications for the completion of the Integrated Review and will provide an update in due course.

**Sarah Champion:**[\[108234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Government's timescale is for publication of outcomes of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; and what assessment he has made of the implications for that Review's form and content of proposed changes to the term and form of the upcoming Spending Review announced on 21 October 2020.

**James Cleverly:**

In light of the decision to move to a one-year spending review, the Government is considering the implications for the completion of the Integrated Review and will provide an update in due course.

■ **Iran****Jack Lopresti:**[\[107633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to pursue a comprehensive agreement with international partners addressing Iran's (a) nuclear programme, (b) ballistic missile production, (c) human rights record and (d) involvement in financing terrorist groups.

**James Cleverly:**

We have been clear on the need to keep the diplomatic door open for talks with Iran which address in the long term our concerns about Iran's nuclear programme, its ballistic missile programme and its destabilising regional activities. We will continue to work closely with our international partners to lay the groundwork for such talks.

■ **Iran: Arms Trade****Jack Lopresti:**[\[107632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK is taking to address Iran's regional aggression since the expiry of the UN conventional arms embargo on 18 October 2020.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK did not want to see the arms embargo expire, given the major implications for security and stability in the region. We remain concerned at Iran's destabilising regional behaviour and continue to hold Iran to account for its activity in the region. We currently have over 200 EU sanctions listings in place against Iran, including against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety. We also continue to support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to non-state actors in the region, including to Lebanese Hezbollah (UNSCR 2216, Iraqi militia groups (UNSCR 1546) and the Houthis in Yemen (UNSCR 1701). The EU arms embargo on Iran remain in place as do UN ballistic missile restrictions on Iran.

We are committed to working with regional partners, the E3 and the US to find a sustainable solution to Iranian proliferation to non-state actors in the region.

■ **Iran: British Nationals Abroad**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[107689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 97664, what steps he plans to take to (a) end the seclusion of UK nationals arbitrarily detained by the Iranian authorities and (b) provide access to those UK nationals to British Embassy officials in the next six months.

**James Cleverly:**

We deplore and condemn arbitrary detention, by any state. We continue to raise such cases at the most senior levels, and discuss them at every opportunity with our Iranian counterparts. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises all of our dual national detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In all the cases we act in what we believe to be in the best interests of dual British nationals detained in Iran.

■ **Iran: Torture**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[107701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to prevent potential torture as required by the (a) UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and (b) its other obligations under international law in the cases of British citizens imprisoned in Iran.

**James Cleverly:**

We have consistently made clear our absolute opposition to torture and our determination to combat it wherever and whenever it occurs. We take all allegations and/or concerns of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of British citizens detained overseas very seriously and will follow up with action, as appropriate. Torture prevention remains central to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's human rights work and we will continue to actively contribute to international efforts to prevent torture globally.

■ **John Bunyan Fund for Freedom of Religion and Belief**

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[106963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 20 October 2020 to Questions 104086 and 104087, if his Department will publish the findings of the projects funded by the John Bunyan fund with sensitive information redacted if necessary.

**Nigel Adams:**

The authors of the reports provided them on the basis that they would not be published by the FCDO. Given the sensitivity of the topics, and the potential harm



that releasing the reports might cause to those threatened by religious intolerance, we have no plans to make the contents of the reports public.

■ **Lucie Blackman Trust**

**Hannah Bardell:**

[\[107680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the funding allocated to the Lucie Blackman Trust is to help it support families bereaved abroad in addition to cases of missing persons.

**Nigel Adams:**

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

The funding allocated to the Lucie Blackman Trust is to support missing British nationals abroad and their families; the Lucie Blackman Trust has not received funding from the FCDO to support families bereaved abroad.

■ **Myanmar: Sanctions**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[108235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which of the 16 people from Burma who appear on the UK Government's sanctions list have had their assets frozen by the UK Government.

**Nigel Adams:**

Across two financial sanctions regimes, the UK has targeted sanctions in place on 16 individuals from Myanmar for their role in atrocities against Rohingya and other minorities. These sanctions place obligations on those who hold or control assets to freeze the assets in place. Funds and economic resources must be frozen immediately by the person in possession or control of them. An asset freeze does not involve a change in ownership of frozen funds or economic resources, nor are they confiscated by the UK Government.

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), part of HM Treasury, publishes details of frozen assets reported to it in its Annual Review. However this figure is provided on an aggregate basis so as not to disclose the value of funds held by particular individuals, in compliance with data protection law.

■ **Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict**

**Catherine West:**

[\[107069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterparts in (a) Armenia and (b) Azerbaijan on the use of cluster munitions and heavy artillery in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are aware that there are allegations of the use of cluster munitions and heavy artillery in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I spoke to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister

on 15 October and highlighted continued UK concern over the escalation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and strongly condemned all targeting of civilian areas and the increasing numbers of civilian casualties. I also spoke to the Armenian Foreign Minister on 19 October where I delivered the same messages. The UK continues to urge de-escalation and a return to the negotiating table.

**Patrick Grady:**

**[108248]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish a response to EDM 717 on Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan tabled by the hon. Member for Harrow East.

**Wendy Morton:**

The situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan is complex and the UK deeply regrets the loss of life. We do not believe that apportioning blame will assist in resolving the conflict. The UK Government has made its position regarding the current outbreak of hostilities clear; a military solution is not possible and only a negotiated peaceful settlement will resolve the situation.

■ **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[107688]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 5 and 8 October 2020 to Questions 97665 and 97664 respectively, when the Government formally asserted its right to consular access in the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

**James Cleverly:**

We have made numerous formal requests for consular access to Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and we will continue to do so, keeping the language in our Notes Verbales to the Iranian authorities under review. However, Iran does not recognise dual nationality nor grant consular access to dual-nationals; even while on furlough, the authorities continue to treat her as an Iranian national only. We continue to raise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case at the highest levels, and discuss this at every opportunity with our Iranian counterparts.

■ **Nigeria: Human Rights**

**Gavin Robinson:**

**[107007]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of imposing sanctions against Nigeria in the event of the continuation of human rights abuses against people in that country.

**James Duddridge:**

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 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.

## ■ Nigeria: Violence

**Gavin Robinson:**

[\[107006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of (a) recent unrest in Nigeria and (b) reported abuses being conducted by the special anti-robbery squad.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government is deeply concerned by reports of widespread violence during recent protests in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria, including horrific reports of protestors being killed. We are following events closely and offer 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 also tweeted on 21 October to urge the Nigerian Government to restore peace and address concerns about brutality towards civilians. The British High Commissioner in Abuja has raised the protests with representatives of the Nigerian Government. I expressed my concern over recent violence in Nigeria to Foreign Minister Onyeama on 23 October.

The Nigerian security services must uphold human rights and the rule of law in all operations, investigate any incidents of brutality towards civilians and hold those responsible to account. We will continue to work with the Nigerian Government and international and civil society partners to support justice, accountability and a more responsive policing model in Nigeria.

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[107773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Nigerian counterpart on (a) violence committed by (a) the special anti-robbery squad and (b) other police forces.

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[107774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Nigerian counterpart on potential human rights violations in that country by police during operations to limit demonstrations; and if he will make a statement.

**James Duddridge:**

The Government is deeply concerned by violence during protests in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria, including reports of protestors being killed. Our condolences go to the families of all 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. I also tweeted on 21 October urging the Nigerian Government to restore peace and address concerns about brutality towards civilians. I reiterated the UK's concerns when I [Minister Duddridge] 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.

We will continue to push the Nigerian police to uphold human rights and the rule of law in all operations. We will also continue to urge the Nigerian authorities to investigate allegations of police brutality, illegal detentions and assaults, and hold those responsible to account.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[107084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the postponement of the three year Comprehensive Spending Review on the setting of his Department's development priorities.

**James Cleverly:**

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

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[108238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure greater coordination of the UK's overseas development budget (a) on global health research and development with the Department for (i) Health and Social Care and the (ii) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) across Government Departments, more widely.

**James Cleverly:**

Our officials work closely with colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), as well as with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Wellcome Trust and other organisations, to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of the UK Government's global health research and development portfolios.

Coordination is facilitated through higher level bodies. Examples include the Strategic Coherence of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funded Research (SCOR) Board that includes senior representatives from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, DHSC, BEIS, UKRI and Wellcome; and the Global Health Oversight Group that brings together senior officials from departments across Government to oversee the UK's ODA to health. Similar boards exist in other sectors that the UK Government works in internationally. A Ministerial oversight group, chaired by the Foreign Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, mirrored

by a senior officials' oversight group, oversees UK ODA from Whitehall. At country level, departments work closely together.

## ■ **Palestinians: Human Rights**

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[107649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of Israel's refusal to grant visas for officials of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the monitoring of human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[107650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Israeli counterpart on Israel's refusal to grant visas for officials of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights wishing to enter the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

**James Cleverly:**

We are aware of the difficulties officials of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have faced in renewal of the visas necessary to remain in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The UK, alongside international partners, raised our concern with the Government of Israel on 26 October. The UK also raised this issue with the Mission of Israel to the UN in Geneva on 8 September. We call upon the Government of Israel to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and the OPTs. We continue to make clear that a strong, vibrant civil society is in Israel's own interest. As a friend of Israel, we would be concerned by any developments that may undermine this commitment.

## ■ **Saudi Arabia: Detainees**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[107612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take diplomatic steps to make Saudi Arabia's participation in the upcoming virtual G20 summit conditional upon the release of (a) Prince Turki bin Abdullah, (b) Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and (c) other political detainees in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

Our close relationship with Saudi Arabia allows us to raise our concerns about human rights, including on political detainees, in private and in public. We have expressed significant concerns about reports of continuing arrests and arbitrary detentions in Saudi Arabia. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September. It called for the release of all political detainees, and noted concern over reports of torture and arbitrary detention. We continue to raise concerns at all levels and we are monitoring the ongoing situation closely.

The G20 Leaders' Summit is likely to focus on health, the global economic recovery and wider global challenges (including climate change, trade and development). It is

a key part of international planning for a sustainable recovery from coronavirus. As current G20 President, Saudi Arabia will play a vital role in coordinating the global health and economic response. We hope that the international platform provided by the G20 Presidency encourages continued progress on domestic reforms.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[108278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking in response to reports of the detention and ill-treatment by Saudi authorities of people accused of cooperating or seeking to cooperate with the United Nations.

**James Cleverly:**

We are monitoring the situation closely. We have expressed concern about reports of continuing arrests and arbitrary detentions of human rights defenders in Saudi Arabia. In July, I met with the Head of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, Dr Awwad al-Awwad, to discuss our human rights concerns. Lord Ahmad also discussed our concerns with Dr al-Awwad in June. The Foreign Secretary raised human rights during his visit in March this year. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September. It called for the release of all political detainees, and noted concern over reports of torture and arbitrary detention. Saudi Arabia remains a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office human rights priority country.

## ■ Saudi Arabia: Human Rights

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[\[107611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of (a) the UK not participating in the G20 summit in Saudi Arabia in response to that country's human rights record and (b) making the UK's participation contingent on the release of women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK will participate in the G20 Summit, which is likely to focus on health, the global economic recovery and wider global challenges (including climate change, trade and development). It is a key part of international planning for a sustainable recovery from coronavirus. As current G20 President, Saudi Arabia will play a vital role in coordinating the global health and economic response. We hope that the international platform provided by the G20 Presidency encourages continued progress on domestic reforms.

Our close relationship with Saudi Arabia allows us to raise our concerns about human rights, including on political detainees, in private and in public. We have expressed significant concerns about reports of continuing arrests and arbitrary detentions in Saudi Arabia. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September. It deeply regretted the continued detention of at least five women's human rights defenders, arrested in 2018, and called for the release of all political

detainees. We continue to raise concerns at all levels and we are monitoring the ongoing situation closely.

## ■ South America: Climate Change

**Catherine West:**

**[107070]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional steps the Government is taking to work with partners in south America to help protect the Amazon rainforest and work together on climate change.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK is engaging with international partners to ensure momentum and ambitious, collective action on climate ahead of a rescheduled COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. As part of the UK's COP26 Presidency we are working with Chile, the current COP Presidency, to call on all countries to submit new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that represent their highest possible climate ambition. Tackling climate change remains a high priority for this Government. The Prime Minister has committed to double the UK's International Climate Finance funding to at least £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26. In South America, the UK is one of the leading donors of climate finance. The UK runs major programmes on sustainable agriculture and deforestation with stakeholders in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru, and has committed £120 million to Partnerships for Forests, a programme which supports sustainable businesses which create jobs and protect forests. This programme operates in a number of locations, including the Amazon region.

The Foreign Secretary recently raised the issue of climate change and the need to protect the Amazon rainforest with his Brazilian counterpart. We are keen to work with our South American partners to protect natural systems, like rainforest, which are on the front-line of the fight against climate change, and on the transition to sustainable land use, which is critical to raising the next 1.5 billion people globally from poverty. It is vital to ensure that our land-use, agriculture and fisheries management policies adapt so that our ecosystems can continue to support people and biodiversity. To this end, the UK has been working with a number of countries to create an ambitious 'Leaders' Pledge for Nature'. This Pledge commits leaders to take ten urgent actions to put biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. So far, 78 countries have signed the Pledge, including Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay, and Peru.

In August 2020, the Government launched a consultation seeking views on whether it should introduce a requirement on larger business using forest risk commodities to undertake due diligence on their supply chains. The consultation attracted over 60,000 responses, which we are analysing carefully. We will publish the Government's response to the consultation shortly.



**■ Sri Lanka: Military Aid****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[107092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason his Department has not released a full copy of the file FCO 37/3978 Involvement of UK companies training Sri Lankan security forces, 1985.

**Nigel Adams:**

This file has been reviewed under the Public Records Act and has been transferred to The National Archives (TNA). The file is currently held closed at TNA on grounds of sensitivity under Freedom of Information Act exemptions. The FCDO only withholds information from release under the Public Records Act in line with legal exemptions.

**■ Sri Lanka: Private Military and Security Companies****Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[107093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has provided access to the Metropolitan Police war crimes team access to the file FCO 37/3978 for its investigation into the activities of British mercenaries in Sri Lanka in the 1980s.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO has shared the full contents of this file with the Metropolitan Police in the context of this investigation.

**■ Torture: British Nationals Abroad****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[107700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to cases of torture of British citizens imprisoned overseas, what legal obligations the UK has to take action to prevent further torture under the (a) European Convention on Human Rights and (b) UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment.

**Nigel Adams:**

There is an absolute prohibition of torture in international law, including Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment. It is so fundamental a principle of international law that it is accepted by states as a norm from which no derogation is permitted even if a state has not ratified a treaty prohibiting torture. We have consistently made clear our absolute opposition to such behaviour and our determination to combat it wherever and whenever it occurs. We take all allegations and/or concerns of torture and CIDT of British citizens detained overseas very seriously and will follow up with action, as appropriate. Torture prevention remains central to the FCDO's human rights work and we will continue to actively contribute to international efforts to prevent torture globally.

## ■ Turkey: Armenia

**Sammy Wilson:**

[\[107627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether Turkish forces have been involved in recent attacks on the civilian population in Armenia.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK has not seen any evidence that Turkish forces have been involved in attacks on civilian populations in Armenia. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu on 19 October. Both parties agreed the need for de-escalation.

## ■ Yemen: Politics and Government

**Anna McMorris:**

[\[107096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen will be discussed as part of the agenda for the G20 summit.

**James Cleverly:**

The G20 Leaders' Summit agenda has yet to be finalised. It is likely to focus on health, the global economic recovery and climate change. The UK continues to raise the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen in multiple multilateral fora.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Bowel Cancer: Screening

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

[\[97473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the extension of bowel cancer screening to people aged over 50 is planned to begin.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England agree that a phased approach is required to safely introduce the lowering of the starting age for bowel screening from 60 to 50, allowing capacity and resources (financial, facilities and accredited workforce) to be built into the system.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement is currently undertaking detailed modelling to assess endoscopy capacity and demand within the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme, which will inform decisions about the timing and implementation of the age extension.

**■ Cancer: Diagnosis****Munira Wilson:****[82473]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what effect the covid-19 outbreak will have on his plans to implement the NHS Long Term Plan with respect to (a) Rapid Diagnostic Centres for cancer and (b) the 28 day cancer diagnosis standard.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have set out guiding principles in re-establishing NHS Long Term Plan programmes, prioritising delivery of Long Term Plan commitments that also support recovery - focusing on activities increasing early diagnosis and survival rates such as Rapid Diagnostic Centres.

The Faster Diagnosis Standard is being tested as part of the wider, clinically-led review of National Health Service access standards. Timelines for the review have been impacted by COVID-19, and updates will be provided in due course.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing activities that support ambitions with minimal system impact/burden - including activities such as the Quality of Life metric surveys to track and respond to the long-term impact of cancer, and prioritising delivery of activities that have a significant impact on Long Term Plan ambitions – including projects such as Targeted Lung Health Checks, and personalised stratified follow up.

**■ Care Homes: Coronavirus****Theresa Villiers:****[45035]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care home (a) workers and (b) residents have been tested for covid-19 over the last two weeks.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not routinely publish information on the number of care home staff and residents who have been tested for COVID-19 at present, but we are exploring the feasibility of including this information as part of the NHS Test and Trace Statistics publications in the near future.

