



Daily Report

Thursday, 5 November 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 5 November 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 05 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Administration of Justice: Disclosure of Information

Karl McCartney:

[\[908177\]](#)

What steps she is taking to ensure that the revised Guidelines on Disclosure will result in improved performance across the criminal justice system.

Suella Braverman:

I am delighted that my revised Disclosure Guidelines have now been published. These Guidelines will come into force on 31 December and will be key to the requisite culture change and thinking approach needed when investigators and prosecutors carry out their disclosure obligations.

This will ensure that better, fairer decisions are made in criminal cases, which will help to ensure that fewer cases are dropped post-charge due to issues arising due to late disclosure.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Syria

Adam Holloway:

[\[110089\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions there have been of British citizens who returned to the UK from north-eastern Syria since March 2019.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS has a strong record of bringing successful prosecutions in terrorism cases and works extremely closely with Counter Terrorism policing and partners to help build strong cases.

The CPS does not collate or publish data on categories of offender such as British citizens who have returned to the UK. However, latest figures from the Home Office for *all* types of terrorism cases show that in the year ending 30 June 2020, 49 persons were tried for terrorism-related offences, resulting in 45 convictions.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Coronavirus

David Johnston:

[\[908180\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) effectiveness of the digital capability of the CPS during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS successfully enabled almost its entire workforce to move to remote working at the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, without business interruption. Working with partners, the CPS has helped the criminal justice system to continue to function throughout the pandemic.

The CPS Inspectorate published a report on the performance of the CPS at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak. It commended the organisation's digital capability and strategic planning and its foresight in upgrading its digital capabilities.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Standards

Gerald Jones: [\[908181\]](#)

What steps she is taking to reduce the backlog of cases in the CPS.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS is working closely with partner agencies across the criminal justice system to reduce the current backlog of cases created by the Covid-19 outbreak. This includes both internal measures to deal with larger live caseloads in CPS Areas and working closely with partners to ensure maximum throughput of cases at court.

Considerable progress is being made. In the honourable member's constituency, Merthyr Magistrates' Court has now reduced its backlog to pre-COVID levels.

■ Prison Sentences

Henry Smith: [\[908175\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the extension to the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

Selaine Saxby: [\[908176\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the extension to the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

Michael Ellis:

The unduly lenient sentence scheme was extended to incorporate further serious offences, in November of last year.

The horrendous crime of stalking involving serious alarm or distress was one of the offences which was added.

I am pleased to tell the House that this extension meant I was able to refer a case recently to the Court of Appeal, one in which the sentence of the offender was more than doubled.

■ Rule of Law

Marion Fellows: [\[908178\]](#)

What discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on upholding the rule of law.

Suella Braverman:

The freedoms and protections that we all enjoy rely on the rule of law. This is an important constitutional principle which demands: equality under the law; access to independent and impartial justice; government subject to the law; law that is clear and certain.

The duty of the Law Officers is to give the Government full and frank legal advice, and to ensure the Government acts in full knowledge of the legal position. I take that responsibility seriously, and will continue to do so.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Daisy Cooper:

[\[110251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the guidance on Bounce Back Loans to permit businesses, that have chosen to accept less than the total loan offered to them, to increase the borrowed amount up to the maximum they are eligible for.

Paul Scully:

As part of the broader package of support measures announced on 2 November, we announced that we will change the Bounce Back Loan Scheme rules to allow those businesses who have borrowed less than their maximum to top-up their existing loan.

If a business has already received a Bounce Back Loan of less than 25% of the turnover they stated on their last application form, they will be able to apply to their existing lender to top up their existing loan to 25% of turnover or £50,000, whichever is lower.

The top-up will be on the terms of the original loan, that is, the term for the top-up will finish on the same date as for the original, as will the repayment holiday.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[110242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with business representative organisations on the effect on businesses of the covid-19 pandemic.

Paul Scully:

Ministerial colleagues and I have engaged closely with business representative organisations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and we continue to do so.

Ministers hold regular sector calls with all the industries that BEIS covers, including but not limited to manufacturing, energy, construction, life sciences, professional services, retail and hospitality. Attendees include business representative organisations, trade associations and trade unions. We use these on-going engagements to collect direct intelligence on the impact of Covid-19 on industries and sectors that informs the response from BEIS and other Government departments and ensures the effectiveness of the Government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

■ Business: Loans**Stella Creasy:** [\[110295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish details of individual aid awards under the (a) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, (b) Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and (c) Bounce Back Loan Scheme as required on the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module.

Paul Scully:

Details of individual aid awards under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme will be published where required on the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module in due course.

■ Climate Change Convention**Ruth Jones:** [\[110241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made on preparations for COP26 in November 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Planning for COP26 is ongoing and we are continuing to work closely with the venues and our delivery partners to ensure that we deliver the facilities and logistics needed for the event, in line with the requirements outlined by the UNFCCC.

Alongside summit preparations, the COP26 President, ministers and senior officials have been engaging with a wide range of UK and international partners.

The UK, UN and France will co-host a Climate Ambition Summit alongside our partners Italy and Chile, on 12th December 2020 on the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement. This will be an opportunity for countries to announce ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and net zero, finance and adaptation commitments.

The recent net zero commitments from China, Japan and South Korea have provided welcome momentum, and we hope that the Ambition Summit provides impetus for further commitments by the end of the year.

■ Hydrogen: Northern Ireland**Sammy Wilson:** [\[107626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the Northern Ireland hydrogen economy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to developing hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier across the UK. Low carbon hydrogen presents an opportunity for Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole to deliver against our clean growth goals –

meeting our decarbonisation needs while capturing commercial opportunities. This is especially important as we support our economy to recover from Covid-19.

In order to realise the opportunities from hydrogen, we are undertaking a range of activities:

- investing up to £121m in hydrogen innovation across the value chain;
- developing business models to support the deployment of, and investment in, low carbon hydrogen production;
- announcing the £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund in 2019 to stimulate capital investment.

We will be setting out further plans in the UK Hydrogen Strategy, which we intend to publish in early 2021.

In order to aid this work, we established the Hydrogen Advisory Council to formalise regular engagement with Industry. The Council met for the first time on 20 July and membership includes officials from Northern Ireland government as well as Ryse/Wrightbus. We look forward to the Council's ongoing input as we build a new low carbon hydrogen economy for the UK.

■ Licensed Premises: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[110254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the financial detriment to (a) licensed premises and (b) cask beer producers of the restriction on the sale of takeaway alcohol during the covid-19 lockdown.

Paul Scully:

During the new national restrictions in place from 5 November, pubs and bars are permitted to sell alcohol through delivery or via click and collect where remote ordering has been utilised.

■ Music: Internet

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[908253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, If he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a public body with powers to set the price of licences required to stream music similar to the Copyright Royalty Board in the US.

Amanda Solloway:

The prices of music streaming licences are the result of private, commercial negotiations and the Government plays no role in them.

The Government recognises the importance of understanding how rights holders are remunerated in the global streaming environment. The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is working closely with the UK Council of Music Makers on a research project to

investigate the flow of money from streaming to creators. This is due to report in summer 2021.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Jane Stevenson: [\[110245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will allow pubs to sell takeaway alcohol during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Paul Scully:

During the new national restrictions in place from 5 November, pubs and bars are permitted to sell alcohol through delivery or via click and collect where remote ordering has been utilised.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces Covenant

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[110073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 106907 on the Armed Forces Covenant, if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter and consultation proposals his Department sent to local authority Chief Executives.

Johnny Mercer:

The Director of Armed Forces People Policy wrote to the Chief Executives and Council Leaders of a number of Local Authorities to inform them of the Government's draft legislative proposal. This was at the request of some regional focus group members, as part of the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) policy development to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law. I have placed a copy of this letter in the Library of the House. To date, the MOD has not sent any consultation proposals to Local Authority Chief Executives.

Attachments:

1. Armed Forces Covenant Legislation [Letter to LA CE - Covenant Legislation.pdf]

■ Frigates

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[110070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which shipbuilding contracts will follow the conclusion of the Type 26 and Type 31 frigate programmes.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence remains committed to ensuring the United Kingdom has the capabilities required to fulfil Defence requirements both now and in the future. An update to the 30-year Naval Ship Acquisition Plan will be published after the Integrated Review, in line with the 2017 National Shipbuilding Strategy.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Patrick Grady:**[\[908269\]](#)

What assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the (a) live music industry and (b) arts and culture sector of ending the transition period without a deal with the EU.

Caroline Dineneage:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer from the Secretary of State to his topical question during DCMS Oral Questions today.

Rachel Hopkins:[\[908273\]](#)

What assessment his Department has made of the effect of the removal of the TV licence concession for the over-75s on the Government's loneliness strategy.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We remain disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75 licence fee concession to those in receipt of pension credit. We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe the BBC must look at how it uses its substantial licence fee income to support older people.

The government remains committed to working with partners across society to tackle loneliness. During Covid-19 we've provided £18 million for loneliness charities, updated our awareness campaign and launched a new Tackling Loneliness Network.

■ **Broadband: Rural Areas****Chi Onwurah:**[\[103503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the Government's strategy for encouraging competition amongst rural broadband providers.

Matt Warman:

In 2018, the Government published the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR), which set out the Government's strategy to deliver nationwide gigabit capable broadband as soon as possible, including in rural areas, by encouraging greater network competition and commercial investment.

The strategy focuses on:

- Making the cost of deploying gigabit capable networks as low as possible by addressing barriers to deployment, which increase costs and cause delays.
- Supporting market entry and expansion by alternative network operators through easy access to Openreach's ducts and poles, complemented by access to other utility infrastructure.
- Stable and long-term regulation that encourages competitive network investment.
- Supporting the timely switchover to new gigabit capable broadband networks.

The Government has recognised that not all areas of the country, particularly those in the most rural and remote areas, are likely to benefit from network competition and receive gigabit capable broadband through private investment alone, which is why we have committed to invest £5 billion in supporting deployment in these areas. The use of this funding will encourage a variety of rural broadband providers to deploy gigabit networks.

■ Conference Centres and Weddings: Coronavirus

Andrea Leadsom:

[109338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefits of increasing the number of people permitted to attend (a) wedding and (b) exhibition venues for those venues that have more space to accommodate those attendees safely during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Tourism Industry Council and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to assess how we can best support the sector's safe reopening. The business events pilots we carried out in September will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help larger events reopen when it is safe to do so.

Officials at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are continuing to engage with the wedding industry to understand the challenges being faced by wedding venues. These businesses are able to take advantage of a number of business support measures, such as government-backed loans and access to the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Fleur Anderson:

[103638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support he is providing to the events and exhibitions sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

We also recognise that the new national restrictions will have a significant impact on jobs and the economy, as well as on mental health and wellbeing. We've confirmed that there will be a full package of financial support in place, with the Job Retention Scheme extended for this period of lockdown. Businesses can continue to apply for government-backed loans, and self-employed individuals can access the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Tourism Industry Council and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to monitor the situation facing the sector. The business events pilots we carried out in September

will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help larger events reopen when it is safe to do so.

■ Gender Recognition: Sports

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[109573\]](#)

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

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[109574\]](#)

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

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[109575\]](#)

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

Nigel Huddleston:

No one in either my department or the Government Equalities Unit has had discussions on this topic with either World Rugby or the Rugby Football Union.

Officials in my department meet regularly with Sport England to discuss a range of issues related to diversity and inclusion across all sports, including transgender and non-binary participation, and the overarching guidance that Sport England is involved in providing to the grassroots sport sector. These discussions are general and do not focus on specific types of sport, such as contact sport.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [\[110200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of sports facility closures during the latest covid-19 restrictions on the (a) physical and (b) mental health of the population.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sport and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus.

Nobody wanted to be in the position of having to introduce further national restrictions. However as the Prime Minister said, with the virus spreading faster than expected we cannot allow our health system to be overwhelmed. Therefore, from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December indoor and outdoor leisure will need to close. The national restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions.

In order for these measures to have the greatest impact, we will all need to sacrifice doing some things that we would otherwise like to do, for a short period of time. As soon as we're in a position to start lifting restrictions, grassroots sports will be one of the first to return.

During this period, people are still allowed to leave their homes for exercise and recreation outdoors, with their household, on their own, or with one person from another household or support bubble.

■ Sports: Gender Recognition

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[109577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant Answer of 22 October to Question 105503, what discussions his Department has had with the Minister for Women and Equalities on the participation of transgender and non-binary players in contact sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport works with the Government's Equalities Office to discuss issues of equality in sport, but have not had specific discussions on the participation of transgender and non-binary players in contact sport.

Government's overriding sporting objective is and remains the guarantee of fair and safe competition - it is therefore right that sports bodies have their own rules on trans issues and can determine the right position for their own sport.

■ Swimming: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[110199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the scientific advice on which the decision to extend the latest covid-19 restrictions to outdoor swimming facilities is based.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy.

Nobody wanted to be in the position of having to introduce further National Restrictions. However as the Prime Minister said, with the virus spreading faster than expected we cannot allow our health system to be overwhelmed. Therefore, from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December indoor and outdoor leisure will need to close. The national restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions.

In order for these measures to have the greatest impact, we will all need to sacrifice doing some things that we would otherwise like to do, for a short period of time. As soon as we're in a position to start lifting restrictions, grassroots sports will be one of the first to return.

People are still allowed to leave their homes for exercise and recreation outdoors, with your household or on your own, or with one person from another household or support bubble.

■ Writers: Performing Arts

Giles Watling:

[109632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has undertaken research on the value added by scriptwriting to the UK creative industries.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Government supports scriptwriters as part of its broader sectoral support for the film sector, in particular through the approximately £70 million provided annually (including Lottery funding) to our lead agency for film the British Film Institute, and its funded partners. This funding supports screenwriting specific opportunities offered as part of the BFI Film Academy and BFI NETWORK, which invest in the next generation of screenwriting talent.

While the Department has not undertaken such specific research, the global box office performance of UK films and foreign productions which draw on UK source material is a good indicator of the value of scriptwriting. Of the top 200 grossing films released worldwide from 2010 to 2019, 26 are based on stories and characters created by UK writers, and collectively these films have earned \$19 billion at the global box office, 13% of the total.

EDUCATION

■ Education: British National (Overseas)

Sarah Owen:

[107112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to allow the admission of children to schools in the UK of British Nationals (Overseas) passport holders from Hong Kong in advance of the launch of the scheme for those passport holders in 2021.

Nick Gibb:

British Nationals (Overseas) ('BN(O)s') who are in the UK in advance of the new Hong Kong BN(O) route being launched in January 2021 are entitled to access a school place for their children. BN(O)s are able to apply for 'leave outside the rules' prior to the new route - which will give them and their family members access to work and study whilst in the UK - becoming available. This information is clearly set out on this website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/british-nationals-overseas-in-hong-kong>.

Dependent children of BN(O)s who are in the UK will also be entitled to access a school place under the new route once it is launched in January 2021.

BN(O)s may not be aware of the processes and timescales involved in applying for an English school before they move to the UK. They can find the information they need on this website: <https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions>.

This website also provides links across to information on the school admission systems in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, in case they are applying for schools under the different education systems that pertain in those nations.

■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Ian Byrne: [110275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the health and safety of teachers and staff in the workplace at schools and colleges during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Nick Gibb:

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) to develop specific guidance for education settings, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>. DHSC and PHE endorsed system of controls outlined in our guidance sets out the measures that school and college leaders and staff should follow.

Where settings implement the system of controls outlined in our guidance, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, DHSC and PHE confirm that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

While the national restrictions introduced from 5 November are in force, those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home where possible and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions. All other staff can continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

Ian Byrne: [110276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions the Government has had with the teaching unions on keeping schools and colleges open during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England; and what further steps the Government is taking to limit the spread of covid-19 in schools and colleges.

Nick Gibb:

Ministers and officials have regular engagement with teaching unions about the Government's COVID-19 response, including around keeping schools and colleges open during the November national lockdown.

On 2 July, the Department published guidance to help schools prepare for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term.

The full guidance can be viewed here:

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

Our guidance for schools sets out measures which provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff, which also ensure that all pupils receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. This includes the public health advice schools must follow to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission.

The public health advice in the guidance for schools makes up a Public Health England-endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that schools have been using throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Department is keeping the guidance under review. It will reflect any further steps necessary to keep children in school, whilst minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission, in light of new national restrictions being implemented from 5 November.

■ **Extended Services: Coronavirus**

Tulip Siddiq:

[110201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether wraparound childcare is permitted to remain open under the November 2020 national lockdown restrictions.

Vicky Ford:

As outlined in the guidance on new national restrictions, registered childcare and other childcare activities (including wraparound care) will be able to remain open under the national restrictions coming into effect from 5 November, where this is reasonably necessary to enable parents to work, seek work, attend education or training, or for the purposes of respite care. Some youth support services, including one-to-one youth work and support groups, may also continue to operate. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november#childcare-and-childrens-activities>.

■ **Pre-school Education: Coronavirus**

Tulip Siddiq:

[110202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether private (a) toddler groups, (b) singing groups and (c) other educational classes for children under the age of five can continue to take place under the new national covid-19 lockdown restrictions to be applied from 5 November 2020.

Vicky Ford:

Support groups, such as for breastfeeding, postnatal, and baby and toddler groups, operating in:

- Ofsted registered settings should follow government guidance on COVID-19 for early years and childcare providers, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>.

- Community settings, such as a church hall, community centre, or other public place groups, support groups, that are essential to deliver in person, can continue with up to 15 participants where formally organised to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support. This includes support to new parents and carers. These groups must be organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body and must follow COVID-19-secure guidance for the venue. This applies at all local alert levels and when national restrictions apply. Relevant guidance for when church halls are used can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>. Guidance for multi purpose community facilities can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>.

When national restrictions apply, in determining the limit of 15 participants, no account is to be taken of any child who is below the age of 5.

Informal groups, such as those organised by a parent, need to comply with the gathering and household mixing rules for the relevant local alert level, or in the case of national restrictions.

■ Remote Education: Liverpool West Derby

Ian Byrne:

[110277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of school children who did not have access to broadband and computer equipment have been given the equipment required to enable them to carry out school work from home where required in Liverpool West Derby constituency.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has invested over £195 million to support remote education through laptops and tablets, internet provision, and online education platforms.

Over 220,000 laptops and tablets were delivered during the summer term for disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access. This data can be found here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912888/Devices_and_4G_wireless_routers_progress_data_as_of_27_August_2020.pdf and includes data on Liverpool Council and trusts in the Liverpool region.

The Department have supplemented this support by making an additional 340,000 laptops and tablets available in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local Covid-19 restrictions, and children become reliant on remote education.

Over 100,000 devices have been delivered to schools since September, which includes 5,728 delivered to schools in the Liverpool region.

We have already provided over 50,000 4G wireless routers, with free data for the autumn term, to support disadvantaged children to access remote education and vital social care services.

In partnership with select mobile network operators, the Department ran a small-scale trial with a limited number of local authorities and academy trusts to identify and support disadvantaged families who would benefit from free mobile data uplifts to engage in remote education. Following the success of this pilot, we are now working with mobile network operators to provide a national service for disadvantaged children.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[110140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of SEND pupils have been unable to return to school since term began in September.

Vicky Ford:

The department does not hold this information.

The department collects data on the number of schools that have indicated that they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures, and have attendance data for schools that have done so. Published information is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

We know that for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, attending their educational setting is crucial so that they can receive high quality teaching and the specialist professional support they need. It remains our priority to keep education settings open for vulnerable children and young people, including those who have an Education Health and Care plan.