**Rachael Maskell:****[46728]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to require care homes to publish data on the number and proportion of their residents that (a) have been tested for covid-19, (b) returned a positive test, (c) have died and (b) were admitted to the care home with a positive covid-19 test since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department will not make it a requirement for care homes to publish data on COVID-19 testing, as this would create a burden on them to manage an additional process at a time when many care homes are already facing substantial extra challenges to care for their residents during this pandemic.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[67538]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for (a) patients and (b) staff in care homes to receive their test results for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not hold data on turnaround times for tests broken down in this format.

Since the beginning of September, the median time taken to receive a test result from satellite test centres has decreased from 102 hours to 59 hours.

Symptomatic care home staff are able to access testing via a number of routes such as home testing, and information on the turnaround times for these is available as part of the weekly NHS Test and Trace Statistics Publication, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports>

## ■ **Community Care: Coronavirus**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[103474]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons he has not yet answered Question 96963 on Community Care: Coronavirus, tabled on 29 September 2020; when he plans to respond to that Question; if he will make it his policy to begin regular repeat covid-19 tests for (a) occupational therapists, (b) audiology specialists and (c) other health professionals who visit care homes; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

I answered Question [96963](#) on 16 October 2020.

We are currently running a pilot to test professionals who visit care homes weekly in Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. This includes all professionals that visit care homes two or more times a week and where carrying out their role requires them to be within one metre of residents.

We will use the data from this pilot to consider the next steps for testing health and social care professionals who visit care homes and we will continue to review our social care testing strategy in light of the latest evidence and available capacity.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Birmingham**

**Shabana Mahmood:**

**[67601]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many confirmed covid-19 cases have been recorded under (a) pillar 1 and (b) pillar 2 testing for the city of Birmingham metropolitan borough.

**Alison McGovern:**

[67631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many confirmed covid-19 cases have been recorded under (a) pillar 1 and (b) pillar 2 testing for the borough of Wirral on each day since records began.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[67639]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many confirmed covid-19 cases were recorded under (a) Pillar 1 and (b) Pillar 2 testing strands in the Newcastle City Council area on each day since records began.

**Wes Streeting:**

[67709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many confirmed covid-19 cases were recorded under (a) pillar 1 and (b) pillar 2 testing for the London Borough of Redbridge on each day since records began.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[67732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will urgently publish Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 data for daily confirmed covid-19 cases in Birmingham.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2020]:* All upper tier local authorities have access to record level (including sex, age, occupation and postcode) test and case data. We also publish public dashboards at a national, regional and local authority level and the Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) map, which allows individuals to type in a postcode to find their MSOA and see how many cases there are in small areas of around 7,000 people

Data on the 7 day average for the number of people with COVID-19 identified through an NHS lab (Pillar 1) or from commercial swab testing (Pillar 2) back to March 2020 is available as part of the NHS Digital Progression Dashboard to upper tier local authority level and is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/dashboards/progression>

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Alison McGovern:**

[98958]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the National COVID-19 surveillance report: 2 October 2020 (week 40) published by Public Health England on 2 October 2020, what the weekly case rate per 100,000 cases by Index of Multiple Deprivation decile was in that reporting period; and if he will include data in that format in future covid-19 surveillance reports.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* The national COVID-19 surveillance report published on 2 October included graphs of weekly COVID-19 case rate per 100,000 population by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile and age group (10-39 year

olds). The weekly COVID-19 case rate per 100,000 population by IMD quintile for week 39 (between 21 and 27 September 2020) is shown in the following table.

There is no longer a COVID-19 surveillance report but IMD quantiles will be included in the slide set accompanying the new combined flu and COVID-19 report, which published weekly.

COVID-19 case rate per 100,000 by IMD quintile in 10 to 39 year olds, in England

	IMD Q1	IMD Q2	IMD Q3	IMD Q4	IMD Q5
10 to 16 years	10.09	5.84	4.65	3.90	3.40
17 to 19 years	18.84	24.23	24.38	23.37	25.83
20 to 29 years	17.43	12.66	11.93	12.01	13.13
30 to 39 years	15.51	9.44	7.85	7.06	5.86

Source: The data is based on the latest surveillance report, which can be found at the following link:

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

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Dr Luke Evans:**

**[102189]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to expand laboratory capacity for covid-19 testing in (a) Leicestershire and (b) the rest of England.

**Helen Whately:**

We have rapidly built the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history from scratch since the pandemic began. Our laboratories are processing more than 1 million tests a week and we recently announced the addition of new Lighthouse laboratories in Charnwood, Newcastle and Bracknell. The latest and fifth addition – the Newport lab – is already live and is taking samples and operates alongside labs at Milton Keynes, Alderley Park, Glasgow and Cambridge.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[41069]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the next steps set out on page 14 of his Department's policy paper of 4 April 2020, Coronavirus (COVID-19): scaling up testing programmes, what progress has been made on implementing those next steps.

**Helen Whately:**

Following the publication of the Department's Testing Strategy, 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): scaling up testing programmes', there has been significant progress against the objectives set out as next steps, including achieving delivering 100,000 swab tests per day by the end of April.

The Department has ensured that the National Health Service uses its spare capacity to test its staff and has rolled out a commercial swab testing programme that is now testing hundreds of thousands of people a day.

We have now delivered over 2.3 million antibody tests to NHS staff and patients and continue to evaluate lateral flow style antibody tests for home use should that be appropriate.

**Chi Onwurah:** [45178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the scientific human resource requirements necessary to support a significant increase in covid-19 testing.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department has made assessments of the resource allocations across the testing programme needed to increase testing capacity and support the Government's ambition that anyone who needs a test can get one. This has included discussing staff prioritisation across a range of organisations supporting the programme, recruiting staff and volunteers and seeking further support from the academic and life sciences sectors.

Anyone who is able to support the Government's programme to increase testing capacity, including offers of laboratory capacity should submit their offers via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-the-government-increase-coronavirus-covid-19-testing-capacity>

**Rosie Cooper:** [48333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether tests for covid-19 that have exceeded the recommended time-frame for results are recorded as clinical incidents.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* Later than expected delivery of test results i.e. exceeded the 'within 24 to 48 hour of test booking' target are reported as clinical incidents if one of the below two conditions applies:

- Aged samples – where an incident causes a delay to the testing of a sample, but a result was achieved.
- Voids – where a result cannot be achieved from a sample for reasons including that the sample has become too old.

**Caroline Lucas:** [48383]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS laboratory capacity for covid-19 testing is being used at maximum capacity; whether all NHS laboratories seeking reagent to fulfil their maximum testing capacity are able to source sufficient reagent; and if he will make a statement.



**Helen Whately:**

National Health Service pathology laboratories play a vital role in our ability to test for not only COVID-19 but a range of other conditions. There is a balance to be struck between using NHS laboratories at maximum capacity and ensuring the continuity of other pathology testing and this will be discussed with NHS trusts when they request additional supplies.

**Afzal Khan:**[\[53612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure all covid-19 testing centres have access to adequate supplies of test swab sticks.

**Helen Whately:**

Swab supply has not been a limiting factor in the national testing programme. A swab sourcing team in NHS Test and Trace has been working for months with many international manufacturers of swabs and, in tandem, have identified and are working closely with a number of United Kingdom-based manufacturers who have increased capacity significantly since the start of the crisis.

This approach is ensuring we have sustainable supplies going forward. Saliva testing is also being explored as an alternative sample collection method that will likely give additional supply options and capacity.

**Afzal Khan:**[\[53614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase covid-19 testing capacity in hospitals.

**Helen Whately:**

Efforts are being made to increase the total capacity of National Health Service testing through the availability of testing kits and reagents needed to process them, as well as the investigation of new technologies such as rapid, point of care testing capabilities.

**Hilary Benn:**[\[67551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) total number and (b) the rolling average number of positive (i) pillar 1 and (ii) pillar 2 covid-19 tests has been in the (A) LS1, (B) LS2, (C) LS6, (D) LS7, (E) LS9, (F) LS10 and (G) LS11 postcodes in each of the last eight weeks.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2020]:* All upper tier local authorities have access to record level (including sex, age, occupation and postcode) test and case data. Postcode level data is sensitive as there is a risk of disclosing the health information of individuals, and as such we do not have plans to provide public, postcode level data at this time

We do however publish public dashboards at a national, regional and local authority level and the Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) map, which allows individuals

to type in a postcode to find their MSOA and see how many cases there are in small areas of around 7,000 people

Data on the seven-day average for the number of people with COVID-19 identified through an NHS lab (Pillar 1) or from commercial swab testing (Pillar 2) back to March 2020 is available as part of the NHS Digital Progression Dashboard to upper tier local authority level and is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/dashboards/progression>

**Justin Madders:**

**[91077]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average distance travelled by people to access a covid-19 test has been in each week since 3 August 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* The Government does not publish data in the format requested.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: South Yorkshire**

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[R] [87552]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) availability of covid-19 tests for (b) average distance travelled to receive a covid-19 test and (c) average waiting time for results to be received by residents in (i) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (ii) Doncaster Council (iii) Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and (iv) Sheffield City Council.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 14 September 2020]:* The Government has put in place the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. We do not publish testing data in the format requested, however our laboratories are processing more than 1 million tests a week and we recently announced new facilities and technology to process results even faster and to ensure capacity. We have developed capacity to almost 350,000 swab tests a day and we are scaling this capacity up to 500,000 tests a day by the end of October. The median distance to in-person testing sites for booked tests has now decreased to 3.3 miles and 90% of people who book a test at a test centre live 14.8 miles or less away. For week commencing 10 October 67.9% of test results were received the day after the test was taken an increase from 60.8% the previous week.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: York**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[86098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that a walk-in covid-19 testing centre is located in York, before the university term commences, in order to respond to the expected demand for testing from students.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 10 September 2020]:* We have quickly established walk-through sites and deployed mobile test sites so that almost all universities are within 1.5 miles of an in-person test site allowing staff and students to access tests should they develop symptoms. There is a local testing centre at Wentworth Way Carpark at the University of York and a regional testing centre at Poppleton Bar Park and Ride.

It is important that university staff and students only get a test if they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

**■ Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards****Gareth Johnson:**[\[104095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many manufacturers, distributors and importers of e-cigarette products provided data on any adverse effects linked to their products, following the request for that data by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in October 2019; and what proportion that accounted for of all notified e-cigarettes and refill containers.

**Gareth Johnson:**[\[104096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what enforcement action he has taken against (a) manufacturers, (b) distributors and (c) importers of e-cigarette products for alleged non-compliance with Article 39 vigilance requirements in the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 and non-reporting of adverse effects in relation to their products, since the October 2019 request by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

**Gareth Johnson:**[\[104097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what level of funding has been allocated to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to support enforcement actions related to the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

In October 2019, in light of the emerging suspected cases of e-cigarette or vaping associated lung injury in the United States, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) requested data from 513 producers of nicotine containing e-liquid listed on the United Kingdom notified products list. The request was for information relating to any suspected respiratory adverse reaction in association with their products.

Overall 275 responses were received, covering approximately 72% of notified products. Seventeen producers confirmed they had received reports and provided data. This resulted in the addition of 125 cases of adverse respiratory reactions to the MHRA database of suspected adverse reaction reports to e-cigarette products.

**■ Health Services: Homelessness****Scott Benton:** [\[102944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the increased use of digital health appointments on people who are homeless.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Local initiatives are in place to address digital barriers to access remote services, including access for the most excluded citizens. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local service providers to ensure the homeless have access to the right healthcare and support including registering with a general practitioner and access to mental health services. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working with Groundswell to understand the experiences of people who are homeless, in order to drive improvements in the services they receive.

**■ Hearing Impairment: Coronavirus****Jonathan Gullis:** [\[104203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring public health communications on covid-19 are accessible to deaf and hard of hearing communities across the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department has been working with the Cabinet Office Disability Unit throughout the pandemic to ensure public health communications on COVID-19 are accessible, including to deaf people and those with hearing loss.

For example, the Government established British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation at the daily Number 10 press conferences via the BBC News channel and iPlayer.

The Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre also provides a range of Government advice and public health information in alternative formats such as BSL, to download free of charge.

**■ Hospital Beds: Private Sector****Karin Smyth:** [\[97625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of using private sector beds during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Karin Smyth:** [\[97627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what consultations will take place with local NHS acute care providers before any new contracts for private sector beds are signed.

**Edward Argar:**

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

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

The addition of around 6,500 additional beds has increased NHS capacity and ensured that facilities are available for patients diagnosed with COVID-19 whilst ensuring continuity of service for non-COVID patients requiring elective activity, including cancer and other urgent treatment. Latest collected information shows that over 215,000 patient contacts had taken place under the contract.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[98993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with local authorities in England on the adequacy of the availability of flu vaccinations.

**Jo Churchill:**

Regional NHS England and NHS Improvement teams involve all relevant local stakeholders in the planning and delivery of the flu programme each season including representatives from local authorities. The Directors of Public Health and their teams in each local authority, are included in discussions about the annual flu programme and receive regular updates and assurance in relation to flu vaccination uptake for their local population.

## ■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[99624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will implement the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report entitled First Do No Harm, published on 8 July 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

All recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully. The Government will provide an update in due course.

## ■ Mental Health Services

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[96808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken to implement the (a) recommendation to increase the availability of talking therapies as an alternative to psychiatric medication and (b) other recommendations of Public Health England's Prescribed medicines review report, published in September 2019; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* The most appropriate form of treatment is a matter for clinicians and patients, based on each patient's individual clinical circumstances.

Over 1 million people with mental health conditions are now accessing psychological and talking therapies through Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services each year. Under the NHS Long Term Plan, our ambition is that an additional 380,000 people per year will be able to access National Institute for Health and Care Excellence-approved IAPT therapies by 2023/24.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has established a group, chaired by the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer and the Primary Care Medical Director, to oversee implementation of the recommendations for the NHS from Public Health England's prescribed medicines review, on dependence forming prescription medicines. Further consideration is being given on wider engagement with patient groups, charities and people with lived experience, alongside clinical experts, professional bodies and Royal Colleges, including the potential for a separate advisory stakeholder group to support development and implementation.

### ■ NHS: Coronavirus

**Jon Trickett:**

**[90042]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the letter of 24 March 2020 from NHS England and NHS Improvement entitled COVID-19: Partnership working with the Independent Sector Providers and the Independent Healthcare Providers Network, what the cost to the public purse has been of NHS agreements with Independent Sector Providers to secure all available inpatient capacity and resource; and what estimate he has made of the (a) cost to the public purse and (b) size of the unused capacity and resource secured.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* National Health Service patients are benefitting from an unprecedented partnership with private hospitals as we battle the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked with the independent sector to secure all appropriate inpatient capacity and other resource across England.

The addition of around 6,500 additional beds has increased NHS capacity and ensured that facilities are available for patients diagnosed with COVID-19 whilst ensuring continuity of service for non-COVID-19 patients requiring elective activity, including cancer and other urgent treatment.

Under the agreement, latest figures show that from 30 March until 30 August 2020 over 967,000 NHS patient appointments have taken place within independent facilities at an estimated cost of approximately £1 billion.

It is not possible to estimate the cost to the public purse and size of the unused capacity and resource secured.

## ■ NHS: Cybercrime

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[92740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recent suspected ransomware attack on a hospital in Dusseldorf, what assessment he has made of the NHS's ability to withstand a cyber attack.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* Thanks to over £250 million of investment nationally by 2021, the cyber maturity and security posture of National Health Service organisations has increased over the past three years and continues to do so. Cyber attacks, including ransomware attacks, remain a major risk for the NHS and the cyber programme we have implemented has a strong focus on managing that risk.

We are using the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) to assess cyber security performance at an organisation level, and this information is collated nationally to help inform policy and investment decisions. The DSPT helps organisations understand their data and cyber security risks and encourages the inclusion of cyber security in business continuity planning.

We are also helping NHS organisations increase their preparedness to recover from successful cyber attacks. During the COVID-19 response period, we have put in place additional cyber security protection for the NHS, including additional incident response capacity, a rapid remediation programme, and enhancements to the NHS Digital Cyber Security Operations Centre to increase monitoring.

## ■ Ovarian Cancer

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[82471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle delays to (a) diagnostic referrals and (b) courses of treatment for ovarian cancer as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Health Service's recovery approach is looking to restore urgent cancer referrals and treatment to at least pre-pandemic levels, including the 62-day pathway, and ensure sufficient capacity is available to manage increased demands in the future.

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

## ■ Prisons: Coronavirus

**Mr David Lammy:**

[\[96769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many prisoners have been taken to hospital as a result of covid-19; and how many are being ventilated.



**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We do not hold information in the format requested.

**Schools: Coronavirus****Afzal Khan:**[\[53595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to ensure that covid-19 tests provided for children returning to school have a 24-hour turnaround time.

**Helen Whately:**

As part of the Government's commitment to reopening schools, all schools in England have been provided with a small number of home testing kits to be offered in the exceptional circumstance that a school believes a symptomatic pupil or staff member will not get a test by another route.

Anyone experiencing symptoms can access a free test at a testing site or at home via the online booking portal or by calling 119. This includes all pupils, teachers and staff. The majority (about 70%) of those taking an in person test at mobile testing units, walk-throughs and drive-through testing sites received results the next day after the test was taken.