■ **Teachers: Coronavirus**

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[110272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Public Health England's report entitled Covid-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes, what additional support he is providing to teachers who are more vulnerable to covid-19 during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Nick Gibb:

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) to develop specific guidance for school settings, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#school-workforce>.

DHSC and PHE endorsed system of controls outlined in our guidance sets out the measures that school leaders and all school staff should follow.

Where schools implement the system of controls outlined in our guidance, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, DHSC and PHE confirm that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. As a result, on current evidence, DHSC and PHE advise that schools are not currently considered high risk settings when compared to other workplace environments.

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from COVID-19, as set out in the 'COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes' report. These staff can attend school as long as the system of controls set out in the published guidance are in place, as set out above.

While the national restrictions introduced from 5 November are in force, those individuals who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised to work from home where possible and not to go into work. Individuals in this group will have been identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP, and may have been advised to shield in the past. Staff should talk to their employers about how they will be supported, including to work from home where possible, during the period of national restrictions. All other staff can continue to attend work, including those living in a household with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

■ Teachers: Training

Andrew Gwynne:

[110087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October to Question 105309, what assessment he has made of the effect of the withdrawal of teaching bursaries for arts, English and humanities subjects on the ability of people (a) switching careers and (b) from less affluent backgrounds to train to teach those subjects.

Nick Gibb:

The bursaries offered for initial teacher training (ITT) are reviewed before the start of the annual recruitment cycle. In doing this, several factors are considered, including forecast economic conditions, previous recruitment, and teacher supply needs in each subject. Being able to change bursary amounts gives flexibility in responding to the need to attract new teachers and ensures money is spent where it is needed most.

In the academic year 2019/20, the postgraduate ITT targets in history (127% of target), geography (119% of target) and English (110% of target) were exceeded. Teaching remains an attractive proposition for graduates, including those in arts, English and humanities subjects. As a result, the Department has decided to focus the bursaries for the academic year 2021/22 on subjects where it is expected that it will be hardest to attract sufficient applicants.

Trainee teachers on tuition fee-funded ITT routes can apply for a tuition fee loan so they do not have to pay the fee upfront. They can also apply for a maintenance loan

to support their living costs. Additional funding is also available depending on individual circumstances, such as the Childcare Grant.

Kate Green:

[110297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department had with industry bodies within the music education sector before the publication of the 13 October 2020 guidance that removed music from the list of postgraduate bursaries for Initial Teacher Training; and if he will further consult with that sector before progressing with that policy decision.

Kate Green:

[110298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the decision to remove postgraduate bursaries for Initial Teacher Training in Music on (a) levels of music teacher recruitment and (b) the ability of schools to ensure that every student has access to a broad and balanced curriculum which includes music as part of their statutory entitlement.

Nick Gibb:

The Government believes that the arts are an essential part of a broad and balanced education. Music is a statutory subject within the National Curriculum for maintained schools in Key Stages 1 to 3. At Key Stage 4, all pupils in maintained schools must be offered the opportunity to study at least one subject in the arts 'entitlement' area.

The Department reviews the bursaries that are offered for initial teacher training (ITT) before the start of the annual recruitment cycle. The decisions made by the Department take account of several factors, including forecast economic conditions, previous recruitment, and teacher supply need in each subject. Being able to change bursary amounts gives the Department the flexibility to respond to the need to attract new teachers, and enables money to be spent where it is needed most.

In the 2020/21 academic year, we have seen an increase in applications compared to previous years, and a 32% increase in postgraduate ITT applications compared to the equivalent period in the 2019/20 academic year^[1]. Departmental analysis suggests that this increase will continue for applications to ITT courses for the 2021/22 academic year.

The Department recognises the importance of music within the National Curriculum. As we review ITT financial incentives during each academic year, the Department will consider the offer across all subjects before announcing the incentives for ITT courses taking place in the 2022/23 academic year.

In the 2019 spending round, the Government announced funding increases for schools across the next three years. This will mean an additional £2.6 billion for the 2020/21 financial year, £4.8 billion for 2021/22, and £7.1 billion for the 2022/23 in cash terms compared to 2019/20. In terms of distribution, this funding increase will allow every secondary school to receive at least £5,000 per pupil, and every primary school at least £3,750 per pupil this year (rising to £4,000 per pupil in 2021-22).

[1] <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/ucas-teacher-training-statistical-releases>

■ Universities: Coronavirus**Marco Longhi:****[106508]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that university students receive high quality teaching during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

This is a difficult and uncertain time for students, but we are working with the sector to make sure that all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies.

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

HE providers must also continue to comply with their legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010), ensuring that education and learning is accessible to all students. When making changes to the delivery of their courses, providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

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

The OfS is taking very seriously the potential impacts of the outbreak on teaching and learning and ensuring that they have a clear picture of what students are receiving. The OfS published a statement on 9 October that sets out how it is actively monitoring the quality of online provision at HE providers that have moved predominantly to online provision as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions.

The OfS is directly engaging with those providers to ensure that they maintain the quantity and quality of their provision that is accessible for all. The government fully supports the OfS's approach – we believe unequivocally that all students deserve a high-quality HE experience and we will continue to work closely with the OfS and providers to ensure that students receive this.

Providers should make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching and support for students broadly equivalent to the provider's usual arrangements, in circumstances where face-to-face contact is no longer possible. On 3 November, the department published guidance on how the national COVID-19 restrictions affect HE.

This guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-new-national-restrictions-guidance>. We have been clear throughout the COVID-19 outbreak that HE providers must maintain the quality of their tuition at all times, regardless of whether a HE provider is delivering its courses through face-to-face teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both. We have worked with the OfS, who are regularly reviewing online tuition.

Students have rights under consumer law that they can rely on if they are dissatisfied with their provider's response to COVID-19. In the first instance, students should speak to their provider to see if they can resolve their issue. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns. If a student at a provider in England or Wales is not satisfied with their provider's response, they can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Zarah Sultana:

[110260]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of phasing out badger culling and introducing a cattle vaccine to prevent the spread of bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

On 5 March 2020, the Government published its response to Professor Sir Charles Godfray's 2018 review of England's bovine TB eradication strategy, setting out the priorities for the next phase of the strategy.

Developing a TB vaccine for cattle is one of our priorities. A cattle vaccine could be a game-changer in terms of providing a strong additional tool to help eradicate bovine TB. In July 2020, we announced that the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) had granted permission for field trials of both the candidate Cattle BCG vaccine and the candidate skin test to detect infected animals among vaccinated animals (the DIVA skin test). Like other veterinary medicines, both the Cattle BCG vaccine and the DIVA skin test will need VMD marketing authorisations before they can be deployed. We hope that field trials will provide the evidence required for future marketing authorisations and for the DIVA skin test to be internationally recognised. The aim is to start field trials in 2021 and complete them in 2024. Provided the field trials go as hoped, and VMD considers the marketing authorisation applications satisfactory with respect to quality, safety and efficacy, the timeline envisages those authorisations being granted in 2025.

We also set out in the Government response plans to evolve the wildlife control policy, with increased support for badger vaccination following the widespread

deployment of effective, industry-led intensive badger culls. We envisage that the widespread badger culling policy will begin to be phased out and gradually replaced by Government supported badger vaccination and surveillance. Culling of badgers in specific areas will remain an option where the epidemiological assessment indicates it is needed.

There is no single measure for tackling bovine TB and that is why we continue to pursue a suite of interventions to eradicate the disease in England.

■ Guide Dogs: Travel

Ruth Jones:

[\[110243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with his European counterparts to ensure people with assistance dogs are able to travel to the EU after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is proactively and positively engaging with the assistance dog community and relevant stakeholders on the impacts on dog movements to the EU. We will continue to closely work with assistance dog organisations to share the latest advice and guidance (in accessible formats) with their members on pet travel requirements as this is updated. The Department submitted an application to the EU Commission to become a 'Part I' listed third country in relation to non-commercial movement of pet dogs, cats and ferrets from the UK into the EU. Acceptance of this application would mean very similar documentation and health requirements to those now for pet owners and users of assistance dogs travelling to the EU. The Commission is now considering our application and the Government is continuing to engage with the them on this point. We will not be changing our requirements for pet travel into GB in the short term, in order to make the movements of pet travellers and users of assistance dogs as frictionless as possible. Any future review of the pet travel rules will take into consideration the needs of assistance dog users as a priority.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Armenia and Azerbaijan: Foreign Relations

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[110150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan in the last three months.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is deeply concerned by the military action in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and has been in regular contact with both the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan urging de-escalation and a return to the negotiating table. Since the renewed hostilities began, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood has spoken to the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers three

times, most recently on 28 October, to raise UK concerns over civilian casualties and fatalities, urge immediate de-escalation and reinforce the importance of engagement with the OSCE Minsk Group. Additionally, officials have continued to engage with the Azerbaijani Ambassador and the Armenian Charge d'Affaires in London and our Embassies in Baku and Yerevan have continued to work with their hosts on a range of topics, including at Foreign Minister level.

■ British Nationals Abroad: EU Countries

Julian Sturdy:

[109331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on UK nationals who (a) make regular extended trips to EU states, (b) have close family in EU states and (c) own property in EU states of a future relationship with the EU which does not include visa-free travel across the EU for UK nationals beyond the 90 day or 180 day limit prescribed by the EU Schengen Border Code for third-country nationals.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has discussed arrangements for UK nationals travelling to the Schengen Area and understands concerns about the impact of these arrangements on UK nationals who travel for extended periods of time. Regrettably, the EU has consistently maintained that UK nationals will be treated as Third Country Nationals under the Schengen Borders Code from January 2021. They will only be able to travel visa-free for short stays for up to 90 days in a rolling 180-day period. UK nationals planning to stay longer will need permission from the relevant Member State. This may require applying for a visa and/or permit. Information about travel to Europe after the transition period is available on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021>

Julian Sturdy:

[109332]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of making bilateral agreements with EU member states to allow UK nationals to travel visa-free in the EU beyond the 90/180 day period set out in the Schengen Borders Code for third-country nationals.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has discussed arrangements for UK nationals travelling to the Schengen Area and understands concerns about the impact of these arrangements on UK nationals who travel for extended periods of time. Regrettably, the EU has consistently maintained that UK nationals will be treated as Third Country Nationals under the Schengen Borders Code from January 2021. They will only be able to travel visa-free for short stays for up to 90 days in a rolling 180-day period. UK nationals planning to stay longer will need permission from the relevant Member State. This may require applying for a visa and/or permit. Information about travel to

Europe after the transition period is available on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021>

■ CDC: Feronia

Preet Kaur Gill:

[110213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any of CDC Group's USD 80.66 million investment in Feronia was written off by the CDC after the transfer of shares in that company to private equity firm KKM.

James Duddridge:

CDC has invested a total of \$76.6 million in Feronia since 2013. This has been a pioneering investment for CDC in a remote area of DRC that has led to economic opportunities for local people including improvements to healthcare, education, clean water and infrastructure provision.

Feronia announced in June that it was in restructuring talks with lenders and current shareholders including KKM, to look at possible asset sales, reduce debts and bring in new equity. The restructuring of Feronia involving the transfer of its shares in Plantations et Huileries du Congo (PHC) to KKM has not yet happened.

The sale of Feronia is a live commercial transaction and as there are issues of commercial confidentiality it would be inappropriate at this stage to go into detail about the transaction.

■ China: Uighurs

Sarah Olney:

[110211]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps, other than making an assessment of the potential merits of implementing coordinated sanctions with allies, his Department is taking to hold the Chinese authorities to account for the detainment of Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region of China.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has taken a leading international role in holding China to account for its gross human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and will continue to do so. 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 political re-education camps. This growing caucus reflects UK diplomatic leadership in raising the issue with a wide range of partners. On 28 July, the Foreign Secretary raised our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi.

■ Electronic Warfare

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[110285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the US Government's Clean Network initiative; what assessment the Government has made of the potential efficacy of that initiative in protecting the UK's digital network from (a) exploitation and (b) potential disruption by hostile states; and whether the Government plans to subscribe to that project.

James Cleverly:

The forthcoming Telecoms Security Bill will establish a robust framework to drive up security standards across the UK's telecoms providers and control the presence of equipment from High Risk Vendors in the UK's telecoms networks. We are aware of the US Clean Networks initiative and look forward to discussing further the detail of the initiative with the US to inform our assessment. We have a close dialogue with the US on telecoms security and the importance of diversification in the global telecoms market. We have engaged with them extensively following our decision in July that operators should remove all Huawei equipment from the 5G network by the end of 2027. For example we held senior expert level talks with them this September and the Foreign Secretary discussed telecoms with Secretary of State Pompeo during his visit in July.

■ Feronia: Community Relations

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[109551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether CDC Group made an assessment of the potential development benefits of issuing shares in Feronia Inc. to local community co-operatives.

James Duddridge:

In managing its investment in Feronia CDC considered the option of transferring some, or all, of the Company's assets into a community-led structure.

Since CDC first invested in Feronia in 2013, workers' wages have more than doubled, and protective clothing is now mandatory. Housing has begun to be renewed and restored and around \$7 million has been spent on clean water provision, healthcare and educational facilities. 72 wells have been drilled or renovated, and restored medical facilities are helping thousands of workers and non-workers every year.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation: Medical Treatments Abroad

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[110110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the devolved Administrations on the regulations governing travel abroad for women seeking IVF treatment during the covid-19 lockdown period.

Nigel Adams:

Before planning any travel, individuals should check all the domestic rules that apply where they are resident, including whether they could restrict international travel. There are different measures in place in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice provides guidance on COVID and non-COVID risks abroad. FCDO travel advice aims to help British nationals make informed decisions about foreign travel. The amount of information the FCDO can provide varies from place to place. For some parts of the world we may be able to offer very detailed advice; for others we may not. We cannot give tailored advice for individual itineraries.

The FCDO currently advises against all but essential travel to many countries and territories on the basis of COVID risks. Whether travel is essential or not is a personal decision and only individuals can make an informed decision based on their own individual circumstances and the risks. Travel disruption is still possible worldwide. Countries may bring in new measures with little notice such as border closures, movement restrictions or quarantine rules. Travellers should check the advice for their destination and be ready and prepared to stay overseas longer than planned.

■ Malnutrition: Children**Ed Davey:**[\[109148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is providing to tackle global child malnutrition during the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

Prevention and treatment of malnutrition remains a priority for the UK as part of our commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children, particularly as malnourished people are likely to be more severely affected by COVID-19. The wider impacts of COVID-19 are also predicted to increase malnutrition across Africa and Asia in particular.

The Foreign Secretary has appointed the UK's first Special Envoy on Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs to make sure malnutrition is averted in countries where food insecurity, conflict and COVID-19 have increased risk. The FCDO is continuing to deliver programmes to address malnutrition in countries such as Somalia, Yemen, South Sudan and Ethiopia. We are also supporting UNICEF to maintain provision of treatment for child wasting and to adapt relevant services in light of the pandemic.

■ Mohammed bin Salman**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[110106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the CIA's assessment that Mohammad bin Salman ordered the

assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including Mohammed bin Salman in the next round of Magnitsky sanctions designations.

James Cleverly:

On 6 July the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. It is not appropriate to speculate on who may be designated under the Global Human Rights sanctions regime in the future. To do this could reduce the impact of the designations.

■ **Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict**

Martyn Day:

[\[109505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on reports of Turkey's involvement in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary spoke to the Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu on 19 October and both agreed the need for an urgent de-escalation and a return to substantive negotiations. The Defence Secretary visited Ankara on 5-6 October and stressed the need for immediate de-escalation. We continue to encourage all external parties and friends of both states to redouble their efforts in support of an end to hostilities and to refrain from taking actions that may exacerbate the crisis. We support the efforts of the Minsk Group, of which Turkey is a member, to facilitate an end to the conflict.

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[110149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to de-escalate tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Wendy Morton:

The Government is deeply concerned by the military action in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone and the resulting humanitarian situation. The Foreign Secretary and Canadian Foreign Minister have delivered two joint statements calling for de-escalation and for both parties to return to the negotiating table without preconditions. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood has spoken to the Armenian and Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers three times, most recently on 28 October. The Minister raised UK concerns over civilian casualties and fatalities, urged immediate de-escalation and reinforced the importance of engagement with the OSCE Minsk Group. The UK will continue to engage the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan and all regional partners, including to push for a return to substantive negotiations without pre-conditions.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**Layla Moran:****[110233]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the (a) UK Ambassador to Iran or (b) other UK diplomatic personnel were present at the court hearing of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe on 2 November 2020.

James Cleverly:

It is appalling that Iran has brought new charges against Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and threatened her with a return to prison. We had formally requested the UK Government's attendance to support her at her hearing through a Note Verbale to the Iranian Government, but we were not permitted access to the trial. We also summoned the Iranian Ambassador on 29 October to raise concerns over her treatment. We welcome the fact that her trial has been adjourned and she has not been sent back to prison for the moment - we have been consistently clear that she must not be re-incarcerated. We continue to raise her case at the most senior levels, and discuss it at every opportunity with our Iranian counterparts. The Foreign Secretary has done so repeatedly with Foreign Minister Zarif. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently discusses all of our dual British national detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

■ Nigeria: Human Rights**Theresa Villiers:****[110084]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Nigerian counterpart on recent human rights abuses in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government's position on human rights is firm: they are universal and must apply equally to all people. We condemn all human rights abuses in Nigeria and 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.

The UK Government works closely with the Nigerian Government and international and civil society partners on improving the human rights compliance and accountability of the Nigerian authorities. We are deeply concerned by violence during protests in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria, which has tragically claimed lives. Our thoughts are with the families of all those affected. The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 21 October calling for the Nigerian Government to urgently investigate reports of brutality by its security forces and hold those responsible to account. I repeated this message to the Nigerian Foreign Minister on 23 October. We also remain committed to helping Nigeria tackle the ongoing terrorist threat from groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, who commit human rights abuses in North East Nigeria. The Prime Minister raised security concerns in North East Nigeria and UK support during his meeting with President Buhari at the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January 2020. We will continue to

make clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting human rights for all.

Theresa Villiers:

[110085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish any assessment he has made of the effectiveness of human rights training programmes which his Department has supported in Nigeria in the last two years.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is firmly committed to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. We have supported efforts to bring about the long-term changes needed to improve human rights compliance in Nigeria, including through providing human rights training to the Nigerian Police Force and Nigerian Armed Forces. For example, under the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, the Nigeria Policing Programme provided human rights training to the Nigerian Police Force. Evaluations show this led to improved relationships and trust with communities and the police continue to work on community safety and security. We will continue to make clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting human rights for all Nigerians.

■ Saudi Arabia: Detainees

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[110105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make UK attendance at the upcoming G20 in Riyadh contingent on the release of (a) Loujain al-Hathloul, (b) other human rights defenders, (c) Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, (d) Prince Turki bin Abdullah and (e) other political detainees.

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. We have raised detention cases, including Loujain al-Hathloul, at senior levels with the Saudi authorities. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September. It 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 are monitoring the situation closely.

■ Saudi Arabia: Political Prisoners**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[110104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman on the release of (a) Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, (b) Prince Turki bin Abdullah and (c) other senior political figures detained without charge.

James Cleverly:

We will continue to monitor the cases of those detained in Saudi Arabia. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, which called for the release of all political detainees. We raise concerns about individual cases regularly, using a range of Ministerial and diplomatic channels, including our Embassy in Riyadh.

■ Strategic Defence and Security Review**Sarah Champion:**[\[110139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to publish the outcomes of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Foreign and Development policy; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the changes to the form of the upcoming Spending Review on the form and content of that review's outcomes.

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.

■ Sudan: Foreign Relations**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[108207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will lead an urgent cross-departmental analysis of UK policy's impact on Sudan.