Staff and students should only request a test if they develop one or more of the main COVID-19 symptoms.

**Screening: Coronavirus****Mike Amesbury:**[\[89831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for the 25 per cent of covid-19 nationally which originates from the North West region of that region having access to 15 per cent of national covid-19 testing capacity.

**Helen Whately:**

Our approach to testing is guided by the latest scientific advice. We are targeting testing capacity at the areas that need it most, including those where there is an outbreak, and prioritising at-risk groups. Where there is an outbreak, we are working intensively to curb the spread, giving local areas dedicated ring-fenced teams from the national NHS Test and Trace service.

**Surgical Mesh Implants: Compensation****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[99538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June 2020 to Question 55665 on Surgical Mesh Implants, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review's recommendation that a redress agency be established to administer compensation to those affected by surgical meshes.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

All recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully. The Government will provide an update in due course.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Antisocial Behaviour: Coronavirus****Colleen Fletcher:****[107008]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the levels of anti-social behaviour incidents in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps her Department is taking to tackle anti-social behaviour.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The ONS published their 'Coronavirus and crime' report on 26 August, which included a section on perceptions of crime, the police and anti-social behaviour. The report noted that 20% of adults in England and Wales reported experiencing or witnessing ASB locally in the last three months, while a similar proportion (21%) perceived ASB levels in their local area to have decreased during the pandemic period. A regional assessment was not included.

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour. We recognise the impact that persistent anti-social behaviour can have on victims. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour. These powers and tools continue to be applicable during this time.

**■ Asylum: Coronavirus****Tim Farron:****[106940]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make permanent the change introduced as a result of the covid-19 outbreak which permits new asylum claims to be submitted electronically.

**Chris Philp:**

To help reduce the potential spread of Covid 19, in March 2020 the Home Office placed a temporary suspension on the long-standing requirement for fresh asylum claims to be submitted in person in Liverpool. The suspension was brought in as a measure to reduce travel and direct contacts between applicants and officials. It was permitted instead for evidence relating to a fresh claim to be submitted electronically or through the post.

There are no current plans to make the suspension on in-person appointments for fresh asylum claims a permanent arrangement. The situation is kept under regular

review, though it is not expected that in-person appointments will resume in the near future.

**Tim Farron:**

**[106941]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she make permanent the change introduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak which permits the registration of in-country initial asylum claims in six regional locations.

**Chris Philp:**

We take the wellbeing of asylum claimants extremely seriously and have put in place a range of measures to register asylum claims in a safe way for claimants and officials in response to COVID 19.

Asylum in the UK should continue to be sought at the first available opportunity, this means on arrival, at a port of entry. For those who have failed to claim on arrival, or whose circumstances have changed since arrival, can lodge a claim at an in-country location – this is usually by appointment at the Asylum Intake Unit (AIU) in Croydon.

The asylum registration process requires the enrolment of biometrics (photographs and fingerprints) to complete immigration and security checks against Home Office systems. This process requires attendance in person and cannot be undertaken remotely.

The AIU in Croydon has continued operate throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, however in line with Government COVID 19 guidance and restrictions, additional regional locations have been temporarily introduced to ensure asylum seekers are able to safely register their claims. The asylum screening and registration process has been temporarily abridged to minimise in person contact and limit travel required but remains under ongoing review. The AIU and the regional registration locations all facilitate social distancing for the safety of claimants and officials.

**Tim Farron:**

**[106942]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the electronic submission of accompanying evidence for asylum applications electronically will continue at the conclusion of 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: Employment

**Tim Farron:**

[\[106939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 100340 on Asylum: Employment, when she plans to (a) complete and (b) publish the review on asylum seeker right to work.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue. A review of the policy is ongoing, and we are considering the evidence put forward on the issue. The findings of the review will be announced once the work has been completed.

## ■ Asylum: Mobile Phones

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[107004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers entering at the UK border do not have their mobile (a) photos and (b) contacts seized by border authorities without the owner of the device receiving a copy of that information.

**Chris Philp:**

Organised crime groups involved in immigration crime are highly exploitative of vulnerable adults and children, charging large sums of money for their illegal services.

This revenue is often used to fund other forms of criminality. Phones are seized to gather evidence to establish Organised Crime Group links. The dismantlement of these Organised Crime Groups is essential to protect vulnerable migrants. Where there is no requirement to retain the mobile phone for evidential purposes, they are returned to the owner.

## ■ Asylum: Penally

**Nia Griffith:**

[\[106928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that accommodation for asylum seekers at the Penally training camp is covid-19 secure.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office has sought Public Health advice on how we can make best use of this accommodation, working within the constraints of the configuration, whilst minimising risks from Covid-19.

Risk mitigations include limiting occupancy in dormitories ensuring a minimum distance between beds of at least 2 metres. This is complemented by a range of additional safety measures including increased cleaning of surfaces, availability of hand sanitisers, a track and trace system and communications with residents around covid-19 control measures.

Asylum seekers will have the same access to testing as the general population.

The Home Office's contractor has an outbreak management plan which will be enacted if we experience an outbreak.

**Nia Griffith:**

**[106929]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how long her Department plans to use Penally training camp for the provision of accommodation to asylum seekers.

**Chris Philp:**

In recent months we have faced additional challenges which have required us in some instances to use temporary accommodation, including hotels, to fulfil our statutory obligations to house destitute asylum seekers whilst their claims are examined.

This accommodation is contingency accommodation. Our ambition is to house asylum seekers within the asylum estate without the need for contingency accommodation. We are working to address the issues putting pressure on our asylum accommodation including resuming cessation of support for those whose cases have been decided. This frees up accommodation for new claimants and allows us to reduce our use of contingency measures.

The Ministry of Defence has given permission to use the site for up to 12 months; this facility will be temporary, and we will discontinue it as soon as we are able.

**Nia Griffith:**

**[106930]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional resources her Department will provide to Dyfed Powys police in response to increased activity at the Penally training camp.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office is working on the same principle as in other asylum seeker accommodation where additional funds are not provided. However, in terms of additional policing demands, any force facing significant additional costs as a result of unplanned or unexpected events can apply for additional funding from the Police Special Grant.

## ■ Asylum: South Northamptonshire

**Andrea Leadsom:**

**[106332]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many appeals rights exhausted asylum seekers are being housed in South Northamptonshire; and at what cost to the taxpayer.

**Chris Philp:**

The number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential so we do not provide this information, however, total asylum spends are published as part of transparency data <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

■ **British National (Overseas): Hong Kong**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

[R] [\[107610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to bring forward legislative proposals to enact the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa announced on 22 October 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) Visa route will open from 31 January, and will allow BN(O)s and their family members to come to the UK to live, work and study.

The Immigration Rules for the route were put before Parliament on 22 October which set out further details of the route.

■ **Children: Hong Kong**

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[107111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the admission of children of Hong Kong BNO holders to UK schools ahead of the scheme's launch in 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office is working as part of a cross-government effort to ensure that when the Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) Visa route opens in January it operates smoothly.

All children who live in the UK are eligible for a school place in England irrespective of their nationality.

BN(O) families moving to the UK under the Hong Kong BN(O) Visa route will be able to access a state-funded or independent school place for their children on the same basis as every other family in the UK. Those BN(O) families who choose not to avail themselves of our migration offer, and who remain in Hong Kong, will, as now, be able to send their children to the UK to access an independent school place under the UK study visa rules.

■ **Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus**

**Tim Farron:**

[\[106943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the use of digital signatures on domestic violence concession applications will continue after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

There are no plans to change the current application process for Destitute Domestic Violence Concession cases.

## ■ Hong Kong: Politics and Government

**Sarah Owen:**

**[107113]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress the Government has made on the development of the Hong Kong BNO scheme announced in July 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) Visa route will open from 31 January, and will allow BN(O)s and their family members to come to the UK to live, work and study.

Further details of the route were put before Parliament on 22 October, when the Immigration Rules were laid.

## ■ Immigration

**Olivia Blake:**

**[107770]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times have police officers have accompanied immigration enforcement teams on visits in the last 12 months.

**Chris Philp:**

To maintain the highest standards of accuracy, the Home Office prefers to refer to published data, as this has been subject to rigorous quality assurance under National Statistics protocols prior to publication.

Information about enforcement visits undertaken jointly with police partners is not part of our published data.

Our published data is available at the following links:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020/summary-of-latest-statistics>

**Olivia Blake:**

**[107771]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times police have used Stop and Scan technology to gather data on individuals for immigration purposes in the last 12 months; and on how many of those occasions the police were operating (a) alone and (b) alongside Home Office immigration enforcement teams.

**Kit Malthouse:**

A Police Officer is able to use their Strategic Mobile device only when they suspect a person of having committed an offence and their identity is not known or cannot be ascertained, whether or not related to immigration. All data used as part of the



Strategic Mobile check, including the results, are deleted and not stored on the phone. It is an operational matter for the police officer whether to contact the Home Office for further immigration details if this might be required as part of their investigation. This information is not recorded as part of the mobile search.

The latest available figures show that there have been 8,940 matches against the Immigration and Asylum Biometric System (IABS), when a police officer has made a Strategic Mobile search. The period covering this figure is March 2018 to May 2020.

There is no data available to identify whether, when making a Strategic Mobile search, a police officer was alone or alongside the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team

## ■ Immigration: Coronavirus

**Fleur Anderson:**

[107118]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to suspend the minimum income requirement during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Minimum Income Requirement is set at the level which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration and we remain aligned with those aims whilst making adjustments to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Such adjustments are among a range of measures put in place by the Home Office to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. These are set out for customers on GOV.UK and are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

We have no plans to suspend the Minimum Income Requirement.

## ■ Immigration: Yorkshire and the Humber

**Olivia Blake:**

[107769]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visits by Immigration Compliance and Enforcement teams have taken place in Yorkshire and the Humber in the last 12 months, by (a) parliamentary constituency and (b) location of team.

**Olivia Blake:**

[107772]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visits by immigration enforcement teams have been made to (a) private rented accommodation, (b) owner occupier accommodation, (c) local authority housing, (d) housing association housing, (e) private businesses, (f) places of worship and (g) other locations in Yorkshire and the Humber in the last 12 months.

**Chris Philp:**

To maintain the highest standards of accuracy, the Home Office prefers to refer to published data, as this has been subject to rigorous quality assurance under National Statistics protocols prior to publication.

Information about enforcement visits is not available in our published data.

Our published data is available at the following links:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020/summary-of-latest-statistics>

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Alison Thewliss:**

[107030]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive written response in respect of (a) correspondence to her Department of (a) 11 June 2020, (b) 20 August 2020 and (c) weekly phone calls from the hon. Member for Glasgow Central on behalf of Mssrs Abdul and Habib Safi.

**Chris Philp:**

I apologise for the delay in responding to the Hon. Member's correspondence. The Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts replied on 23 October 2020

## ■ Personation

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[107720]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the police notify individuals when the police are made aware that another individual is using their identity without their knowledge.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government is aware of the harms caused by identity crime and that criminals use false identities to commit and enable a range of offences, from people trafficking, benefit fraud, credit card fraud to fraudulently obtaining government-issued documents.

Contact with victims is usual procedure where police are working on an open investigation. However, the majority of cases of identity theft are brought to the attention of the police by the victim themselves.

In the case of the identity theft being a result of a personal data breach all organisations have a duty under GDPR to report certain personal data breaches to the relevant supervisory authority. Where the breach is likely to result in a high risk of adversely affecting individuals' rights and freedoms, they must also inform those individuals without undue delay.

## ■ Religious Hatred: Islam

**Afzal Khan:**

[107103]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's statistical release, Hate Crime: 2019-20, published on 13 October 2020,

what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) Islamophobia and (b) the number of Islamophobic incidents.

**James Brokenshire:**

This Government recognises the discrimination and intolerance faced by Muslim communities and the UK has a robust legislative framework in place to respond to hate crime.

The Government has taken steps to combat anti-Muslim Hatred including supporting Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with just over £2.8m between 2016 and 2020 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred.

In addition, the Places of Worship protective security funding scheme, which provides security measures for mosques and other places of worship, has been allocated £3.2m for 2020-21 - double what was awarded last year.

This Government is committed to continuing the promotion of shared values among people of all backgrounds through sustainable social integration and meaningful civic participation whilst tackling and preventing religiously and racially discriminatory behaviour and those acting against others because of their faith or race. Therefore, we have launched a competitive grant scheme for 2020-21 to support projects in this space, with a budget of up to £2M.

■ **Windrush Lessons Learned Review**

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[106891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to The Response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review: A comprehensive improvement plan, published in September 2020, CP293, what her planned timescale is for reviewing the public funds stream to the compliant environment; and if she will make a statement.

**Priti Patel:**

The review and evaluation of the compliant environment is taking a phased approach and will report regularly to Ministers. As a first step on public funds, the Home Office is working with the Department for Education (DfE) on how immigration status and no recourse to public funds (NRPF), interact with free school meals and other educational entitlements, which are administered by DfE. This review will be completed by the end of the year.

Transparency and engagement will remain at the heart of our approach to the evaluation of the compliant environment.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

■ **Evictions**

**Tim Farron:**

[\[108216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring landlords to register eviction

notices at the point of delivery, so that his Department would obtain accurate records of all evictions including those which do not proceed to court.

**Christopher Pincher:**

There are no plans to require landlords to record eviction notices at the point of delivery; this information is not collected centrally by the government and we have made no assessment of the merits of increasing data collection in this way. To further protect renters, the measures in the Coronavirus Act 2020 mean that landlords must now give 6 months' notice except in the most serious cases. To gather data, we work closely with the Ministry of Justice and HM Courts and Tribunal Service to monitor possession proceedings. The Ministry of Justice publishes national statistics on possession actions in county courts by private and social landlords. This includes statistics on claims, orders, warrants and possessions.

The Department also conducts regular surveys such as the annual English Housing Survey and the English Private Landlord Survey to gather data. These include questions regarding ending a tenancy and the reasons for it, and both the English Housing Survey and English Private Landlord survey will be published next year.

■ **Evictions: Coronavirus**

**Scott Mann:**

[\[107684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government has taken to support small landlords in disputes with tenants who had refused to pay rent before the covid-19 outbreak and who are now unable to evict those tenants as a result of measures put in place to support renters in genuine need during the outbreak.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The best way to support landlords is by helping tenants to pay their rent. The Government has brought forward a significant economic response, including support for business to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Job Support Scheme. We have also introduced over £9 billion of measures in 2020/21 that benefit those facing financial disruption due to the current situation. These measures include increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by £1,040 a year for the next 12 months, and a significant investment in the Local Housing Allowance of nearly £1 billion, lifting rates to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile from April this year. Discretionary Housing Payments can also be paid to those entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit who face a shortfall in their housing costs.

Where landlords have found themselves in coronavirus-related hardship, mortgage lenders have agreed to offer payment holidays of up to three months, including for buy-to-let mortgages. On 2 June, the Financial Conduct Authority confirmed that borrowers can apply for an extension to any holiday already taken while extending the window for new applications to 31 October.

As we move forward, we have taken steps to ensure that landlords can recover their properties in the most serious circumstances whilst still protecting tenants.

Courts restarted possession proceedings on Monday 21 September 2020. The listing of the cases is a matter for the judiciary but they will be prioritising the most serious cases, including extreme rent arrears.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 means landlords must now provide six months' notice of their intention to seek possession. However, for the most serious cases notice periods have been lowered to give landlords the ability to regain possession more quickly. This includes only requiring 4 weeks' notice when arrears are equivalent to at least six months' rent. This supports landlords with tenants in pre-COVID arrears to pursue repossession more quickly.

## ■ Help to Buy Scheme

**Andrea Leadsom:**

**[108225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the help to buy scheme in its current format will be extended until April 2022.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government recognises that there have been delays caused by Covid-19. That is why on 31 July a two-month extension was announced to the building completion deadline from 31 December 2020 to 28 February 2021. The legal completion deadline for the purchase remains 31 March 2021.

The Government also announced an extra measure to protect existing customers who have experienced severe delays as a result of coronavirus. Homes England, who administer Help to Buy, will work with those who had a reservation in place before 30 June to assess their situation and look to provide an extension where necessary. In which case, they will have until 31 May 2021 to legally complete. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-to-buy-scheme-extended>.

We believe these measures provide sufficient time for developers to build out homes delayed by COVID 19 and protect customers whose purchases have been significantly delayed. There are no plans to extend the current scheme further.

Meanwhile the Government's new Help to Buy scheme, which will replace the current scheme and is for first time buyers only, will commence on 1 April 2021 and run until March 2023. More information can be found at: <https://www.helptobuy.gov.uk/equity-loan/help-to-buy-equity-loan-2021-2023/>.

## ■ Landlord and Tenant: Correspondence

**Catherine West:**

**[107067]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) private and (b) social landlords respond to tenants correspondence in a timely manner.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government encourages a positive relationship between social and private landlords and their tenants. It is in landlords' interests to have a constructive and open dialogue with their tenants, for example to ensure that properties are kept in good repair.

The Regulator of Social Housing sets standards that registered providers of social housing are required to meet. This includes expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants, and a clear approach to complaints that ensures complaints are resolved promptly. It is for each landlord to decide how best to comply with these requirements.