James Duddridge:

Our policy towards Sudan is to support the transition to democracy alongside our extensive humanitarian support. In particular we support the commitment of the civilian-led Government to end the economic crisis and to secure a comprehensive peace agreement as the means to deliver our shared interest in stability. This policy is the product of extensive analysis and work across all parts of Her Majesty's Government with a stake in supporting change in Sudan and delivered as an integrated effort. We continue to keep our policy under review, across HMG, to ensure it delivers impact and value for money.

■ Turkey: Diplomatic Service

Adam Holloway:

[110088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many (a) adult, (b) child, (c) male and (d) female British citizens have been given consular assistance to get home from Turkey having escaped detention in north-eastern Syria.

James Cleverly:

We do not comment on individual cases. Each request for consular assistance is considered on a case-by-case basis and the support we can offer is tailored to the individual circumstances. All British nationals who return to the UK from north-eastern Syria should expect to be investigated and, where there is evidence that a crime has been committed, prosecuted. Decisions on prosecutions are taken independently by the police and Crown Prosecution Service on a case-by-case basis.

■ UN Mission in Darfur

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[108206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will advocate for the continuation of the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur, to ensure the mission can support implementation of the peace deal signed earlier this month between armed movements and Sudan's transitional government.

James Duddridge:

The UK welcomes the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement on 3 October 2020 between the Government of Sudan and a number of armed opposition groups. This is an important step towards a comprehensive peace deal to help end decades of conflict in Sudan. The UK Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, and our team in Khartoum, remain in touch with all parties to ensure this agreement can deliver impact for those who have suffered for too long from conflict. I [Minister Duddridge] also discussed the implementation of the agreement, and the need to build trust that the agreement will deliver security for ordinary citizens, with the Sudanese Acting Foreign Minister on 21 September. Through our role as penholder on the UN Security Council, we supported the extension of the UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) until 31 December, and establishment of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (UNITAMS). UNITAMS is mandated to assist Sudan in the implementation of any peace agreement and this will be central for international community support.

■ USA: Bank Services

Daniel Zeichner:

[110145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his US counterpart on the effect of that country's Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act and Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts on US-born UK citizens.

Wendy Morton:

The British Embassy in Washington has raised taxation issues facing UK citizens with the US Government. We will continue to raise this matter with the US Government.

■ **USA: Postal Services****Sarah Olney:**[\[110210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations his Department has made to the US Administration on disruption to US postal services.

Wendy Morton:

Domestic affairs - including US postal services - are matters for the US Government.

■ **Visas: EU Countries****Julian Sturdy:**[\[109330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to secure reciprocal rights for UK nationals to travel visa-free in the EU beyond the 90/180 day period set out in the Schengen Borders Code for third-country nationals to reflect proposals by the UK Government for visa-free travel to the UK by EU nationals for up to six months.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has discussed arrangements for UK nationals travelling to the Schengen Area and understands concerns about the impact of these arrangements on UK nationals who travel for extended periods of time. Regrettably, the EU has consistently maintained that UK nationals will be treated as Third Country Nationals under the Schengen Borders Code from January 2021. They will only be able to travel visa-free for short stays for up to 90 days in a rolling 180-day period. UK nationals planning to stay longer will need permission from the relevant Member State. This may require applying for a visa and/or permit. Information about travel to Europe after the transition period is available on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021>

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse****Munira Wilson:**[\[100547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of ambulance service callouts by NHS trust that were alcohol-related in each of the last four years.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: The information requested is not centrally collected.

■ Animal Products: Northern Ireland

Daisy Cooper:

[107745]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Food Standards Agency 21-month adjustment period Guidance on health and identification marks that applies from 1 January 2021, as it applies to Products of Animal Origin, will be extended to include products sold in Northern Ireland.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: The Government is continuing to consider the arrangements for the Northern Ireland market in this area and will update industry with detailed guidance as soon as it is able to do so.

■ Asthma: Health Services

Henry Smith:

[85018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 60724, what steps his Department is taking to ensure at-home treatment of severe asthma patients is available and offered to all patients; and what assessment has been made of the clinical capacity released within respiratory units as a result of such home management.

Helen Whately:

Specialist respiratory services for severe asthma, along with urgent and emergency treatment for other serious complaints, have continued throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. In most cases people with severe asthma have been able to receive their medication at home instead of having to attend hospital through increasing home care support and via access to remote outpatient consultations for new patients.

Although clinical capacity was re-directed to support care of patients with COVID-19 and this need has reduced, trusts are also required to prepare for potential future waves of COVID-19 and this will affect the clinical capacity required particularly in respiratory units. Regions have oversight of the local plans developed by each trust.

■ Bowel Cancer

Anne Marie Morris:

[102083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the (a) treatment options available for metastatic colorectal cancer patients and (b) average survival rates for those patients in (i) the UK and (ii) other European countries.

Jo Churchill:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Breast Cancer

Caroline Nokes: [\[107640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in each of the last 10 years; and how many of those people were diagnosed (a) less than and (b) more than five years after a diagnosis of primary breast cancer.

Liz Twist: [\[107716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in (a) Blaydon constituency and (b) England in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Hospital trusts submit data for secondary breast cancer diagnoses through the Cancer Outcomes and Services Dataset (COSD) or Cancer Waiting Times (CWT) data collection mechanisms. Data on the reported number of people diagnosed with secondary breast cancers in 2014-2017 in England are available in the following table. Data for 2018 will be published in November 2020.

YEAR	DIAGNOSES RECORDED IN COSD	DIAGNOSES RECORDED IN CWT
2017	4,754	6,739
2016	4,746	6,824
2015	4,218	6,808
2014	3,395	6,817

Notes:

1. Source:

http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer_type_and_topic_specific_work/topic_specific_work/recurrence

- Where a recurrence record has been reported by multiple trusts it will be included once per trust. This means the totals will include some double-counting of recurrences.
- Counts from COSD and CWT cannot be combined as there will duplication between the datasets.

The number of reported cases is accepted as being significantly below the estimated number of secondary breast cancers. The National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service is working closely with cancer charities to improve data collection and submission by hospital trusts, looking at how they can help improve completion rates

and thus gain a better picture of the burden of recurrence and metastatic disease across the health service.

Data for secondary breast cancer diagnoses are not available at constituency level. Data on how many people diagnosed with secondary breast cancer who were diagnosed less than and more than five years after a diagnosis of primary breast cancer are not available.

■ **Breast Cancer: Health Services**

Craig Tracey:

[R] [\[86715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the backlog of breast cancer surgeries, treatments and screenings resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is restoring the full operation of all cancer services, with local delivery plans being delivered by Cancer Alliances.

Systems will work with general practitioners and the public locally to restore the number of people coming forward and being referred with suspected cancer to at least pre-pandemic levels.

Sufficient diagnostic capacity in COVID-19 secure environments will be supplied through the use of independent sector facilities, the development of Community Diagnostic Hubs and Rapid Diagnostic Centres, further all cancer screening programmes will be fully restarted.

■ **Breast Cancer: Radiotherapy**

Jim Shannon:

[\[91040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timescale is for making high-speed radiotherapy for breast cancer available on the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

Breast cancer treatments are advancing all the time and this year is no exception.

The publication of the 10-year results of the FAST-FORWARD Trial, which looked at 5 fraction radiotherapy to treat early breast cancer, is an exciting breakthrough which will enable people with breast cancer to be treated much more quickly and conveniently. All National Health Service radiotherapy providers in England are encouraged to adopt this approach.

■ **Breast Cancer: Screening**

Tracey Crouch:

[\[106959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of upright MRI scanners in encouraging more women to undergo breast cancer scans.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has not reviewed the evidence to offer upright MRI scanners as a primary screen test in the National Health Service Breast Screening Programme (NHS BSP).

A change to the primary screen test would be considered as a major programme modification. Such a proposal can be submitted to the UK NSC for further consideration.

The NHS BSP offers screening to women using MRI who are high risk or very high risk as assessed by specialist genetics or oncology as being more at risk of developing breast cancer than women in general population. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-breast-screening-high-risk-women>

Mr Virendra Sharma:**[107628]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure equity of access to breast screenings for women living in deprived areas when timed appointments are replaced with open invitations.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Breast screening services have a responsibility to reduce health inequalities. Local services have been able to choose whether to implement open appointments or maintain fixed timed appointments as they work to restore appointments following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This choice takes into account the needs of the local population: the service must evidence that their given approach better supports the recovery of appointments as well as ensuring equity of access.

■ Cancer**Julian Sturdy:****[94403]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on cancer waiting times.

Jo Churchill:

At the beginning of the pandemic, the National Health Service faced significant pressures as it responded to patient demand from COVID-19 cases. The action taken to free up capacity included the postponement of non-urgent elective treatment while protecting urgent services.

However, during the pandemic, key waiting times were at maintained at pre-pandemic levels. From March to July 2020, over 91% of people referred urgently were seen by a consultant within two weeks - the same as in March to July 2019 - and 95% of people started a first treatment for cancer within a month of a decision to treat, compared to 96% in March to July 2019.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[89700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to safeguard the provision of cancer care and treatment in the event of future outbreaks of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's priorities for recovering cancer services are increasing urgent cancer referrals, reducing the number of patients waiting longer than 62 and 104 days for treatments or diagnostics, and ensuring capacity is in place for patients returning to the system in winter. The newly formed Cancer Recovery Taskforce will oversee the development of the cancer recovery plan and review progress against objectives, including considering any impact of a second wave of COVID-19.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Sir Graham Brady:

[\[102688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will expand funding for immunotherapy for advanced cancer in cases where clinical trials have shown that patients have responded well to that treatment.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England funds licensed medicines that have been recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), or off-label use of licensed medicines that have been approved by the NHS England clinical policy process.

The Cancer Drug Fund allows early access to drugs with residual clinical uncertainties which can be addressed following further data collection.

Companies should go to NICE for licensed indications with any new data – and as long as drugs are priced appropriately, they will be made available for patients via the National Health Service. For drugs which will not be licensed, clinicians should apply to NHS England for a clinical policy and a commissioning position based on the strength of clinical evidence for use.