The Government does not prescribe a mandated form of engagement between private landlords and their tenants. While it is for private landlords to decide how best to engage with their tenants, the Government is clear that all tenants have a right to a decent, warm and safe place to live and to be treated with dignity and respect.

**Landlords****Apsana Begum:****[108300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant of the Answer of 21 October to Question 104199, when his Department plans to widen access to the database of rogue landlords and property agents introduced in April 2018; and what his timescale is for bringing forward legislative proposals on renters reform.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Renters' Reform Bill, which will include measures on the database of rogue landlords and property agents, is a priority for the Department and will be brought forward in due course.

**Local Government: Coronavirus****Steve Reed:****[107005]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the oral contribution by the Prime Minister of 12 October 2020, official report, column 24, on covid-19 update, when he plans to release details of the £1 billion of new financial support for local authorities.

**Luke Hall:**

On Thursday 22 October, the Secretary of State confirmed individual allocations of the £1 billion of new financial support for councils, further information can be found on the Government website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/enrick-confirms-allocations-of-1-billion-funding-for-councils-this-winter>.

## ■ Permitted Development Rights: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[107743]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2020 to Question 104771, on The Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development and Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020: what assessment he has made of the merits of extending the scope of those measures to include those (a) pubs and (b) hospitality businesses that are listed buildings, and cannot erect temporary outside structures within their curtilage due to the constraints of listed building consents.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As set out in my answer to Question UIN 104771 on 21 October 2020, we will continue to keep the rights under review, as is the case for all Covid-19 related measures.

## ■ Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[105321]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the value of private housing rent arrears as a result of the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Hull and (b) England.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with support for businesses to pay staff salaries and strengthening the welfare safety-net with a nearly £9.3 billion boost to the welfare system. This includes an extra £1 billion to increase Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates so that they cover the lowest 30 per cent of market rents.

For those renters who require additional support, there is an existing £180 million of Government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments made available this year, an increase of £40 million from last year, which is for councils to distribute to support renters with housing costs.

The Department does not currently hold information on the value of private housing rent arrears in Hull and England as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

**Sir Charles Walker:**

**[106908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to consult on his Department's proposals to tackle the issues relating to (a) rent arrears accrued as a result of the covid-19 outbreak in the private rental sector and (b) the associated risk of homelessness as a result of those arrears; and if he will seek the views of (i) Generation Rent, (ii) the Association of Residential Letting Agents, (iii) the National Residential Landlords Association, (iv) Shelter, (v) Crisis and (vi) the Citizens' Advice Bureau; and if he will make a statement.



**Christopher Pincher:**

We regularly engage with a range of stakeholders on different issues relating to the private and social rented sector, as well as closely monitoring the issues of rent arrears and the risk of homelessness in the private rented sector as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the Covid-19 pandemic with, support for businesses to pay staff salaries and strengthening the welfare safety-net with over 9 billion boost to the welfare system. This includes an extra £1 billion to increase Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates so that they cover the lowest 30 per cent of market rents.

For those renters who require additional support, there is an existing £180 million of Government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments made available this year, an increase of £40 million from last year, which is for councils to distribute to support renters with housing costs.

This Government remains committed to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping and is clear that no one should be without a roof over their heads. We have provided £5.7 billion to help councils to manage the impacts of COVID-19 which includes their work to support homeless people.

We are also providing a Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of £200 million to help local authorities plan and respond to their local homelessness pressures alongside delivering the Homelessness Reduction Grant of £63 million to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act, and to enable local authorities to do more to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas.

**■ Religious Hatred: Islam****Afzal Khan:****[107102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he has taken to tackle Islamophobia; and what plans he has to support Islamophobia Awareness Month in November 2020.

**Luke Hall:**

This Government has pledged to tackle prejudice, racism and discrimination. We recognise the discrimination and intolerance faced by Muslim communities.

Everyone in our country should be able to practice their faith in freedom. We already 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. This Government's work to tackle the scourge of anti-Muslim hatred is extensive, and includes:

- Supporting Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with more than £2.8 million since 2016, helping to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred

- Providing almost £5 million through our Places of Worship Security Grant in the last two years alone - helping to secure and protect mosques and other places of worship
- Supporting the work of the cross-Government Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, which provides valuable advice on the challenges faced by Britain's Muslim communities, and proposals on how to address them

## ■ Rented Housing: Repairs and Maintenance

**Catherine West:**

**[107068]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to (a) ensure (i) private and (ii) social landlords respond to urgent repair requests in a timely manner and (b) scrutinise the time taken by landlords to respond to urgent repair requests.

**Christopher Pincher:**

All landlords must by law carry out repairs in a reasonable timeframe.

We have given local authorities strong powers to require urgent repairs if landlords in the private sector do not carry these out. If landlords do not comply, or if the risk is high enough, then local authorities can do remedial works themselves and recover the costs.

For social landlords, the Regulator of Social Housing sets standards that they are required to meet under the Home Standard. This includes all applicable requirements that provide for the health and safety for the occupants of their homes and a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service. If failure to meet the Home Standard has caused, or could have caused, serious detriment to tenants, the Regulator may intervene.

The repair obligations of all landlords, private and social, have not changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government recognises that restrictions imposed by current measures, to minimise the infection risks from COVID-19, may make this more difficult. Guidance has been issued to local authorities advising they take a common-sense, pragmatic and risk-based approach to enforcement.

It is a matter for private landlords to decide on how they best engage with their tenants and organise their repairs to meet their obligations. This does not mean that we do not take this matter seriously.

In July this year the Housing Ombudsman, which provides redress for social housing residents, published a new Complaint Handling Code which sets out good practice for landlords on how to respond to complaints effectively, fairly and in a timely way.

My officials are in regular contact with stakeholders across both the private and social sectors, discussing not just health and safety obligations, repairs and inspections but all aspects of both sectors.

**Rents: Arrears****Nadia Whittome:****[107146]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to record the number of people in rent arrears.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and as with all policy making, this is informed by a range of data sources.

This comprehensive package includes a range of support for businesses to pay staff salaries which will support renters to sustain tenancies. We have also strengthened the welfare safety-net with a nearly £9.3 billion boost to the welfare system, including an extra £1 billion to increase Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates so that they cover the lowest 30 per cent of market rents.

For those renters who require additional support, there is an existing £180 million of Government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments made available this year, an increase of £40 million from last year and which is for councils to distribute to support renters with housing costs.

**Social Rented Housing: Coronavirus****Dame Diana Johnson:****[105320]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate has he made of the value of social housing rent arrears in (a) Hull and (b) England that have accrued as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We have not made an estimate of the value of social housing rent arrears that have accrued as a result of Covid-19 pandemic in Hull and England.

The Regulator of Social Housing's quarterly survey report for April to June 2020 (which is based on regulatory returns from private registered providers and private registered provider groups who own or manage more than 1,000 homes) shows that mean current tenant arrears stood at 4.0 per cent at the end of June. The equivalent figure in the same quarter of 2019/20 was 3.5 per cent. This information is for private registered providers in England and does not include local authorities. The report is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/quarterly-survey-of-private-registered-providers>.

We are carrying out a data collection to gather information on the impact Covid-19 is having on local authority finances. Data from these returns are available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-covid-19-financial-impact-monitoring-information>

## JUSTICE

### ■ Administration of Justice: Coronavirus

**Lilian Greenwood:**

[\[107639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to prioritise cases dealt with by the courts during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

The prioritisation of cases is a matter for the judiciary.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has assisted the judiciary by providing analyses of caseload and case types for the most time-critical and sensitive cases.

HMCTS are investing record amounts, with £153m to improve court and tribunal buildings, as well as more than £80m on a range of emergency measures to tackle the impact of Covid-19, including the recruitment of 1,600 additional staff.

To enable judicial prioritisation HMCTS has rapidly rolled out technology to support far more remote hearings than could have been supported before the pandemic, set up Nightingale courts, conducted detailed risk assessments, and completed physical building works to enable hearings to take place safely where cases are prioritised for an in-person hearing.

### ■ Court of Protection

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[106964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the waiting time for Court of Protection decisions.

**Alex Chalk:**

HMCTS and the MOJ have been working together to pilot new, digital ways of working in the Court of Protection that could streamline processes and remove both administrative and procedural delay. Emphasis has also been placed on increased digital working, to increase efficiency and facilitate remote working for both Court users and Court staff. These pilots are still in their early stages.

A digital upload pilot that commenced in April enables professional users to submit their Property and Affairs deputyship applications online. Over 200 applications have now been issued through this pilot, which has enabled orders, in non-contentious cases, to be made within weeks of the application being received.

A second pilot is being developed to encourage applicants to notify parties upfront. This will remove delays in waiting for responses and enable non-contentious cases to be dealt with in a more timely and efficient manner.

In addition, this month a new centralised team will be created at the Court of Protection, called the 'Orders Hub', to focus specifically on orders and process them more efficiently. Staff will be provided with targeted training to increase their expertise, tasks will be completed in tandem to reduce the time taken and areas of

improvement will be identified to allow changes to be implemented. This will enable court orders to be issued quicker, and some within days of receipt

■ **Courts: Nottingham**

**Lilian Greenwood:** [106976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to implement a Nightingale Court in Nottingham.

**Chris Philp:**

Nightingale courts are one of the ways in which we are ensuring we have additional capacity to alleviate the pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic. We are considering a number of locations for future Nightingale courts, but no final decisions have been made.

HMCTS has published an update on their response to covid-19 in the criminal courts in England and Wales (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-and-tribunal-recovery-update-in-response-to-coronavirus>). This provides a comprehensive update on our recovery plans.

■ **Courts: Security Guards**

**Lilian Greenwood:** [107638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of court security staffing.

**Chris Philp:**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service keeps the security arrangements at its court and tribunal buildings under close review and we are satisfied that appropriate provision is in place to ensure that all of our sites are safe for our users.

In April 2020, OCS became the sole national provider for security services across the HMCTS estate, enhancing the day to day security provision at courts and tribunals. The new contract enables improved monitoring of security in our sites, provides enhanced training of security staff and delivers an improved experience for all users of our courts and tribunals.

■ **Crown Court: Nottingham**

**Lilian Greenwood:** [108219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on what date (a) protective screens installed and (b) other covid-19 protective measures were introduced at Nottingham Crown Court.

**Chris Philp:**

HMCTS has in place a range of measures, developed in line with, and validated against, relevant public health standards, to help to prevent the transmission of Covid 19 across the court and tribunal estate. Details can be found in the published Organisational Risk Assessment, and in the site-specific risk assessments undertaken and reviewed regularly at each building, which are available on request.

These measures have enabled HMCTS to run its vital public services, and so maintain access to justice, throughout the pandemic emergency.

Nottingham Crown Court had screens installed on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020 into two jury deliberation rooms and two court rooms.

Furthermore, as well as requiring anyone in public spaces within our buildings to wear a face covering (unless exempt), a series of other measures have been put into place since the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to ensure that the building operates in a Covid secure way, including introducing revised entry and search procedures for all court users, the provision of hand sanitiser at convenient points across the building, and public concourses marked out with socially distanced floor markings and appropriate guidance signage. In addition, all work assessed as suitable by the judiciary can be managed by way of remote/virtual hearings, and staff who can work remotely are doing so to reduce footfall and ensure social distancing can be adhered to.

## ■ Custodial Treatment: Coronavirus

**Catherine West:**

**[107071]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prisoners and (b) prison staff have (i) been tested for covid-19, (ii) tested positive for covid-19 and (iii) died from covid-19 in each prison and young offender institution.

**Lucy Frazer:**

A testing programme to help understand the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and how it is transmitted through individual establishments and the wider estate began on the 20 July. The programme, carried out over three months, took place in 28 prisons and has been undertaken in collaboration with the University of Southampton, Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care. Once the study team has completed the findings, the number of tests and summary of the results will be made available.

Verified data on the number of prisoners that have tested positive for COVID-19 and the number of prisoner deaths is published on gov.uk for the period up to the 30 September 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-covid-19-statistics-august-2020>

Current published data for prisons and the Youth Custody Service (YCS) indicates 620 prisoners tested positive for COVID-19 in prison, and 10 young offenders tested positive for COVID-19 in the Youth Custody Service.

Verified data on the number of prison staff that have tested positive for COVID-19 and the number of prison staff deaths is published on gov.uk for the period up to 31 July 2020. This data is currently covers all staff working for HM Prison and Probation Service. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-june-2020>

The number of directly employed staff testing positive for COVID-19 in prisons and young offender institutions up to 31 July is 965. In addition, 188 non-directly

employed staff HMPPS-wide are recorded as having tested positive for COVID-19. Published data is not currently broken down into non-directly employed staff working in prisons. Staff data is self-reported, and at present, no by prison data is published.

Published data for prisoners and prison staff will be updated in November 2020.

The number of directly employed prisons and YCS staff who are recorded as suspected to have died from COVID-19 up to 31 July is 5, and non-directly employed staff HMPPS-wide is 9.

The number of prisoners in prisons and young offender institutions recorded as suspected of having died from COVID-19 up to 31 September is 23 and 0 respectively. Each case is investigated by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman to determine the official cause of death.

Published data in relation to suspected COVID-19 deaths is not published at prison level.

For the purposes of published data, the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system. Much of the data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic has been done at pace, with recording practices evolving as we understand more about the requirements and conditions we are facing.

We have robust plans in place to keep prisoners, staff and the public safe, based on the latest Public Health advice. We continue to monitor the situation across the estate, and should restrictions need to be re-imposed to maintain safety, we will not hesitate to do this. Prisons operate under a National Framework which sets out how restrictions are managed: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-national-framework-for-prison-regimes-and-services>

## ■ Evictions: Coronavirus

**Olivia Blake:**

**[107142]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will suspend evictions in regions with additional covid-19 public health restrictions.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government is clear that evictions should not be carried out in areas where gatherings are not permitted in homes. Enforcement agents should not, therefore, carry out evictions in regions that have been classified as Local Alert Level 2 (high) or 3 (very high). This position has been set out in HMCTS's operational guidance for County Court bailiffs and in guidance from the Lord Chancellor to the High Court Enforcement Officers' Association. The Government is keeping this approach under review.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[107648]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of private rented households for whom local covid-19 restrictions prevent bailiffs from enforcing an eviction.



**Chris Philp:**

The information requested is not held.

In higher risk areas and for the protection of public health, bailiffs have been instructed not to carry out evictions in tier 2 (high) and tier 3 (very high) local COVID-19 alert areas. The Government is keeping this approach under review.

**Office of the Public Guardian****Fiona Bruce:****[106965]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is able to take to speed up procedures in the Office of the Public Guardian.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) has many areas of responsibility, but the areas most affected by COVID-19, leading to delays in procedures, are those regarding the registering of lasting and enduring powers of attorney (LPAs and EPAs), and time taken for an investigation into concerns raised about an attorney or deputy to be approved by the public guardian.

LPAs and EPAs are paper documents that require a physical staff presence in an office to process and register; therefore these elements of the registration process have been affected by the need to maintain social distancing measures. Additionally, the staff numbers that are available to attend the office to carry out these physical activities are significantly reduced due to COVID-19. Measures introduced were focused on enabling as much remote working as possible, and also increasing the number of staff hours available in the office through overtime payments.

OPG aims to register Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) in 40 working days (this includes a statutory 4-week waiting period). OPG has seen an impact on the time taken to process an LPA since COVID-19 began affecting circumstances. As of 22/10/2020 the average time taken to process and dispatch an LPA was 58 days against the target of 40 days. As a comparison, the July average came in at 71 days. The average of 40 days was achieved in 2019/20.

As part of a wider transformation programme, OPG is developing options to consult on proposals for modernising the LPA, with the opportunity for less reliance on paper and therefore the need for the physical presence of staff in offices.

When investigating concerns regarding an attorney or deputy, OPG needs to establish the mental capacity of the person (the donor of the LPA/EPA or the person who has a deputyship order in place for them) before conducting further enquiries into the allegations made. COVID-19 has prevented or delayed the ability for assessment of capacity to be made, as this is done through specially arranged visits to the person's home/residence. As of the end of September 2020, an investigation was taking an average of 83 days against the target of 70 days. As a comparison, an average of 74 days was achieved in 2019/20. Where any serious concerns about a person are identified, OPG informs the local authority so they can follow up at a local level and take any actions they feel are necessary.

## ■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

**Drew Hendry:**

**[107043]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in the time taken for a personal independence payment appeal to be heard at Tribunal after an application to attend the Tribunal is made.

**Chris Philp:**

I accept that waiting times for proceedings in the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) service remain higher than we would like. The impact of the Coronavirus outbreak has significantly increased the challenges we currently face.

We have taken a number of measures to improve SSCS performance:

- Over the past two-years 38 salaried judges, 194 fee paid judges, 232 medical members and 118 disability qualified members have been appointed to the Social Entitlement Chamber.
- As part of the £1.2 bn court reform programme, we have invested in digital systems so that appellants to the SSCS can now lodge their appeal, track its progress and receive the outcome online.

We have also introduced emergency measures to ensure the tribunal can continue to function safely during the pandemic:

- We have increased our capacity to hold remote hearings by telephone and video link;
- Appeals may also be decided by a judge sitting alone without a hearing using the evidence before them in the case papers;
- HMCTS has also introduced safety measures so that face to face hearings can be held.