■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

Martyn Day:

[\[108269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) randomised control trials and (b) other research have been done into the medical potential of cannabis in the UK since November 2018.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funds and supports research on the medicinal benefits of cannabis. This includes six randomised controlled trials, one of which is jointly funded by the Medical Research Council. The NIHR also funds three further studies on medicinal benefits of cannabis and supports another through

the Clinical Research Network. Details of studies can be found on the NIHR Open Data website at the following link:

<https://nihr.opendatasoft.com/pages/homepage/>

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has also supported research on the potential therapeutic benefits of cannabinoids, with much of the research in this area being funded by UKRI's Medical Research Council.

The Economic and Social Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council have small portfolios of research with some of those projects also being related to the medical use of cannabis. All UKRI funded research can be found online at Gateway to Research.

■ Clinical Trials: Coronavirus

Martyn Day:

[108267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what lessons have been learnt on clinical trial recruitment during the covid-19 pandemic; and what plans he has to apply those learnings in his Department's approach to new medicines more widely.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is taking several steps to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and will apply these learnings in its future approach to clinical research. The NIHR has conducted a lessons learned exercise and is now developing a 'Standard Operating Procedure' for a response to a future emergency which requires a rapid and co-ordinated response from the system, and will also draw upon these lessons to identify and recommend changes to business as usual practice. To complement this, the NIHR regularly reviews the progress and performance of nationally prioritised COVID-19 Urgent Public Health Research studies, and insights are used to inform the continuous improvement of prioritisation, placement, set up and delivery of other COVID-19 studies.

■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Apsana Begum:

[108296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to address the disproportionate effect of covid-19 on (a) BAME people and (b) people of a Bangladeshi background.

Jo Churchill:

On 22 October, the Race Disparity Unit at the Cabinet Office published 'Quarterly report on progress to address COVID-19 health inequalities', which made three recommendations.

This includes reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by relevant Government Departments to directly lessen disparities in infection and death rates of COVID-19 and taking action to modify existing policy, and policy in development, to address these disparities. The Prime Minister has accepted

these recommendations. These measures apply to the black, Asian and minority ethnic population, including those of Bangladeshi background.

The report is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928646/First_Covid_Disparities_report_to_PM_Health_Secretary_Final_22-10-20.pdf

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Apsana Begum:

[107758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the adequacy of the personal protective clothing issued to staff working in covid-19 testing centres.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: In line with the national Public Health England guidance, there are different personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements dependent on the role test site staff take within the testing sites. In the case of the walk-in local testing sites, the PPE requirements are set out in the local testing sites' Standard Operating Procedure. Test operatives, for tester assisted testing, are required to wear disposable gloves; a disposable plastic apron; a fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask; and reusable eye protection.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[R] [101990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to (a) recruit and (b) train a workforce to administer a covid-19 vaccine safely.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is preparing to recruit people to be trained as COVID-19 vaccinators in support of the national effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. We are working with experienced NHS partners to prepare for when a vaccine becomes available to enable the NHS to vaccinate as many people as possible.

Secondary legislation enabling more healthcare workers to administer flu and potential COVID-19 vaccines has been introduced. This means that the NHS can expand the vaccination workforce by recruiting to clinical roles needed to support mass vaccinations in a safe way. Recruitment is focused on those who already have experience in handling vaccinations but may currently work outside of NHS settings, for example, independent nurses or allied health care professionals. We will also use existing schemes such as NHS Bring Back scheme to fill roles. Robust training and supervision will be provided for all those who will be part of the vaccination effort.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[106438]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on preparations for the deployment of a covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

The Vaccine Taskforce is procuring vaccines for the whole of the United Kingdom, including Wales. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care meets weekly with counterparts in the devolved administrations for discussions of key COVID-19 issues across all four nations. The Government is working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure successful delivery across the whole of the UK.

Alex Cunningham:[\[106994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to provide NHS dental teams with priority access to a covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise Government on which vaccine/s the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. The JCVI published interim advice on 25 September 2020 stating the vaccine should first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and risk.

The JCVI has prioritised health and care workers, which would include National Health Service dental teams, in the initial recommendations. The final recommendations may further refine these recommendations taking into account the different levels of exposure, vaccine characteristics and other factors such as age and clinical risk. We will consider the Committee's advice carefully as we continue to plan for a vaccination campaign.

Sarah Owen:[\[107751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2020 to Question 99130 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what preparations the Government is making for the mass distribution of a covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: The Government has asked the National Health Service to be ready to deploy any safe, effective vaccines when available. Planning considerations include the size and make-up of the workforce needed to deliver a potentially extensive vaccination programme at pace, training requirements, guidance, consumables and other equipment, as well as the supporting infrastructure required, including warehousing, transport, logistics and end-destination 'clinic' storage.

The scale of what is rolled out and when will depend on a safe, effective vaccine being available. All plans we are making recognise that there are numerous potential vaccine candidates, meaning that we will need to remain flexible. Throughout, as health is a devolved matter, the Government is working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure successful delivery across the whole of the United Kingdom.

■ Dentistry: Qualifications

Judith Cummins:

[107019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps have been taken by the General Dental Council to restart the Overseas Registration Exam.

Jo Churchill:

As a result of the safety restrictions brought in as part of the COVID-19 response, the General Dental Council (GDC) suspended Parts 1 and 2 of the Overseas Registration Exam (ORE) earlier this year.

Following engagement with exam providers, the GDC has decided it will not be practicable to run any sittings of the exams in 2020. The GDC aim to resume the ORE as soon as it is safe and viable to do so.

In the meantime, regular discussions with exam providers continue and further information will be provided to candidates as soon as it is available. Candidates who booked a place on the cancelled exams have been advised they may request a refund.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Grahame Morris:

[100939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will answer Question 81804, tabled on 28 August 2020.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him to Question [81804](#) on 9 October.

Mr David Jones:

[101250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to provide a substantive response to Question 92724, tabled on 21 September 2020 by the hon. Member for Clwyd West.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 October 2020]: I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave him to Question 92724 on 22 October.

Caroline Lucas:

[102751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to provide an Answer to Question 91604 tabled by the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion on 17 September.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question [91604](#) on 20 October.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[102878]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Named Day Question 96118 on Influenza: Vaccination, when he plans to publish a substantive response to that Question.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[102879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Named Day Question 96119 on Influenza: Vaccination, when he plans to publish a substantive response to that Question.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[102880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Named Day Question 96120 on Influenza: Vaccination, when he plans to publish a substantive response to that Question.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[102881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Named Day Question 96121 on Influenza: Vaccination, when he plans to publish a substantive response to that Question.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[102882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 October 2020 to Named Day Question 96122 on Influenza: Vaccination, when he plans to publish a substantive response to that Question.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to Questions [96118](#), [96119](#), [96120](#), [96121](#) and [96122](#) on 23 October.

Mr David Jones: [\[106232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to provide a substantive answer to Question 92724, tabled on 21 September 2020 by the Rt hon. Member for Clwyd West.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question [92724](#) on 22 October.

■ Diabetes and Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[106947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people with diabetes from BAME groups who have died from covid-19.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[106948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to protect the health of (a) people with diabetes and (b) BAME communities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic diabetes care has remained a priority and general practitioners (GPs) have supported patients with long term conditions to access care and support.

Trusts, working with GP practices, have been asked to ensure that every patient whose planned care has been disrupted by COVID-19 receives clear communication about how they will be looked after, and who to contact if their clinical circumstances change. The focus is on accelerating the return of non-COVID-19 health services to near-normal levels, including making full use of available capacity between now and winter, whilst also preparing for winter demand pressures. This will be done alongside continued vigilance against further COVID-19 spikes locally and possibly nationally.

The NHS England and NHS Improvement's Diabetes Programme Team has helped to develop a COVID-19 risk prediction model to support shared decision making between clinicians and patients based on more accurate information as well as discussions on how to reduce risk of COVID-19 for all, including those with diabetes.

Reflecting the fact that those of black and south Asian background are at both greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes and of in-hospital COVID-19 mortality, NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed a focused marketing and promotion campaign, aimed at those who are black and south Asian. This work is supported by deep insight work commissioned from Cultural Intelligence Hub to develop approaches for communications and engagement activity targeted at black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

The number of people with diabetes who died between 16 February and 12 October 2020 where COVID-19 was mentioned as a cause of death on the death certificate, by diabetes type and ethnicity is in the following table.

ETHNICITY GROUP	COVID-19 DEATHS WHERE THE PERSON HAD TYPE 2 OR OTHER DIABETES	
	COVID-19 DEATHS WHERE THE PERSON HAD TYPE 1 DIABETES	COVID-19 DEATHS WHERE THE PERSON HAD TYPE 2 OR OTHER DIABETES
Asian	70	1,760
Black	60	1,075
Mixed	5	170
Other	15	240
Not stated/known	50	1,835

Coverage: England and Wales

■ Electronic Cigarettes and Tobacco

Martyn Day:

[\[106421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which body is responsible for the regulation of novel nicotine products.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is the responsible Government Department for The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. This regulation covers the relevant tobacco and nicotine related products within it.

■ **Epilepsy: North West****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[107602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the GP to patient ratio for female patients aged from 15-45 years with epilepsy in (a) the North West, (b) Liverpool City Region, (c) Wirral and (d) Wallasey constituency.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Data on the general practitioner (GP) to patient ratio for female patients between the ages of 15 to 45 years old with epilepsy is not available at national or regional levels. There is no recommendation for how many patients a GP should have as the demand each patient places on their GP is different and can be affected by various factors, including rurality and patient demographics. When considering the ratio of GPs to patients it is important to consider GPs as part of the wider multidisciplinary team. Getting the skills mix right in general practice is critical in addressing workload pressures as well as in delivering appropriate patient care.