The decision on how a hearing is conducted is a matter for the judge, who will determine how best to uphold the interests of justice. In considering the suitability of video/audio hearings to replace face to face hearings, judges will consider matters such as the nature of the dispute at stake and any issues the use of video/audio technology may present for participants in the hearing, having regard to individuals' needs.

Statistics on the performance in the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) are regularly published in the statistical bulletin, Tribunal Statistics Quarterly, which are available at the following link:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics).

Publication of SSCS statistics is currently suspended due to data quality issues identified as the Tribunal is migrated to a new operational system. These data will be made available as soon as these issues have been resolved and data quality is assured.

## ■ Prisoners: Exercise and Recreation Spaces

**Catherine West:**

**[107710]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that prisoners have access to recreation areas and exercise during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

*We are working hard to safeguard prisoners' wellbeing. This means that whilst we have had to introduce a number of necessary restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and protect life, we have continued to offer as much time out of cells as possible, with necessary adaptations to manage infection.*

*On 2 June we published the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services, setting out how we will operate whilst responding to COVID-19. Supporting this, there is more detailed guidance about the nature of regime activity expected at each Stage, including elements of recreation.*

*Specifically, we have maintained a requirement in all prisons to provide prisoners with time in the open air. All sites have also set out how they will provide prisoners with time out of cell, and the safe equivalent of association time. Since the beginning of the pandemic, prisons were authorised to use external exercise yards for access to the open air and to deliver external physical education.*

## ■ Residential Property Tribunal Service

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[107647]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many residential property tribunal decisions were made under the sub category of Rents - Market rent (assured shorthold tenancy) in 2019.

**Chris Philp:**

During the Calendar year of 2019 there were 248 Residential Property decisions made under the category of Rents – Market Rents (assured shorthold tenancy).

Data source: Operationally Sourced Case Management Data

The above data was generated on a different date to the information contained in quarterly published statistics and was produced specifically for this enquiry.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system and is the best data that is available at the time of this publication.

## ■ Wormwood Scrubs Prison: Coronavirus

**Andy Slaughter:**

**[106914]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners held in HMP Wormwood Scrubs have (a) been tested and (b) tested positive for covid-19 in each of the last six months.

**Andy Slaughter:****[106915]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners held in HMP Wormwood Scrubs are permitted to leave their cells for two or more hours a day as at 21 October 2020.

**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.

As of 30 September, there were six positive prisoner cases at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. Out of the six cases, three of these received their result in April and the other three in May.

As mentioned in the previous answer, verified data on the number of prisoners that have tested positive for Covid-19 for 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/government/collections/hm-prison-and-probation-service-covid-19-statistics-monthly>

Out of 1118 prisoners at Wormwood Scrubs, 866 of those prisoners who are not required to isolate or quarantine for reasons linked to Covid-19, have access to between 2-3 hours out of their cell each day.

**■ Youth Justice Board: Ethnic Groups****Peter Kyle:****[107062]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to improve BAME representation amongst the staff of the Youth Justice Board (a) overall and (b) at Grade 7-5 level.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The YJB is a non-departmental public body and as such has responsibility for its own recruitment policies and processes. They are seeking to address disproportionality by implementing good practice from other organisations.

The YJB's actions to date include:

- Mandatory unconscious bias training for all those involved in the recruitment process;
- Race Awareness training for all staff;
- Widening the advertising of posts to include specific networks for black and minority ethnic individuals;
- Promoting staff networks to black and minority ethnic staff;
- A review of current recruitment practices and processes for potential bias;

- A promotion of mentoring and coaching programmes and how these can be expanded to specifically support black and minority ethnic staff; and
- Mentoring by YJB Chair and Board members for staff.

The YJB's Equality and Diversity Group are reviewing the success of YJB's measures and may make recommendations to the organisation on further good practice.

**Peter Kyle:**

[\[107063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to p55 of the Youth Justice Board Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20, what proportion of Youth Justice Board staff are from a BAME background, by geographical region.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Due to the geographical spread of YJB staff, YJB records only allow them to split staff geographically by 'London' and 'National'. In this context 'National' represents YJB staff who are based outside of London. The latest diversity figures have been provided by the YJB below.

72% of YJB staff are London based. Within this:

25% of London based staff are Black or from an ethnic minority group.

63% of London based staff are white

12% of London based staff have chosen not to state their ethnicity

28% of YJB staff are based Nationally. Within this:

0% of National staff are black or from an ethnic minority group.

96% of National based staff are white

4% of National based staff have chosen not to state their ethnicity.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### ■ **Parliament: Coronavirus**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[107052\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what recent assessment he has made of the level of health and safety risk posed by Members travelling to Parliament to take part in parliamentary proceedings that are physical-only.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

I refer the hon. member to the answer I gave to his earlier written question (105448).

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Aerospace Industry: Northern Ireland****Louise Haigh:**[\[108259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has held with (a) industry representatives and (b) the Northern Ireland Executive on an aerospace industry taskforce to help safeguard jobs in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

I recently met with representatives of Unite union regarding the challenges currently faced by the aerospace sector in Northern Ireland, including staff retention and the range of Government support measures in place.

As well as the Job Retention Scheme, the UK Government is supporting the UK's aerospace and aviation industries with over £8.5bn in grants, loans and export guarantees. £2.1bn has also been made available to the UK aerospace sector through the Covid Corporate Financing Facility, and UK Export Finance is supporting £3.5bn of sales in the next 18 months.

This sector will be key to Northern Ireland's economic recovery and we want to do what we can to safeguard jobs and investment, working alongside the Northern Ireland Executive.

**■ Borders: Northern Ireland****Paul Girvan:**[\[107717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions his Department had with the Government of the Republic of Ireland prior to the imposition of border checks on the UK-Republic of Ireland border.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Since the start of this pandemic, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has met regularly with the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to coordinate the coronavirus response.

The Secretary of State and the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs recently chaired a conference call with the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Health Ministers to discuss the ongoing response to Covid-19 on the island of Ireland.

There has been no discussion of the imposition of checks in the Republic of Ireland. The enforcement of Covid restrictions in the Republic of Ireland is a matter for the Irish Government.

**Paul Girvan:**[\[107718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of the compliance with the terms agreed under the (a) Belfast Agreement, (b) St. Andrew's Agreement and (c) subsequent bilateral agreements between the UK and Republic of

Ireland of the Irish Government's steps to enforce border checkpoints between the UK and Republic of Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The UK Government is committed to working with the government of Ireland on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been regular discussions on how to achieve a joint approach, including between Ministers and officials from the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and from the Irish Government.

There is a determination to work together to ensure that measures safeguard the health and wellbeing of UK and Irish citizens, and abide by obligations under the Belfast Agreement and the Common Travel Area.

The enforcement of Covid restrictions in the Republic of Ireland is a matter for the Irish Government.

■ **Terrorism: Northern Ireland**

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[108257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many meetings he has held with victims' groups as part of the Government's engagement on legacy proposals since his Statement of 18 March 2020, Official Report, col 22WS.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Since March, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials have had a number of engagements with victims' groups on legacy issues. Details about ministers' meetings with external organisations, including victims' groups, are published on a quarterly basis and can be found on Gov.uk.

While the challenging circumstances presented by the ongoing Covid-19 situation has affected progress, the government remains committed to making progress on legacy issues and the Secretary of State fully recognises the importance of working with all parts of the community in Northern Ireland, including victims' groups, as part of this process.

**PRIME MINISTER**

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Justin Madders:**

[\[107029\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to respond to the letter of 18 June 2020 from Action against Medical Accidents and other signatories on the strategic response to covid-19.

**Boris Johnson:**

My Office has no record of receiving this letter. I have asked my Office to contact the organisation to see if they can re-send the correspondence.



**TRANSPORT****■ Bicycles: Repairs and Maintenance****Naz Shah:**[\[107025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when further vouchers will be released under the Fix your Bike Voucher Scheme; and how many vouchers have been allocated under that scheme to people in Bradford West constituency to date.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department plans to release a further batch of vouchers very shortly. The release of vouchers has been staggered in order to prevent repairers from being overwhelmed. The first release was a small pilot to allow the Department to monitor the scheme's impact and adapt it as necessary. There were 65 vouchers issued to addresses in the Bradford West constituency, out of the 62,101 total vouchers originally allocated.

**■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus****Kirsten Oswald:**[\[108247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what restrictions apply to conducting practical driving tests under the very high local covid-19 alert levels implemented in England.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) priority has been to restore its testing services with new protective measures and procedures in place that keep people safe and stop the spread of COVID-19. The safety measures applied when conducting a practical driving test in England are therefore the same regardless of which Tier level the test centre falls under.

**■ Electric Scooters****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[106975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to enable members of the public to report incidents involving e-scooters to researchers conducting e-scooter trials.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Incidents in e-scooter trials can be reported to the e-scooter operator, the local authority hosting the trial or, if necessary, to the police. All e-scooters have a unique identifier and in some areas have small plates - similar to registration plates - to help identify the e-scooters involved in any incidents. The Department is regularly gathering evidence from local authorities and operators about incidents and how these are being addressed.

In addition to reported incidents, the Department is letting a contract for central monitoring and evaluation across all trial areas. The primary areas of focus include:

- safety outcomes for e-scooter users and what influences this,

- interaction with, and effect on, other road users,
- public perceptions of e-scooters, including directly from people with disabilities and related groups.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

[\[107635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his planned timescale is for bringing forward legislative proposals to legalise the use of e-scooters.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has taken steps to allow trials of rental e-scooters in a number of local areas across the country. The trials will run across the next 12 months and will be closely monitored and evaluated by officials. This will build an evidence base to guide any future decisions about whether or not to legalise e-scooter use in the long-term and – if so – on what basis. It is not yet possible to determine the outcome of the trials and how they may influence timescales of future legislative proposals, if indeed they determine that e-scooters should be legalised.

## ■ Emergency Recovery Measure Agreements

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[107076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what incentives are included in the (a) Emergency Measure Agreements and (b) Emergency Recovery Measure Agreements for train operators to (i) reduce costs and (ii) increase revenues.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Under Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs), Train Operating Companies could receive small performance related fees based on whether they have acted efficiently, including managing costs appropriately and protecting and generating revenue.

Following the expiry of the EMAs, operators have moved onto Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs), where a far higher proportion of the fee is based on performance than under the EMAs. Under ERMAs, operators are measured against a range of performance criteria, including financial efficiency. Further financial performance targets may be set by my Department within the ERMAs, which will be appropriately calibrated to ensure they promote financial efficiency and minimise the net cost to the taxpayer.

## ■ High Speed Two Railway Line

**Justin Madders:**

[\[107027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has reassessed the business case for High Speed Two to take account of recent changes to working and commuting patterns.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The rapid development and the uncertain outcome of the Covid-19 outbreak mean it has not yet been possible to undertake specific analysis to determine its impact on HS2. The Department for Transport is working with colleagues across Whitehall to

understand the impact on transport demand and the pandemic's wider effect on the economy.

The Full Business Case for Phase One published in April looked at both high and low demand scenarios, underpinned by population and economic growth forecasts. That analysis showed that even in a scenario where demand is relatively low, there is still a clear case for pressing ahead with HS2.

We are confident that the strategic case for HS2, including its subsequent stages to Crewe, Manchester and Leeds remains clear, and that there remains a case for increasing capacity on the UK rail network, bringing cities closer together and levelling up regions across the UK. HS2 also remains key to achieving net-zero by 2050, a commitment which remains unchanged despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

### ■ Highways Agency: Marketing

**Matt Rodda:** [\[107592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, who authorised the work to rebrand the Highways Agency; what procurement process was used; and what steps he took to ensure that process complied with Government guidance on marketing spending and procurement.

**Matt Rodda:** [\[107734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost to the public purse has been in (a) staff time, (b) engaging consultants and agencies to provide advice, (c) tendering and (d) new (i) letterheads, (ii) signage and (iii) website for the proposed rebranding of Highways England.

**Rachel Maclean:**

No final decision has been made about renaming Highways England. Any decision would of course seek best value for the tax payer.

### ■ Public Transport: Coronavirus

**Olivia Blake:** [\[107141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will introduce the same public health requirement to sign-in on (a) intercity trains and (b) local public transport networks as already exists for pubs, bars and restaurants during the covid-19 crisis.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Contact tracing is already happening across all modes of public transport through the Bluetooth functionality of the NHS Contact Tracing app, which alerts the user if they have had exposure to someone who later tests positive. Checking in via QR codes is more complex to achieve on transport where passengers and vehicles are constantly on the move. However, we are working with operators to encourage people to download the app in transport hubs and working closely with the NHS Contact

Tracing app team to understand how a check-in feature could be implemented in transport settings whilst avoiding disruption.

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[107740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the level of covid-19 transmission on public transport; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) advice has provided evidence of an enhanced risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 for both transport workers and passengers. This advice has been published on the government website and is titled 'Transmission and Control of SARS-CoV-2 on Public Transport'.

To further advance our understanding of the transmission risk, the Department has worked with SAGE to develop the Transport Risk Assessment for COVID Knowledge (TRACK) research project. The Department has also commissioned other research projects, including working with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory on transmission risk in aviation.

As part of our Safer Transport Guidance we recommend that passengers reduce the risk of transmission by washing or sanitising their hands before and after using public transport, keeping 2m apart where possible and 1m if not, and wearing face coverings when travelling unless they are exempt. Transport operators also enforce this messaging with signs at transport hubs, and regular announcements at platforms and on public transport.

## ■ Public Transport: Disability

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[107660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all modes of public transport are fully accessible for wheelchair users.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Through the Inclusive Transport Strategy, launched July 2018 we aim to give disabled people equal access to the transport network by 2030, with assistance where physical infrastructure remains a barrier. This includes improving wheelchair access across all modes of transport. We understand that the needs of disabled people change over time and we will be reviewing our use of the reference wheelchair standard. We will make recommendations in future on its continued use or the use of an alternative specification.

## ■ Rail Delivery Group: Membership

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[107073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether membership of the Rail Delivery Group is a contractual requirement for train operating companies under the (a) Emergency Measure Agreements and (b) the Emergency Recovery Measure Agreements.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Emergency Measures Agreements and Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements do not contain a contractual requirement for train operating companies to be members of the Rail Delivery Group. However, train operating companies are required to hold an ORR licence as a condition of entry into and to retain the franchise agreement.

Condition 28 of the ORR Statement of National Regulatory Provisions (SNRP) that the SNRP holder ORR 'shall: (a) become and thereafter remain a Licensed Member of RDG; (b) comply with its obligations under the RDG Articles; and (c) procure that any member of its Group that is entitled under the RDG Articles to become a Member of RDG: (i) becomes and thereafter remains a Member of RDG; and (ii) complies with its obligations under the RDG Articles.'

**Rail Delivery Group: Network Rail****Jim McMahon:**[\[107074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of Network Rail effectiveness in working with members of the Rail Delivery Group to deliver value for money across the network; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Network Rail and Rail Delivery Group have been working together extremely effectively, particularly as we navigate our way through the pandemic. However, the extraordinary challenge facing the railway and its fragmented nature makes it more vital than ever that we simplify the system together under an accountable guiding mind. The Government will publish a White Paper with its plans for rail reform once the course of the pandemic becomes clearer.

**Railway Stations: Parking****Theresa Villiers:**[\[106909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Mayor of London on his plans to build over London Underground station car parks.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Matters relating to the Mayor's plans for housing development in London are devolved and subject to local planning consents.

**Railway Stations: Taxis****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[107098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to recommend to railway station taxi permit providers that (a) refunds and (b) reductions be issued to those who purchased 2020 taxi permits for use at those stations.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Secretary of State has no plans to recommend to railway station taxi permit providers that they offer refunds or reductions for those who purchased taxi permits in 2020.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[107099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the economic effect of the recent reduction in commuters on taxi drivers who previously operated mostly from railway stations.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has not made an assessment of the economic effect on taxi and private hire vehicles of reduced commuting.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[107101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government is responsible for any refunds or price reductions of taxi permits issued for use at railway stations under the Government's recently announced Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government is not responsible for refunds or price reductions for taxi permits issued at railway stations. It is the Train Operating Companies and Network Rail that manage and issue permits.

**Railways: Carbon Emissions****Jane Stevenson:**[\[107109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when Network Rail plans to publish its Traction Decarbonisation Network strategy.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS) Interim Programme Business Case was published by Network Rail in September 2020. No date has yet been agreed for further TDNS publications.

**Railways: Policy****Jim McMahon:**[\[107075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the use of rail industry data in rail (a) operations and (b) infrastructure; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The department uses data extensively to underpin all decisions it makes on rail operations and infrastructure, and keeps the quality of its data sources and analysis under continual review.

We are working closely with the rail industry to deliver improvements to data sharing, as set out in the Joint Rail Data Action Plan 2018 and Rail Sector Deal 2018. This will

help to identify the value of industry rail data assets across a wide set of use cases and unlock access to data across the industry, for government and for external stakeholders, improving transparency and stimulating innovation.

## ■ Transport for London: Finance

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[106911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will include in his Department's upcoming agreement with Transport for London for additional funding a condition that it cannot be used to facilitate building over London Underground station car parks.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government has agreed a further extraordinary funding and financing package for TfL of up to £1.7bn to ensure the continuation of public transport services in London.

Matters relating to the Mayor's plans for housing development in London are devolved and subject to local planning consents.