■ **Food: Advertising****Yvonne Fovargue:**[\[101275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the the nutrient profiling model which is applied on a per 100g basis includes (a) cooking sauces, (b) pastes and (c) condiments which are consumed in small quantities.

Yvonne Fovargue:[\[101276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Scottish Government on the exemption of curry sauces and pastes from the Scottish HFSS strategy.

Yvonne Fovargue:[\[101277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the evidential basis for the inclusion of (a) curry sauces, (c) pastes and (c) condiments in the restrictions in the HFSS strategy.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 October 2020]: The nutrient profiling model applies equally to all foods and non-alcoholic drinks; there is no category specific criteria. The possible implications of applying the nutrient profiling model from per 100g basis to per portion basis was considered as part of the 2007 review of the effectiveness of the nutrient profiling model. The independent review panel recommended to retain the 100g base to avoid unnecessary complexity as there are few United Kingdom dietary

recommendations on portion sizes and inconsistent portion sizes used on food or drink packs.

My Rt. hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has not had any discussions with his counterpart in the Scottish Government on the exemption of curry sauces and pastes from the Scottish Government's strategy on foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS).

In 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives', published in July, the Government confirmed its intention to restrict the promotion and advertising of HFSS foods. The consultations on these policies set out proposals for the definitions of HFSS products. We have listened carefully to the feedback and will be setting out final definitions for the products these policies apply to when we publish the responses to the consultations. We will do this as soon as possible.

■ Food: Coronavirus

Daniel Zeichner:

[98236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of the Health and Safety Executive's Riddor reporting system of the number of covid-19 cases and fatalities in food factories; and what steps he is taking to ensure that records of covid-19 (a) cases and (b) fatalities in food factories are accurate.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has made no assessment of the accuracy of the Health and Safety Executive's Riddor reporting system.

Positive tests are notifiable under the Health Protection Regulations 2010, as amended by the Health Protection (Notification) (Amended) Regulations 2020. Under this regulation diagnostic laboratories have a duty to notify PHE when they identify evidence of infection caused by COVID-19. PHE regularly works with labs to help them set up reporting. PHE has published a guide for reporting which is available to view at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739854/PHE_Laboratory_Reporting_Guidelines.pdf

Data on cases and fatalities from COVID-19 in relation to food factories are not collected.

■ General Practitioners

Colleen Fletcher:

[108239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) GPs and (b) GP vacancies there were in (i) Coventry, (ii) the West Midlands and (iii) England in each of the last 10 years.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: The number of full time equivalent (FTE) doctors in general practice in NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG, the West Midlands - defined as NHS Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG, NHS Wolverhampton CCG, NHS Dudley CCG and NHS Walsall CCG - and England from September 2018 to September 2019 is shown in the following table. Data prior to this is not comparable at regional level.

	SEPTEMBER 2015	SEPTEMBER 2016	SEPTEMBER 2017	SEPTEMBER 2018	SEPTEMBER 2019
NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG	N/A	N/A	N/A	301	298
West Midlands	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,911	1,931
England	34,429	35,229	34,653	34,534	34,862

Source: NHS Digital

Notes:

1. West Midlands has been defined as NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG, NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, NHS Coventry and Rugby CCG, NHS Wolverhampton CCG, NHS Dudley CCG and NHS Walsall CCG.
2. Data as at 30 September.
3. Figures shown do not include general practitioners (GPs) working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings.
4. Each period, figures contain estimates, for practices that did not provide fully valid General Medical Practice GP records.
5. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. 1 would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that they worked half time. In Registrars' contracts 1 FTE = 40 hours. To ensure consistency, these FTEs have been converted to the standard measure of 1 FTE = 37.5 hours in the table.
6. Figures are mapped to the regional hierarchy as at 1 April 2020.

7. The figures presented include GP registrars and GP locums.
8. Regional figures prior to Sept 2018 have been excluded as the figure for GPs including registrars from June 2018 onwards cannot be compared to earlier figures, because there is no regional information for a large number of GP registrars in this earlier time period, whose location is therefore recorded as Unknown for September 2015 to March 2018. Figures can be compared at England level.

Data is not included prior to 2015 as improvements were made to the methodology for recording all staff working in general practice in September 2015 and data prior to this is not comparable.

In 2018/19 1,398 practices reported 652 vacancies in the NHS Digital general practitioner workforce data collection. Less than a third of practices submit data to the NHS Digital collection each year and it is not possible to make estimations for practice that did not submit data therefore comparison between years cannot be made.

■ Insulin

Mr John Baron:

[106904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure adequate supplies of insulin after the transition period.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Our priority is to ensure that patients continue to have access to the medicines they need, including insulin. We continue to work closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to deliver the shared goal of continuity of safe patient care by mitigating any potential disruption to supply into the United Kingdom of medicines at the end of the transition period.

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

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

■ Kidney Cancer

Jim Shannon:

[106999]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with kidney cancer in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The number of people in England diagnosed with kidney cancer in the years 2014 - 2018, which represents the most recent five years available, are shown in the following table. Data for 2019 and 2020 are not yet available.

YEAR	NUMBER OF PEOPLE DIAGNOSED
2014	9,505
2015	9,362
2016	9,575
2017	9,483
2018	9,438

Notes:

1. For this response kidney cancer is defined by ICD-10 code C64.
2. Source: Cancer registration statistics: England 2018 final release, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-registration-statistics-england-2018-final-release>

■ **Lithium: Prescriptions****Dr Dan Poulter:****[108217]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2020 to Question 95617 on lithium carbonate, what plans his Department has to tackle the increase in price of lithium carbonate to NHS prescribers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Prices of branded medicines are controlled through the 2019 Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access and equivalent statutory scheme. There are no controls on prices of generic medicines. Instead, we rely on competition to drive prices down which has led to some of the lowest prices in Europe. In some instances, where there is no competition, some very large price increases have been observed. The Competition and Markets Authority has a number of live investigations into excessive prices of generic medicines.

The Department also has powers in the NHS Act 2006 to control the prices of National Health Service medicines. Those powers were updated in 2017 in respect of generic medicines and data provision. The Department has been considering proposals for ways to address high prices of generic medicines.

■ **Medicine: Research**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[106340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to link UK medical research strengths to (a) national and (b) regional clinical needs.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the Government's research funding body for translational, clinical, applied and public health research, funds high quality research for the benefit of the National Health Service, public health, social care, patients and the public. The NIHR's infrastructure covers all of England, such as the NIHR Clinical Research Network and the NIHR Applied Research Centres. It is a strategic priority for the NIHR that research must follow patient and public needs, and it works in partnership with the public, the health, public health and social care workforce, policy-makers and service commissioners and providers to identify the current and emerging challenges and where evidence is most needed.

■ **Obesity**

Alex Norris:

[\[107725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's strategy, Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives, published on 27 July 2020, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of future trade deals on the implementation of that strategy.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Public health issues such as obesity are being actively considered by the Department as part of trade policy development. It is our ambition that trade deals will help to improve the accessibility and affordability of healthier foods.

■ **Ovarian Cancer**

Munira Wilson:

[\[82472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage people who have symptoms of ovarian cancer to contact their GP during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

On April 25, as part of the National Health Service 'Help us help you' campaign, NHS Chief Executive Sir Simon Stevens warned that delays in getting treatment due to COVID-19 fears pose a long-term risk to people's health. It was stressed that the NHS is still there for people who need urgent and emergency services for cancer symptoms, as well as and other conditions.

■ Prescription Drugs: Shortages

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[106906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps have been taken to prepare for the supply of medicine stocks from Great Britain to Northern Ireland (a) before and (b) after 1 January 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: The Department, in consultation with the devolved administrations and Crown Dependencies, is working with trade bodies, product suppliers, and the health and care system to make detailed plans to help ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products to the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, at the end of the transition period, and will continue to after the end of the transition period.

This includes:

- medicines (prescription-only, pharmacy and general sales list and unlicensed medicines);
- medical devices and clinical consumables;
- supplies for clinical trials and clinical investigations;
- vaccines and countermeasures; and
- blood, tissue and transplant materials.

Further detail on the plans to help ensure continuity of medical supplies is available at the following link:

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

■ Prostate Cancer: Health Education

Paul Bristow:

[R] [82505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment Public Health England has made on the need for a national public awareness campaign on prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

In 2014, Public Health England (PHE) ran a Be Clear on Cancer local pilot campaign focusing on prostate cancer in London. This included posters (by the roadside and in barber shops), print, tailored public health messaging on local radio, street ambassadors and public relations. Further information on this campaign for prostate cancer can be viewed at the following link:

<https://prostatecanceruk.org/media/2457630/Be-Clear-on-Cancer-Web-Accessible-GP.pdf>

An evaluation of the campaign showed that the activity raised awareness of the issue within the target audience. However, there was no evidence of an increase in general

practitioner appointments as a result of the campaign. Further details can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.ncin.org.uk/cancer_type_and_topic_specific_work/topic_specific_work/be_clear_on_cancer/prostatecancerevaluationresults

■ Rare Diseases

Chris Green:

[107022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of patients with rare to diseases to access specialist care and treatment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Department, alongside NHS England, is considering the impact of COVID-19 on patients with rare diseases. NHS England has had discussions with some services and patients/patient groups to understand the impact of COVID-19 including what has worked well; what hasn't worked so well; and opportunities for transformation.

NHS England will continue to look at what services can be delivered successfully through virtual communication technology such as telephone consultation and videoconferences. Where services do need to be delivered face-to-face, NHS England will work with providers to ensure that patients have a safe journey through the hospital to the treatment area.

■ Rare Diseases: Diagnosis

Bob Blackman:

[106324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to ensure that there is a geographical spread of rare disease diagnosis centres to ensure that patients are able to attain timely and accessible access to accurate diagnosis.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to improving the lives of those living with rare conditions and recognises the importance of patients across all areas of the United Kingdom being able to obtain a quick and accurate diagnosis.