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[106912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Transport for London on whether (a) the proposed building over of station car parks and (b) other capital projects are excluded from the Government's funding proposals for Transport for London announced on 21 October 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government has agreed a further extraordinary funding and financing package for TfL of up to £1.7bn to ensure the continuation of public transport services in London.

As part of this deal, the Mayor has chosen to make £160 million in savings over the next 6 months to move TfL onto a more financially sustainable footing.

Matters relating to the Mayor's plans for housing development in London are devolved and subject to local planning consents.

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[106913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to exclude (a) the proposed building over of station car parks and (b) other capital projects from the scope of the Government's funding proposals for Transport for London announced on 21 October 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government has agreed a further extraordinary funding and financing package for TfL of up to £1.7bn to ensure the continuation of public transport services in London.

As part of this deal, the Mayor has chosen to make £160 million in savings over the next 6 months to move TfL onto a more financially sustainable footing.



Matters relating to the Mayor's plans for housing development in London are devolved and subject to local planning consents.

## TREASURY

### ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[106901\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential exposure of banks in respect of buildings owned by banks that have flammable cladding.

**John Glen:**

HM Treasury would not routinely assess banks' exposures to mortgages in the UK on properties with potentially combustible cladding.

Lenders account for exposures to potentially combustible cladding by developing their own policy based on a number of factors including their individual risk appetites and lending policies.

It is also worth noting that lenders have agreed that existing borrowers living in properties with potentially combustible cladding, who are not looking to borrow additional funds, should be able to arrange a product transfer with their existing lender.

### ■ Children: Day Care

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[108304\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the relaxation of the minimum income criteria beyond the 31 October 2020 to allow more people to access tax-free childcare.

**Steve Barclay:**

Working parents who are on the Government's coronavirus support schemes will still be eligible for childcare support even if their income falls below the minimum threshold requirement.

From Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November, eligible working parents who receive support through the Government's new Job Support Scheme (JSS) and extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue to receive their childcare entitlements, including the 30 hours offer and Tax-Free Childcare, even if their income levels fall below the threshold temporarily whilst on these schemes.

### ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Job Support Scheme

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[106905\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) changing the requirements of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Job Support Scheme to allow for eligibility to be considered on an individual basis and (b)

those schemes using national insurance numbers to allow support to be transferable between successive employers.

**Jesse Norman:**

The requirements of the Job Support Scheme (JSS) have been carefully considered to ensure that the scheme is effective at supporting jobs, is accessible to those who need it and minimises the risks of fraud.

Further details are set out in the JSS Policy Paper, which was published on 22 October 2020 and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-job-support-scheme/the-job-support-scheme>

Full guidance will be published shortly.

■ **Coronavirus: Northern Ireland**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:**

**[107604]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the additional costs to the public purse incurred as a result of measures introduced in Northern Ireland due to the covid -19 outbreak between March and October 2020.

**Steve Barclay:**

To support the Northern Ireland Executive to respond to coronavirus across its devolved responsibilities, the UK Government announced an unprecedented upfront funding guarantee. 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.

■ **Employee Ownership**

**Bill Esterson:**

**[106984]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value was of shares issued through Share Incentive Plans by (a) partnership, (b) matching (c) free and (d) dividend shares in each of the last five years.

**John Glen:**

Share Incentive Plans (SIPs) is a tax-advantaged employee share scheme offered by the Government.

HMRC publishes annual statistics on Employee Share Schemes, including the value of shares, which are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employee-share-schemes-statistics#national-statistics>

The table below shows the value of awarded shares for the last four years by type of share. Figures for 2014-15 are not available due to the introduction of the Employment Related Securities service.

Table 1- Initial value of SIP shares by share type (£m)

## SIP – INITIAL

## VALUE OF

## AWARDED SHARES

(£M)	FREE SHARES	PARTNERSHIP SHARES	MATCHING SHARES	DIVIDEND SHARES
14-15	-	-	-	-
15-16	240	510	310	130
16-17	120	430	260	130
17-18	120	300	160	80
18-19	110	310	170	70

## ■ Employee Ownership and Save as You Earn

**Bill Esterson:**[\[106985\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to widen participation in the (a) Save As you Earn and (b) Share Incentive Plan all-employee share schemes.

**Bill Esterson:**[\[106986\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on employee participation levels in (a) Save As You Earn and (b) Share Incentive Plan schemes.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government wants to promote employee share ownership in the UK, which is why it offers tax advantaged employee share schemes such as Save As You Earn (SAYE) and Share Incentive Plans (SIPs).

Employers can offer these schemes to share financial rewards with staff who choose to take part. This supports recruitment and retention and helps to encourage employee productivity. The Government keeps all the employee share schemes under review.

In 2018/19, 310,000 employees were granted share options under a SAYE scheme, and around 2.84 million employees were awarded or purchased partnership shares under a SIP.

Information on the employee share schemes for the 2020/21 tax year will not be available until 2021. However, the Government has taken steps to support employees in a SIP or SAYE scheme through the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes extending the payment holiday terms for employees in SAYE plans where the employee is furloughed, has had working hours reduced or has taken unpaid leave during the pandemic, and allowing furlough payments to constitute as salary so SIP contributions can continue to be deducted from these payments.

**■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus****Stephen McPartland:**[\[107644\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend the business rates holiday to the 2021-22 financial year for sectors affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government will continue to look at how to adjust its support in a way that ensures people can get back to work, protecting both the UK economy and the livelihoods of people across the country. The Government considers all reliefs in the round, against the broader fiscal and economic impacts of COVID-19, as part of the Business Rates Review.

**■ Overseas Loans: Republic of Ireland****Paul Girvan:**[\[107719\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress the Irish Government has made on the repayment of loans provided by the UK in 2010.

**John Glen:**

Ireland has repaid £2,420,220,000 on the principal of the loan provided under the Loans to Ireland Act 2010. As of 2 November 2020, the total outstanding principal stands at £806,740,000. The Government continues to expect the loan to be repaid in full and on time.

**■ Photography: Coronavirus****Bill Esterson:**[\[107642\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to support self-employed wedding photographers who work from home and have not been eligible for covid-19 financial support since March 2020.

**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 ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented 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 establish a 12-month, interest-free payment arrangement for up to £30,000 of self-assessment debt.

Furthermore, the application deadline for four temporary coronavirus loan schemes – Bounce Back Loans, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans, Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans (CBILS) and the Future Fund - has also been extended to 30 November. Up to half a million businesses which deferred their VAT bills will also be given more breathing space through the New Payment Scheme, which gives them the option to spread their payments over the financial year 2021-2022.

## ■ Protective Clothing: VAT

**Judith Cummins:**

[\[107020\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the VAT reduction for personal protective equipment beyond 31 October 2020.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[107651\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the VAT exemption on PPE for (a) self-employed physiotherapists and (b) independent providers.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[107652\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with cabinet colleagues on exempting (a) self-employed allied health professionals and (b) independent healthcare providers from VAT on PPE during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The temporary zero rate of VAT on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was an extraordinary measure to help affected sectors (such as hospitals and care homes) during the initial shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and when the global supply of PPE did not meet demand. The zero rate applies to PPE that meets the standard set out in the guidance from Public Health England (PHE).

This measure will come to an end on 31 October (as legislated), as new measures introduced by the Government will ensure supply of COVID-19 related PPE to affected sectors from 1 November. Face coverings that do not meet the standard set by PHE should not be affected by the temporary zero rate coming to an end.

## ■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[107110\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to include period pants as women's sanitary products for VAT purposes.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[108277\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits for the environment of including period pants as women's sanitary products for VAT purposes.

**Jesse Norman:**

At the Budget on 11 March 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that a zero rate of VAT will apply to Women's Sanitary Products from 1 January 2021, at the end of the Transition Period. This will apply to those products which are currently subject to the reduced rate of 5 per cent, for example, tampons and pads, and to reusable menstrual products, such as keepers.

The relief specifically excludes articles of clothing, such as "period pants". Such exclusions are designed to ensure that the relief is properly targeted, since difficulties in policing the scope of the relief create the potential for litigation, erosion of the tax

base and a reduction in revenue. Under existing rules “period pants” may already qualify for the zero rate, when designed for children under the age of 14 if they meet certain maximum sizing limits.

#### ■ **Sunscreens: VAT**

**Patricia Gibson:** [\[107035\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to reclassify sunscreen as an essential healthcare item which would be exempt from VAT to help reduce the incidence of skin cancer.

**Sarah Olney:** [\[107712\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to re-classify sunscreen products from a cosmetic product to an essential healthcare item to exempt those products from VAT.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under the current VAT rules, sun protection products are subject to the standard rate of VAT. High-factor sunscreen is on the NHS prescription list for certain conditions and is provided VAT free when dispensed by a pharmacist.

Expanding the scope of the current VAT relief would come at a cost to the Exchequer. While all taxes are kept under review, there are currently no plans to reduce VAT on sunscreen products.

#### ■ **Tax Evasion**

**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[108197\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an estimate of the potential revenue to the Exchequer from the portfolio of civil and criminal investigations resulting from the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers investigations.

**Jesse Norman:**

To date, the work of HMRC in response to the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers has protected over £188.2 million in revenue, and from the current portfolio of civil and criminal investigations it is estimated that a further £12.6million will be protected.

This is broadly consistent with the HMRC 2018-19 annual report publication, where it was stated that cases linked to the Panama Papers are forecast to produce more than £190 million in yield.

#### ■ **Taxation: Self-assessment**

**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[108210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the 31 January 2021 deadline for submitting tax returns during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

There are no plans to move the Self-Assessment (SA) filing date from 31 January 2021. However, the Government recognises that some taxpayers may have difficulty submitting their SA return due to the impact of COVID-19 on their personal circumstances.

HMRC do not charge penalties for failure to submit a return on time where taxpayers have a reasonable excuse. HMRC's current guidance explains that they will accept the impact of COVID-19 as a reasonable excuse for submitting a return late, provided that taxpayers explain how they were affected and submit the return as soon as they can. More information is available in the HMRC online guidance covering the reasonable excuse provisions.

The Government urges taxpayers to submit returns on time where possible. Where taxpayers or their agents are struggling to get the information they need to submit a return by 31 January, they can complete it using provisional figures and give HMRC the actual figures as soon as they can.

Taxpayers who are unable to pay all of their SA tax due on 31 January can access HMRC's enhanced Time to Pay (TTP) arrangements. HMRC have recently enhanced their self-serve, online TTP service.

This now allows liabilities of up to £30,000 – increased from £10,000 - to be paid in up to 12 instalments without having to contact HMRC beforehand.

**■ Tobacco: Smuggling****Martyn Day:**[\[108263\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the IP Crime Group's finding in its IP Crime and Enforcement Report that cigarettes and tobacco products were the most reported counterfeit goods in the UK in 2019-20, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Government's illicit tobacco control strategy.

**Martyn Day:**[\[108264\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the flow of counterfeit cigarettes and tobacco products into the UK.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Since 2000, the government's anti- illicit tobacco strategy has successfully reduced the cigarette tax gap from 22% in 2000-01 to 9% in 2019-20, and for hand rolling tobacco (HRT) from 61% to 34%. Key to this success has been the continual refresh of the strategy based on HMRC's reassessment of the risks and any emerging threats.

In 2015, HMRC and Border Force published the latest refreshed strategy 'Tackling Illicit Tobacco- leaf to light'. This stated the government's intention to take the fight against illicit tobacco wider, joining up interests across UK government and a variety of partner agencies, including local authority Trading Standards teams, the police and other government departments.



This approach has seen a sustained effort against all types of illicit tobacco. In the year 2018-19, over 1.3bn illicit cigarettes and 140 tonnes of illicit HRT were seized and there were over 270 convictions for tobacco related offences.

Measures specifically targeted at counterfeit tobacco include the introduction of the Raw Tobacco Approval and Tobacco Machinery Licensing Schemes. HMRC has also introduced a track and trace system for tobacco products and new on-pack authenticity features. These initiatives make it more difficult and costly to counterfeit tobacco in the UK and for any form of illicit tobacco to enter our legitimate supply chains.

However, the government is not complacent, organised criminals continually respond to enforcement activity by diversifying but we remain confident in HMRC's ability to recognise and respond to this under the existing strategy. The government will keep the need for a strategy refresh under review.

**Martyn Day:** [\[108265\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will publish the minutes of meetings his Ministers and officials have held with tobacco industry groups on track and trace policy (a) development and (b) implementation.

**Martyn Day:** [\[108266\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the traceability system for tobacco products is independent from tobacco industry influence.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Details of meetings between HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the tobacco industry are published on GOV.UK. These include discussions on points of detail on the track and trace system. All meetings with the tobacco industry are conducted in line with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, in particular in accordance with Article 5.3. HMRC has no plans to publish minutes of these meetings as they may contain taxpayer or commercially sensitive information.

The implementing legislation for the tobacco track and trace system specifies strict and comprehensive criteria for independence from the tobacco industry. The service provider of the track and trace system needs to demonstrate to HMRC that they satisfy the independence criteria both before and during the period they provide the service. HMRC has processes in place to ensure these criteria are met.

## ■ Trusts: Registration

**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[108195\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the new Trust Registration Service will be operational.

**John Glen:**

The government is currently expanding the Trust Registration Service to implement changes required by the Fifth Money Laundering Directive. Work on the expanded

version is well underway, and HMRC will make it available to customers as soon as possible. In the meantime, the Trust Registration Service remains operational for all trusts required to register for tax purposes.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

**[108196]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish guidance on the process by which commissioners of the new Trust Registration Service will allow (a) investigative journalists and (b) non-governmental organisations access to that register in line with the purpose of the fifth anti-money laundering directive.

**John Glen:**

The government is currently in the process of developing guidance on the expanded version of the Trust Registration Service (TRS). This guidance will cover the circumstances and process which will apply to those seeking access to the register.

HMRC will publish the detailed guidance in advance of the relevant provisions coming into effect.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

**[108198]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many HMRC staff will be deployed to examining irregularities in listings on the new Trust Registration Service.

**John Glen:**

The government recognises the need for effective and proportionate measures to ensure that information held on the Trust Registration Service (TRS) is correct and up to date. We are currently working to determine the precise resources required to monitor listings on the expanded TRS once it is operational.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

**[108199]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of UK properties are held in trusts that will be registered through the new Trust Registration Service.

**John Glen:**

Information on the proportion of properties in the UK that are owned via trusts is not held at present. Property in the UK is held by a variety of different structures, including trusts.

There are various reasons that a trust may be required to register on the forthcoming expansion to the Trust Registration Service. Any of the trusts that meet these requirements may hold UK property. Additionally, non-UK trusts that acquire UK land going forward will be required to register.

## ■ UK Trade with EU: Import Duties

**Mr Peter Bone:**

**[106935]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the potential annual value to the public purse from imposing tariffs on trade from the EU in the event that a free trade agreement is not signed.

**Mr Peter Bone:**

**[106936]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the potential annual cost of tariffs which will be paid by UK businesses to the EU in the event that a free trade agreement is not signed.

**Jesse Norman:**

The UK wants a relationship with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals, and centred on free trade. The Government believes that it is still possible to reach an agreement with a Free Trade Agreement at the core, like those the EU has agreed with other close partners around the world, and that this could be done quickly.

A negotiated outcome remains the Government's clear preference. It has put forward proposals and is working hard to reach a deal with the EU. The Government's aim is a zero tariff zero quota FTA, given that avoiding tariffs is beneficial to both sides.

From 1 January, the UK will keep all our tariff revenue, rather than remit 80% to the EU as we have done as a member of the customs union.

As is standard practice, the Office for Budget Responsibility will publish an updated estimate of tariff revenue at the next forecast based on their latest set of assumptions and tariff schedule.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Children: Day Care

**Claire Hanna:**

**[107126]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether a parent is able to make a claim under the childcare element of (a) universal credit and (b) tax credits for the cost of a retainer fee paid to keep their child's place in a childcare setting that has been forced to close due to covid-19 restrictions.

**Will Quince:**

Parents claiming Universal Credit (UC) who satisfy both the work condition and childcare conditions are eligible to have their childcare costs reimbursed if:

- they have a contract of employment and are still being paid;
- childcare is being provided during that assessment period; and
- childcare providers are registered or approved.

If a childcare provider is forced to close due to Covid-19 and unable to provide childcare for parents, the UC Childcare eligibility conditions will not be satisfied because childcare is not being provided.

Under Working Tax Credits, the childcare element is usually only provided where a child is receiving childcare. If a child was not receiving childcare, HMRC wouldn't expect a provider to continue to charge. HMRC will continue to pay childcare costs to

those in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credits who continued to pay childcare fees, despite their children being unable to access childcare because of COVID-19 for a maximum of 4 weeks.

The government continues to pay funding to local authorities in England for the free childcare entitlements for two, three and four-year-olds during the period of closures due to Covid-19. This funding has continued to be paid to providers to ensure there remains sufficient childcare for all those who need it. For the Autumn term, childcare will be funded at the level we would have done had the pandemic not occurred.

These entitlements cannot be accrued for time not spent in the childcare setting and so parents will not be able to carry over unused hours for use later in the year.

## ■ Employment Schemes: Finance

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[107741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her plans are for the funding of employability and skills programmes currently funded by the European Social Fund after 2020; and if she will make a statement.

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[107742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund will fund employability and skills programmes to the same level as funding from the European Social Fund after 2020; and if she will make a statement.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department continues to work across government on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, decisions about which will be made at the Spending Review.

## ■ Employment: Coronavirus

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[108231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans the Health and Safety Executive has to maintain oversight of how employers are (a) meeting their responsibilities in the context of the covid-19 outbreak and (b) equipped to respond effectively to (i) their employees, or members of their supply chain, testing positive for covid-19 or (ii) being close contacts of such a person.

**Mims Davies:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continues to use a blended approach combining communications with policy, sector and operational interventions to ensure appropriate measures are in place to protect workers and the public from the risks of Covid-19 in the workplace. This includes continuing spot check work, including on site interventions with employers as well as investigating reported concerns and the most serious reported cases of Covid-19 under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. Advice on Covid-19 related risks is provided by HSE's Concerns and Advice Team and up to date guidance and information is available on or via HSE's website. HSE continues to work closely across government, with the devolved administrations, industry sectors and a range

of other stakeholders to enable employers to put practical measures in place to control Covid-19 workplace risks. Where necessary, HSE takes appropriate enforcement action to ensure compliance with health and safety law.

HSE does not have a role in establishing or enforcing the NHS Test and Trace service. However, when responding to queries or concerns, HSE signposts to relevant GOV.UK guidance on NHS Test and Trace service in the workplace which provides advice for employers on supporting employees when they are asked to self-isolate.

## ■ Food Poverty: Children

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[106991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of children living in food insecure households in (a) Stockton North constituency and (b) the Tees Valley Combined Authority area.

**Will Quince:**

There currently is no consistent and accurate measure of food security at a constituency or national level.

## ■ Industrial Accidents

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[108232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many serious workplace accidents have been reported to the Health and Safety Executive in each year since 2015 under the 2013 Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations; and in which industries those accidents took place.

**Mims Davies:**

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) places duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain workplace injuries, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses)

The tables below show the number of serious workplace injuries (fatal/non-fatal) which have been reported under RIDDOR since 2015 in the main industry sectors.

**TABLE 1: FATAL INJURIES TO WORKERS (I.E. EMPLOYEES AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED; EXCLUDING RAILWAYS)**

Main industry	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20p
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	32	27	26	29	32	20
Mining and	1	2	5	4	0	0

**TABLE 1: FATAL INJURIES TO WORKERS (I.E. EMPLOYEES AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED; EXCLUDING RAILWAYS)**

Quarrying						
Manufacturing	18	28	18	15	26	15
Gas, electricity & water supply; sewerage, waste & recycling	6	8	18	13	7	6
Construction	35	47	31	37	31	40
Services	48	35	37	41	51	26
<b>All industries</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>107</b>

**TABLE 2: FATAL INJURIES TO NON-WORKERS (E.G. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC; EXCLUDING RAILWAYS)**

Main industry	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20p
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	4	2	3	4	7	1
Manufacturing	2	0	0	0	0	0
Gas, electricity & water supply; sewerage, waste & recycling	7	0	0	4	3	3
Construction	3	2	5	7	5	4
Services	86	71	41	36	45	43
<b>All industries</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>51</b>

**TABLE 3: NON-FATAL 'SPECIFIED' INJURIES TO WORKERS (EXCLUDING RAILWAYS)**

Main industry	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19p
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**TABLE 3: NON-FATAL 'SPECIFIED' INJURIES TO WORKERS (EXCLUDING RAILWAYS)**

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	435	417	395	408	384
Mining and Quarrying	77	71	69	62	67
Manufacturing	2956	2851	2807	2793	2821
Gas, electricity & water supply; sewerage, waste & recycling	675	679	623	658	645
Construction	2481	2542	2606	2510	2424
Services	12478	12505	12085	12944	12357
<b>All industries</b>	<b>19102</b>	<b>19065</b>	<b>18585</b>	<b>19375</b>	<b>18698</b>

### ■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[108228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many covid-19 related workplace concerns have been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (a) by phone and (b) online by (i) members of the public and (ii) employees in each month since March 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

#### **(1) Covid-19 related concerns reported online**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has received a total of 14817 workplace concerns reported via its online concerns reporting process since March 2020 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The notifier gave their status as 'employee' in 5263 cases, and as 'member of the public' in 4256 cases.

Table 1 shows the number of covid-19 related workplace concerns raised with HSE since March 20 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020, identifying the numbers reported by employees and members of the public:

	EMPLOYEE	MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC	OTHER*	TOTAL
Mar	787	324	676	1787



	EMPLOYEE	MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC	OTHER*	TOTAL
Apr	938	729	1106	2773
May	735	558	732	2025
Jun	549	394	504	1447
Jul	525	683	496	1704
Aug	367	494	415	1276
Sep	647	588	653	1888
1 <sup>st</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct	715	486	716	1917
<b>Total</b>	5263	4256	5298	14817

## (2) Covid-19 related telephone enquiries

HSE has received a total of 22371 covid-19 related telephone enquiries since March 2020 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Table 2 shows the number of telephone enquiries by month since March 2020 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

	TOTAL
Mar	1793
Apr	480
May	3315
Jun	4838
Jul	3863
Aug	2313
Sep	3130
1 <sup>st</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct	2639
<b>Total</b>	22371

Notes

i. Table 2 figures include other covid-19 related enquires. A breakdown of specific covid-19 concerns by telephone and the breakdown of the source of the call (employee, member of the public or other) is not possible to obtain.

ii. All figures were extracted from HSE's live database and provide the picture as at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[108229]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many covid-19 related cases opened by the Health and Safety Executive (a) are open and (b) have been closed in each month since March 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has opened a total of 36658 covid-19 related cases arising from social distancing concerns, spot checks, outbreaks and investigations following reports received under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. HSE currently has open 10691 such cases and has closed a total of 25967 since March 2020.

Table 1 shows the numbers of cases opened (which remain open) and closed in each month since March 2020:

CALENDAR MONTH AND YEAR	OPEN CASES	CLOSED CASES
Mar	0	6
Apr	19	1710
May	55	1077
Jun	374	2310
Jul	746	4263
Aug	1637	4648
Sep	3216	6282
1 <sup>st</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct	4644	5671
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10691</b>	<b>25967</b>
<b>Total open cases and closed cases</b>		<b>36658</b>

Notes:

(i) The figures were extracted from HSE's live operational database and provide the picture on the date of extraction (27<sup>th</sup> October 2020). Any new cases yet to be added to the system will not be included.

**Seema Malhotra:**[\[108230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many visits have been carried out by the Health and Safety Executive in each month since March 2020 to inspect whether workplaces were covid-secure; and how many of those visits in each month were carried out in each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK.

**Mims Davies:**

Since March 2020, HSE has recorded a total of 10045 visits to workplaces on Covid-19 security. The visits include spot checks specifically on Covid-19, inspections as part of an investigation into a concern raised about Covid-19 and inspections and investigations into other matters at which Covid-19 is also checked.

Table 1 - Breakdown of visits by month:

MONTH	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	1 <sup>ST</sup> – 27 <sup>TH</sup> OCT	TOTAL
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1586</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>2056</b>	<b>4595</b>	<b>10045</b>

Table 2 - Breakdown of visits by country:

COUNTRY	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	1 <sup>ST</sup> – 27 <sup>TH</sup> OCT	TOTAL
England	2	35	110	140	1281	1232	1713	4154	<b>8667</b>
Scotland	-	2	13	14	190	172	247	231	<b>869</b>
Wales	-	1	8	17	103	48	86	194	<b>457</b>
Dutyholder-based in Northern Ireland but inspection took place in GB		1	-	1	2	6	4	6	<b>20</b>
Unable to verify site postcode with ONS system	-	-	-	3	10	3	6	10	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1586</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>2056</b>	<b>4595</b>	<b>10045</b>

Note: The health and safety at work regulator for Northern Ireland is the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) which is not a part of HSE. Figures given are therefore for visits in England, Scotland and Wales.

Table 3 Breakdown of visits by region.

REGION	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	1 <sup>ST</sup> – 27 <sup>TH</sup> OCT	TOTAL
East Midlands	-	2	12	23	143	112	127	311	<b>730</b>
East of England	-	4	15	17	114	89	151	546	<b>936</b>
London	1	4	4	17	158	120	131	247	<b>682</b>
North East	-	2	14	6	76	64	149	307	<b>618</b>
North West	-	4	10	17	189	255	411	1169	<b>2055</b>
South East	-	4	22	21	186	174	320	434	<b>1161</b>
South West	1	1	19	21	124	164	110	254	<b>694</b>
West Midlands	-	9	3	8	80	92	109	638	<b>939</b>
Yorkshire and The Humber	-	5	11	10	211	162	205	248	<b>852</b>
Dutyholder-based in Northern Ireland but inspection took place in GB		1	-	1	2	6	4	6	<b>20</b>
Unable to verify site postcode with ONS system	-	-	-	3	10	3	6	10	<b>32</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1586</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>2056</b>	<b>4595</b>	<b>10045</b>

## Notes

- i. Data is not available by region for Wales and Scotland.
- ii. All figures were extracted from HSE's live database and provide the picture as at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

## ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[108283]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria are used to assess the (a) appropriateness and (b) quality of jobs aimed at young people as part of the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

To be viewed as both appropriate and of the required quality, a Kickstart job placement must be a new role and develop the young person's employability. For the job placements created with Kickstart Scheme funding to be new jobs, they must not replace existing jobs, or cause existing employees, apprentices or contractors to lose work or reduce their working hours. The job placements must also be a minimum of 25 hours per week, last for 6 months and pay the relevant national minimum wage for the age of the participant.

As well providing important work experience to the participant, each job placement will also provide employability support for the young person. As well as on-the-job skills development, this support could include help with looking for long-term work, including career advice and setting goals or support with curriculum vitae (CV) and interview preparations.

## ■ Kickstart Scheme: West Midlands

**Sajid Javid:**

**[107629]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many businesses in the (a) West Midlands, (b) Worcestershire and (c) Bromsgrove District have signed up to the Kickstart Scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

As of 30/10/2020, 3717 applications have been made for funding through DWP's Kickstart scheme (either as an employer or a Gateway organisation), and at that date bids covering a total of around 15,170 potential placements had been approved. We are not yet able to reliably break these placements down by region, given that some of the employers have submitted national bids.

**■ Poverty: Children****Alex Cunningham:****[107646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department is taking to reduce child poverty in (a) Stockton North constituency and (b) the Tees Valley Combined Authority area.

**Will Quince:**

Tackling child poverty is a priority for this Government. Our recent focus has been on supporting people financially during these unprecedented times. The Department for Work and Pensions quickly introduced a package of support, including welfare changes worth £9.3 billion this year to help people with the financial consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our long-term ambition remains to level up across the country and continue to tackle child poverty through our reformed welfare system that works with the labour market to encourage parents to move into and progress in work wherever possible.

Our £30bn Plan for Jobs is the first step on the ladder to achieving this and will support economic recovery through new schemes including Kickstart and Job Entry Targeted Support. We are also doubling the number of work coaches who, through our Jobcentre network, will provide more people with the tailored support they need to move back into work and towards financial independence.

The Government launched its Plan for Jobs in response to the impact of the pandemic. Progress can be seen in the recent launch of Kickstart, the new Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS), an extension of the Work and Health Programme and the expansion of the Sector-based Work Academy Programme. A New Job Finding Support Service, involving the private sector recruiters, will also be introduced.

**■ Poverty: Females****Colleen Fletcher:****[107012]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of women and girls living below the poverty line.

**Will Quince:**

National Statistics on the number of women and girls in relative and absolute low income are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" (HBAI) publication.

The latest figures up to 2018/19 can be found at:

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

Guidance for users is available at:

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

## ■ Rented Housing: Epsom and Ewell

**Chris Grayling:**

[\[107609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of properties on the rental market in Epsom and Ewell which fall into the lower quartile financial limits for housing support.

**Will Quince:**

There has been no such assessment.

In April we increased Local Housing Allowance rates for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to the lowest 30 percent of local rents. This includes all rates in Outer South London and Outer South West London, the two Broad Rental Market Areas which fall within Epsom and Ewell. This significant investment of almost £1billion, ensures over 1 million households will see an increase, on average, of £600 this year.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[107011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to work with (a) charities and (b) advice centres to improve the advice and support provided to disabled people (i) completing applications and (ii) undergoing assessments for benefits.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Department for Work and Pensions provides funding of up to £39 million to Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland to deliver Help to Claim support. Help to Claim provides advice and practical support to people making their Universal Credit application.

On top of this, as part of our ongoing work on the Green Paper, we have run 16 virtual events in which we've heard directly from over 200 disabled people, and 30 organisations supporting them, about their experiences with the benefits system. The health and disability Green Paper will reflect themes coming out of these conversations and ask for views on how best to improve the benefits system, including the application and assessment process.

We regularly engage with a wide range of external stakeholders in order to continually improve the PIP claimant experience. We are working with charities to hear their views on the PIP application process and reflecting these in improvements to the customer journey and assessments, and in up-coming changes to GOV.UK.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

**Chris Bryant:**

[\[108212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to assist women affected by the changes to the state pension age during the covid-19 crisis.



**Chris Bryant:**

**[108213]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department is planning to provide to women affected by the changes to the state pension age.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Government has strengthened the safety net to provide financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is committed to providing financial support for people at every stage of their life, including when they near or reach retirement. The welfare system will continue to provide support to men and women who are unable to work or those who are on a low income but who are not eligible to pensioner benefits because of their age.

We have invested in a significant new programme, the Plan for Jobs, to help people of all ages who may be made redundant find work and acquire the skills they need to return to work. Our Fuller Working Lives strategy and the Business Champion for Older Workers and Employers will continue to encourage businesses to recognise the value and skills of employing older workers. Jobcentre Plus Older Claimant Champions provide additional tailored support to help people return to work. We have never spent more as a country on welfare support than we do now.

■ **Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit: Coronavirus**

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[106989]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate the Government has made of the number of families that will be affected by the reduction in (a) universal credit and (b) working tax credit by £20 a week in April 2021 in (i) Stockton North constituency and (ii) the Tees Valley Combined Authority area.

**Will Quince:**

No estimate has been made. Volumes will be dependent on the Universal Credit caseload during the period to March 2021.

■ **Universal Credit: Coronavirus**

**Lilian Greenwood:**

**[108220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families with children have received the £20 per week uplift in universal credit standard allowance payments in (a) Nottingham South and (b) the UK in each month since that uplift was introduced.

**Will Quince:**

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

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

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

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

**Claire Hanna:**

**[108305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will extend the run on period for entitlement for the childcare element of universal credit to include two assessment periods after the assessment period in which the client ceases employment to help mitigate the economic effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

Universal Credit (UC) claimants who cease employment and have pre-existing childcare arrangements, will be eligible for reimbursement of up to 85% of their childcare costs as part of their UC award for the assessment period in which they cease work and the subsequent assessment period. There are no current plans to extend this.

#### ■ Universal Credit: Females

**Chris Bryant:**

**[108211]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many women over sixty years of age are claiming universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

The latest available information on the number of people on Universal Credit broken down by gender and by age is published and can be found at:

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

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

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

#### ■ Universal Credit: Poplar and Limehouse

**Apsana Begum:**

**[108298]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of families currently receiving universal credit in the Poplar and Limehouse constituency; and what her policy is on foodbank referrals for those people.

**Will Quince:**

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

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

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

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

DWP, through their Jobcentre network, do not refer claimants to food banks or issue food banks vouchers. The Department has long-standing guidance in place which allows staff to signpost customers in writing to a food bank where they have asked for details, and if all sources of statutory support have been exhausted.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[102869\]](#)

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 October 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

~~As of 15:00 on 14 October 2020, the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme had received 17,218 grant applications.~~

**As of 16:00 on 20 October 2020, the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme had received 20,903 grant applications.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Defence Update

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

[\[HCWS544\]](#)

In 1993 the Ministry of Defence (MOD) entered into a Government owned Contractor operated (GoCo) arrangement with Hunting-BRAE whereby Hunting-BRAE operated the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) on behalf of the Government. In 1999, following a competitive tender, a new 25-year contract was awarded to AWE Management Ltd (AWE ML).

On the 1 July 2019 the MOD triggered the Successor Arrangements clause with AWE ML to enable it to consider alternative viable management options ahead of the current contract expiration. Although the existing arrangements have brought stability to the organisation the MOD has concluded that AWE will revert to a direct Government ownership model.

Under the revised arrangements, AWE plc will become an Arms-Length Body wholly owned by the MOD. It will continue to be managed by a world leading team and a new Board will be appointed by the MOD. The new business model will see AWE plc continue to draw on private sector specialist support to strengthen capability as well as playing a key role in managing capital projects and contracts. This approach is recognised as best practice in other major complex programmes.

The MOD, AWE ML and AWE plc will jointly manage the termination of the contract and the transition to the new arrangements, which are anticipated to be completed by the end of June 2021. This will be completed in close co-operation with workforce representatives, regulators, the supply chain and the local community.

The continued safe and secure operation of AWE sites will remain the over-riding focus during the transition and under the revised management structure.

#### ■ Director of Service Prosecutions

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

[\[HCWS546\]](#)

Under section 364 of the Armed Forces Act 2006 the Director of Service Prosecutions is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The term of the current incumbent, Andrew Cayley QC, comes to an end on 2 November 2020.

I can inform the House that Her Majesty has appointed Jonathan Rees QC to succeed Mr Cayley as the next independent Director of Service Prosecutions. Mr Rees has practised from chambers at 2 Hare Court since 2015, prosecuting and defending serious criminal allegations of murder, terrorism, sexual abuse and corruption.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr Cayley who has served as Director for the last seven years and worked hard with other Service Justice System

stakeholders to improve the processes by which cases are built and brought to trial, whilst maintaining the necessary independence of prosecutorial decision-making. His efforts have ensured that the Authority has retained its position as an independent and respected prosecuting body which has underpinned the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

As he hands over his responsibilities to Mr Rees, I would like to express my personal gratitude for the important contribution he has made.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Grenfell Update

**Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS548\]](#)

The Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 was a national tragedy. 72 people died in the greatest loss of life in a residential fire since the Second World War; many more mourn the loss of their families, friends, community, and homes.

Grenfell Tower Inquiry published its Phase 1 report on 30 October 2019. The Report's findings addressed the events of that night - the fire, how it started and spread, and the emergency response to it. Today I am updating the House on the progress and choices that the Government has made in implementing and acting on these recommendations. We owe it to the bereaved, the survivors, the community, and indeed all people living in blocks of flats around the country to demonstrate that we are making progress and their homes are being made safer.

The Government is delivering a comprehensive programme of reform on building and fire safety to ensure real and long-lasting, change. In the past year we have acted on the recommendations of Sir Martin and the Inquiry, in addition to our ongoing work in response to recommendations made by Dame Judith Hackitt in the Independent Review. We are addressing historic defects and delivering new legislation. This will bring about thorough regulatory reform; and ensure that people feel empowered and listened to and, more importantly, that they are safe and feel safe in their homes.

We recognised the importance of urgent action to remove unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding from high-rise residential buildings, and to date 77 per cent of identified high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings have already been or are in the process of being fully remediated. We expect this figure to rise significantly by 31 December as the remaining residential buildings have a plan in place or have expressed their intention to remediate. As well as providing support, we will hold the owners of these buildings to account and keep residents safe in their homes.

We have worked with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and local health and education partners to help the community in its recovery: rehousing residents of the Tower and of Grenfell Walk; providing funding to support refurbishment of the Lancaster West Estate; and addressing local concerns about the impact of the fire on health and the local environment.

We want the views of Grenfell communities to be heard across government, which is why the Prime Minister appointed Rt Hon Nick Hurd, former Minister for Grenfell Victims, as his Independent Adviser to represent the views of Grenfell communities at the heart of government. We know that the bereaved and the survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire await the forthcoming Social Housing White Paper, and we anticipate publishing this in the coming month.

My officials are working with the Grenfell community and the people affected by the fire, including on the delivery of a fitting and lasting memorial to the 72 people who very sadly lost their lives. As well as continuing to provide regular updates to the community about the site and regarding the legislative programme, we will also ensure we provide further regular updates on progress against the Inquiry's recommendations.

### **Recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One Report**

The report made 46 detailed recommendations to improve fire safety, directed at a range of organisations including: the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and Fire and Rescue Services more broadly, other emergency services, building owners, and Government. The Government is already taking forward a number of these recommendations, including: fundamental legislative change; working with Fire and Rescue Services to support them in making the necessary improvements; starting specific projects on evacuation; working with local leaders and national bodies to ensure that action is being taken across the country supported by new funding; and identifying and remediating buildings with historic risks from unsafe cladding.

#### **Building a safer future**

Since December 2019, the Home Office has led on developing and introducing the Fire Safety Bill. That Bill will clarify the scope of the Fire Safety Order (FSO) in multi-occupied residential buildings. In particular, it will place beyond doubt that in multi-occupied residential blocks the FSO applies to the structure, external wall systems and flat entrance doors, ensuring that Fire and Rescue Authorities can confidently take enforcement action where building owners or managers are not compliant.

The Fire Safety Bill paves the way for secondary legislation which we propose to make after the commencement of the Fire Safety Bill next year. The Fire Safety Consultation held this year set out Government proposals to strengthen fire safety in regulated buildings in England to ensure that people are safe from fire regardless of where they live, stay or work. These proposals are a practical and effective approach to address the risks the Inquiry identified in Phase 1. They will provide residents with greater assurance and deliver fire safety improvements in their buildings and hold Responsible Persons, including building owners and managers, to account. At the same time, the Government will be introducing the Building Safety Bill in 2021, paving the way for a strengthened building safety regime for buildings, with an even stronger regime for high rise buildings.

Looking to the future, at the heart of the new building safety regime are two new regulators. The first, the Building Safety Regulator, will implement the more stringent regulatory regime for high risk residential buildings. It will also oversee the safety and performance of other buildings and support work to improve the competence of

professionals across the industry. The Regulator will be delivered by the Health and Safety Executive and began to operate in shadow form earlier this year.

We are also committed to further strengthening the regulation of construction products. Our draft Building Safety Bill includes provisions for a more robust regulatory framework that covers a wider range of products. It will strengthen the powers available to regulators, enforce the rules and lay the groundwork to establish of a national regulator which will spearhead the new approach.

The shadow Building Safety Regulator, within the HSE, is already advising the Government on the new regime. Over the coming months, it will develop guidance to ensure that all regulators involved understand how this will operate, and what they need to do to prepare for it.

Together, the measures in the draft Building Safety Bill, Fire Safety Bill, and Fire Safety Order consultation will improve safety standards for residents in all blocks of flats. Stricter regulations for high-rise buildings will make sure those living in them can feel safe and be safe in their homes – as is their right. Indeed, everything my officials do across the Building Safety Programme in the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Fire and Resilience Directorate in the Home Office is driven by a shared determination to prevent the recurrence of a tragedy like Grenfell.

#### Fire and Rescue Services

The Phase 1 report made it very clear that Fire and Rescue Services should make significant improvements to their training; policies and practices; and their equipment and technology. We are seeking real changes demonstrated through an investment in the right types of training, leadership and equipment.

That is why the Home Secretary wrote to LFB, requiring regular reporting on its progress on implementing the recommendations. Although there is still more to do, we are encouraged that LFB continues to focus on implementing all the recommendations directed to them as well as those targeting services more broadly. The LFB has revised its policies, and through a programme of training is embedding changes in the approach to high-rise firefighting. The integration of different and new technologies such as the trialling of drones to improve situational awareness and support incident commanders, is encouraging. The use of smoke hoods and smoke curtains to assist with evacuations, trialled in large scale operational exercises, appears to be a positive step. The Home Office continues to receive regular reports which have shown steady and concerted progress, even against a backdrop of the pandemic.

The Home Secretary has also commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to review the governance and progress of LFB's action plan to implement the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. We anticipate the outcome of this initial review in January 2021.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is reflecting the Inquiry's recommendations in its ongoing review of National Operational Guidance and the development of national standards through the Fire Standards Board, which this Government established. The



Minister of State for Building Safety and Communities last month hosted a roundtable for all fire chiefs and chairs, to ensure that local services were equally committed to making rapid and meaningful progress in order to protect communities.

To ensure that the lessons from Grenfell are learned and change is implemented at pace we have made available £10 million in additional funding in 2020/21 to drive change nationally and in local services. A further £20 million has been provided to support fire protection activity across England.

As with London, HMICFRS will provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of services in responding to the recommendations as part of its second cycle of inspection, which the Home Secretary has agreed will commence in the new year.

### Fire Protection

The Independent Review into Building Regulations and Fire Safety found the system 'broken'. This broken system is being further revealed through the work of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The Phase 1 report found that a number of key fire protection measures failed to work as they should have at Grenfell. The Inquiry identified failings in the way in which LFB fulfilled its obligations under s.7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This requirement is in place to ensure that it had the information needed for extinguishing fire and protecting life at the Tower.

Post Grenfell, we have seen other examples, which have further highlighted the importance of strengthening the overall protection capability and capacity of fire and rescue services. The work of HMICFRS, The Independent Review and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry evidence the need for more to be done to ensure that people are safe and secure in their homes and that FRSs need additional support to deliver an improved protection function to help achieve this goal. It is important that people can feel safe in their homes and that is why we have committed to ensuring that all high-rise residential buildings are inspected or reviewed by the end of 2021.

Our first priority for the £20 million protection funding has been to ensure that fire and rescue services are able to review or inspect every high-rise residential building in England by the end of 2021. This is a major programme of work, overseen by the Fire Protection Board, which will set the foundation for the building safety regulator. The funding has also created a new leadership function in NFCC; and provides funding for Fire and Rescue Services to have the capability and capacity to respond to risks in other potentially higher risk buildings, including residential buildings under 18 metres, care homes and hospitals.

Both MHCLG and the Home Office have worked with services and the NFCC, through the Fire Protection Board, to ensure appropriate interim measures remain in place to protect residents in buildings with dangerous cladding, such as ACM. The revised NFCC Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance, published on 1 October 2020, provides clearer advice which supports the Fire and Rescue Services and responsible persons to fully evacuate as soon as a fire is detected. The guidance advises responsible persons to explore cost benefit options with leaseholders and residents. It also encourages the installation of Common Fire alarms systems which means reducing the dependency on

waking watch wherever possible. The guidance also reiterates that interim measures should only ever be short term and are not a substitute for remediation.

In addition, the research to support the development of national guidelines for carrying out partial or total evacuations of high-rise residential buildings and building design requirements is progressing. Independent experts will support the research that will underpin this work, and review the means of escape provisions in blocks of flats, including use of the “stay put” strategy and evacuation.

#### Emergency services

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) Joint Doctrine provides responders, at the scene and elsewhere, with a common way of working when responding to multi- agency incidents. Sir Martin recommended a number of amendments to the JESIP Joint Doctrine, including around communicating the declaration of a major incident.

The Emergency Services lead Chief Officers from JESIP have committed to addressing, in full, these recommendations in the review of the JESIP Joint Doctrine currently underway. This work is forecast to be completed in spring 2021.

#### **Early actions and remediating historic risks:**

Following the fire, the Government removed unsafe cladding products from the market and began dealing with historic defects. We banned combustible materials for use on new high-rise residential buildings and continue to work closely with local authorities, industry and regulators to identify existing buildings with dangerous cladding. Since then, we have continued to engage robustly with building owners, regulators and industry, to ensure the most dangerous forms of cladding are removed and replaced as soon as possible.

Building owners are responsible for building safety. But the Government recognises that funding is often a key barrier to remediation. That’s why we’re providing £1.6 billion to speed up the removal of unsafe cladding.

Despite COVID restrictions, we made it clear that these circumstances could not be allowed to impede progress on ACM remediation. Working closely with industry, we made good progress despite the many challenges we faced. We have set out a clear expectation that all building owners, across all sectors, must start ACM remediation works on site by the end of 2020.

There is still some way to go, but it is important to recognise that homes are being made safer. To date, 351 buildings (77 per cent of all identified high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings, including hotels and student accommodation), have already been or are in the process of being fully remediated. 148 social sector residential buildings – 95 per cent of that sector – have done the same. All remaining residential buildings now have a plan in place or have reported an intent to remediate.

Both myself and the Minister of State for Building Safety and Communities have personally met local leaders and the Fire Service to support them in taking action where progress is slow. Progress is reported through monthly data releases, and we have made

clear that we will not rule out further measures in our mission to hold the owners of these buildings to account and keep residents safe in their homes.

### **Conclusion**

In the year since the Phase 1 report was published, the Government has delivered demonstrable progress on all fronts and remained resolute in its commitment to deliver the recommendations. In relation to London we have used our powers to ensure that real change is happening. Through the funding we have provided the NFCC we have bolstered the national leadership that will help all services to make strategic and meaningful change – both in culture and leadership and in practical operational delivery. We have worked with industry, building owners, and regulators to ensure the most dangerous forms of cladding are removed and replaced as soon as possible. This work is not complete – we will continue to improve our services and the safety of buildings to ensure that the conditions that led to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower will no longer exist. The proposed legislative reforms will ensure there is absolute clarity on the regulatory framework, providing strong and comprehensive building safety so that residents can know their safety is assured.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

### ■ **Negotiations on the UK's Future Trading Relationship with the US: Update**

**Secretary of State for Department of International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):**  
[\[HCWS545\]](#)

The fifth UK-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiating round took place from 19 to 30 October 2020.

This was the most intensive round of negotiations held so far, with 38 sessions covering 19 different chapter areas.

Almost all chapter areas are now in the advanced stages of talks. A significant proportion of legal text has been agreed across multiple chapters.

The round included focused discussions on market access for goods, including negotiations around product specific rules of origin, which determines whether or not a product can benefit from preferential tariffs under the FTA.

We also held detailed textual discussions on a Digital chapter and agreed much of the legal framework for a future agreement.

Following the significant progress made in talks to date, both sides are confident that we are on track for a comprehensive agreement which would provide a significant and mutual benefit to our economies. We believe we are in a good position to move forward after the U.S. election.

We have agreed a programme for continued talks at official level for the weeks following the U.S. election.

Below is a summary list of those workstreams discussed in the round:

- Competition
- Core Text
- Cross Cutting Services
- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Digital
- Environment
- Financial Services
- Good Regulatory Practice (GRP)
- Investment
- Intellectual Property
- Market Access for Goods
- Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)
- Sectoral Annexes
- Services Sectors – Professional Business, Transport and Delivery Services
- State Owned Enterprises
- State to State Dispute Settlement
- Telecoms
- Trade Remedies

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Regulations to implement the consent mechanism in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol

**Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis):**

**[\[HCWS547\]](#)**

I am today laying before both Houses of Parliament a draft of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland (Democratic Consent Process) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 which will, if approved, reflect in domestic law the consent mechanism set out in the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol and the UK Government's Unilateral Declaration of 17 October 2019.

The consent mechanism ensures that Articles 5 to 10 of the Protocol will cease to apply if Northern Ireland's political representatives conclude they are no longer desirable. The first consent process will take place in late 2024, and will be repeated every four or eight years depending on whether consent (if given) is given on a simple majority or a cross-community basis. Embedding that recognition of consent in the Protocol was intrinsic to its acceptance by this Government.

The regulations implement both a default consent procedure, which will apply if a First Minister and deputy First Minister are in office at the time notification of the start of the process is given, and an alternative consent procedure, which will apply if a First Minister and deputy First Minister are not in office at the time notification of the start of the process is given. The alternative procedure enables any MLA to bring forward the consent motion in the absence of a First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Protocol was specifically designed to protect the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and the gains of the peace process. The principle of consent is central to it, ensuring that democratically elected local politicians make decisions for the people of Northern Ireland.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Local Transport Update

**The Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):**

**[[HCWS543](#)]**

The Government and the Mayor of London have agreed a second extraordinary funding and financing package for Transport for London for the period to March 31 2021. It replaces the agreement signed in May. It will ensure the continued operation of public transport services in London and is proof of our commitment to supporting the capital and the transport network on which it depends.

As with the national rail network, the Government will make up the revenue which TfL has lost due to the covid pandemic over the period. The new package comprises a central funding scenario of £1bn - made up of £905m grant funding and £95m borrowing - with flexibility for changing the grant payment in response to changing passenger demand. Actual payments are likely to be greater than £1bn because of the move to national covid restrictions.

TfL continues to need substantial support due to the significant fall in revenue caused by covid-19. However, choices made in the preceding four years have made TfL less resilient to the impacts of the pandemic and this is why it is of vital importance that the Mayor brings forward plans to re-establish a trajectory to financial sustainability as soon as possible.

As well as the conditions in the package agreed in May, the new agreement therefore sets out further measures to put TfL on a sustainable financial footing as soon as possible. Over the next six months, the Mayor will impose fare rises of RPI plus 1 per cent on all modes from January 2021; maintain the central London congestion charge at the hours and level to which it was increased in June; maintain the withdrawal of 60-65 Pass and 66+ Freedom Pass concessions in the morning peak; and make a further £160m in year savings, additional to those already planned, with the exception of active travel, which will remain as in the first half of the year. TfL will co-operate with a Government-led review of driverless trains. The two Government special representatives will continue to attend TfL Board and panel meetings. A new Government-led working-level oversight group will be created. By January 11 2021, TfL will produce a single,

comprehensive management plan with options as to how a trajectory to financial sustainability by 2023 can be achieved.

Any grant from Government to support London must be fair for UK taxpayers. If the Mayor wishes Londoners to continue to benefit from travel concessions and/or other benefits above those typically available elsewhere in England, he and TfL have recognised that the costs of these additional benefits will not be met by the Government; and that they will meet these costs themselves, without recourse to additional borrowing, savings, service changes or deferrals. TfL and the Mayor have proposed that this could be done by an increased council tax precept from April 2021. They will submit their proposals by 11 January 2021, alongside the fiscal sustainability plan. The Government will take all steps necessary at the appropriate times to enable this proposal.

Extending the congestion charging zone to inner London has been ruled out by both the Government and the Mayor. National travel concessions including free travel to school for those who qualify under the 1996 Education Act will continue to be funded by the Government. The Freedom Pass for pensioners and the disabled will continue as now. It is not funded by TfL or the Mayor.

The full agreement can be found on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-for-london-settlement-letter>