The Government will be publishing a new UK Rare Diseases Framework by the end of 2020 which will outline the high-level direction for rare diseases in the UK. Helping patients across the UK access specialist care and get a final diagnosis faster will be priorities of this Framework, as identified by extensive stakeholder engagement with patients, their families, researchers and clinicians. The policies to deliver these priorities will be set out in future nation-specific action plans and will be supported by the recently published Genome UK Strategy, which outlines the Government's vision to help people live longer, healthier lives using new genomic and other technologies to diagnose and treat rare disease.

Chris Green:

[\[107021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve early accurate diagnosis for rare diseases.

Jo Churchill:

The Government recognises the importance of patients across all areas of the United Kingdom being able to obtain a quick and accurate diagnosis.

The 2013 UK Rare Disease Strategy has helped to increase awareness amongst healthcare professionals to refer patients into specialist services. Earlier detection of rare diseases is benefitting from advances in genomics and the commitment to incorporate whole genome sequencing into routine healthcare by the NHS Genomic Medicine Service. The recently published Genome UK Strategy outlines the Government's vision to help people live longer, healthier lives using new genomic technologies to diagnose and treat rare diseases. Additionally, the government plans to publish a new UK Rare Diseases Framework by the end of 2020 which will replace the UK Rare Diseases Strategy.

■ Rare Diseases: Medical Treatments

Bob Blackman:

[\[106325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is undertaking to ensure that the NHS and wider health system is prepared for the adoption of advanced therapy medicinal products for the treatment of rare diseases.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is involved in research, development and adoption readiness of Advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMPs) through the Advanced Therapy Treatment Centre network, which is hosted by the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult and set up through funding from the UK Research and Innovation Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. ATMPs for the treatment of a range of conditions including rare diseases are appraised for clinical and cost effectiveness by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The NHS, the Accelerated Access Collaborative and direct commissioning teams work with a range of stakeholders to undertake detailed horizon scanning for ATMPs to ensure the relevant clinical and implementation preparations can be made where treatments are recommended by NICE.

■ Tobacco

Martyn Day:

[\[106420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to consult on updates to tobacco and related products legislation.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has a commitment to undertake a Post Implementation Review of both the Tobacco and Related Product Regulations 2016 and The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015 by 20 May 2021.

To form part of this review the Department will launch a public consultation by the end of the year.

Martyn Day: [\[106422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the safety of tobacco-free nicotine pouches.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment of the safety of tobacco-free nicotine pouches has been made by the Department. These products are not covered under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 but by The General Product Safety Regulations 2005.

■ Vaccination

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[107594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether, as part of developing a national vaccines strategy, he is making an assessment of the potential merits of (a) a national leadership forum bringing together key individuals and groups, (b) the appointment of a national Tsar to oversee the strategy and (c) new targets for adult vaccination rates.

Jo Churchill:

These issues will be considered, and the vaccine strategy will be reviewed in light of the ongoing pandemic response, to reflect the legacy of investment in vaccine development from the Vaccine Taskforce and lessons from future deployment of the vaccine, to help drive up immunisation rates in the United Kingdom.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[107596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on vaccination rates for adult vaccinations.

Jo Churchill:

The pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) is offered to adults aged 65 and over and children and adults in a clinical risk group. PPV coverage for the 2019-20 financial year was 69.0% (10,115,593/ 6,975,469) in adults aged 65 years and older. These results do not show the impact of the COVID-19 as most individuals were offered the vaccine prior to when lockdown measures were enforced. PPV vaccine coverage estimates for the 2020-21 financial year will reflect adults turning 65 and over from April 2020 to March 2021, which covers the duration when lockdown measures were enforced. This data will be published in summer of 2021.

The shingles vaccine is offered to those turning 70 or 78 years old up to their 80th birthday. Disruption to the delivery of the vaccine caused by COVID-19 and shielding guidance accounts for lower coverage. Annual vaccine coverage was 5.4 and 7.1 percentage points lower for 70- and 78-year olds compared to last year, with coverage in 2019/20 quarter 4 being 3.8 and 3.4 percentage points lower than 2018/19 quarter 4, respectively.

■ Vaccination: Disinformation

Colleen Fletcher:

[107009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle disinformation and misinformation about vaccines; and what assessment he has made of the effect of anti-vaccine misinformation on vaccine uptake rates.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: International research points to anti-vaccine misinformation having a negative effect on vaccine uptake rates therefore the Government is working with a range of partners to ensure that people are able to access the information they need to make the right choice on vaccines.

The Department is working closely with Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to promote vaccinations and raise awareness of their benefits and the diseases they prevent.

The Department works closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in engagement with media, social media and technology companies to limit misinformation and promote positive messages about vaccination.

HOME OFFICE

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Colleen Fletcher:

[109400]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the total number of alcohol-related crimes committed in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

Information on the total number of alcohol-related crimes is not available. However, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) routinely publish estimates on the number of violent offences where the offender was under the influence of alcohol, as part of their annual 'Nature of violent Crime' statistics. This includes data for the past 5 years and the latest data can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/natureofcrimetablesviolence>

■ Animal Experiments

Kenny MacAskil:

[100546]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to his Department's publication entitled Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain, what proportion of the batch safety tests reported in table 7.1. under quality control were (a) abnormal toxicity tests for human biological products, (b)

laboratory animal batch safety tests and (c) target animal batch safety tests for veterinary vaccines.

Victoria Atkins:

With reference to the report entitled Annual Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2019, published in July 2020, laboratory animal batch safety test data is not reported in a way that allows for the distinction between abnormal toxicity tests for human biological products and target animal batch safety tests for veterinary vaccines.

The proportion of batch safety tests performed on laboratory animals reported by establishments in Great Britain for medicinal products for:

- human use was 98.5% (18,470 of 18,757 tests); and
- veterinary use and their residues was 1.5% (287 of 18,757 tests).

■ **Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014**

Peter Kyle:

[\[110186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times the Community Trigger process in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has been used in each of the last five years.

Victoria Atkins:

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced specific measures designed to give victims and communities a say in the way that complaints of anti-social behaviour are dealt with. The Community Trigger, gives victims of persistent anti-social behaviour the ability to demand a formal case review (where a locally defined threshold is met), in order to determine whether there is further action which can be taken.

Data on the use of the ASB powers locally is not collated centrally. The powers in the 2014 Act are deliberately local in nature and it is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate in specific circumstances.

■ **Asylum: Coronavirus**

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[109422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will pause asylum support cessations and evictions in areas designated as Tier 3 or above of local covid-19 restrictions in (a) England and (b) Scotland; and if she will make a statement.

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[109423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 October 2020 to Question 96929 on Asylum: Housing, whether local health colleagues includes local authority Public Health Directors; and whether she consulted with local authority Public Health Directors on her decision to resume asylum support cessations for

people who have had a negative decision on their asylum case, as announced on 15 September 2020.

Chris Philp:

Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Home Office paused ending support for people who had been granted asylum, or whose claim had been refused. This was to ensure that people were not made homeless and able to follow social distancing.

We said from the outset that this was a temporary measure which would be brought to an end as soon as it was safe to do so.

The Home Office has started cessations of support in a phased way which will reduce demand on the asylum system while prioritising the safety of those within the asylum system.

The process of issuing discontinuation notices is kept under regular review, taking consideration of public health guidance. The issuing of notices was paused on 27 March, but resumed on 15 September for some cases, starting with failed asylum seekers living in tier 1 and 2 areas in England at the time of the decision being prioritised over other cases. This is being kept under continual review, particularly in light of the fact that we are only issuing negative cessation notices where a route back to the home country exists for the individual, amongst other things. An offer of voluntary return is made, in each case, including flights being paid for and a cash sum of X is offered as well.

We have been working closely with National and Local health Colleagues throughout the pandemic to inform our approach and will continue to do so. We remain committed to working closely with the accommodation providers and communicating with local authorities to relieve pressure and capacity as much as possible and ensure that health guidance is being followed.

Afzal Khan:

[\[109620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on issuing discontinuation letters to people living in asylum accommodation who (a) have had their asylum claim or fresh claim refused and (b) were eligible for asylum accommodation on public health grounds during the covid-19 outbreak.

Afzal Khan:

[\[109621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on issuing discontinuation letters to people living in asylum accommodation in Tier (a) 2 and (b) 3 local covid-19 alert level areas.

Afzal Khan:

[\[109622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many discontinuation letters have been issued to people living in asylum accommodation in (a) Manchester, (b) Greater Manchester and (c) Liverpool since the outbreak of covid-19.

Afzal Khan:

[109623]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the risk to health of evicting people from asylum accommodation during alert level 4 of the covid-19 outbreak; and if she will publish the evidence she used to make that assessment.

Afzal Khan:

[109624]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on people in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities of discontinuation letters being served to people living in asylum accommodation.

Chris Philp:

Failed asylum seekers who have exhausted their appeal rights are eligible to receive accommodation and other support provided they take reasonable steps to leave the UK or there is a legal or practical obstacle to their departure. Only failed asylum seekers who are able to take steps to leave the UK, but choose not to, are therefore issued with notices that their support will be discontinued.

The process of issuing discontinuation notices is kept under regular review, taking consideration of public health guidance and the impact of the virus on those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The issuing of notices was paused on 27 March, but resumed on 15 September for some cases, starting with failed asylum seekers living in tier 1 and 2 areas in England at the time of the decision being prioritised over other cases.

The number of discontinuation notices issued to those living in Manchester, Greater Manchester and Liverpool since 27 March is not in a recordable format and to do so would be at a disproportionate cost.

Information on the number of people in receipt of support are published here <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support> this includes applications, supported persons and those discontinued. The Home Office does not publish a breakdown by individual Local authority.

This is being kept under continual review, particularly in light of the fact that we are only issuing negative cessation notices where a route back to the home country exists for the individual, amongst other things. An offer of voluntary return is made, in each case, including flights being paid for and a cash sum of X is offered as well.

■ Asylum: Employment

Zarah Sultana:

[109701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of granting the right to work to asylum seekers and their adult dependents after six months of having lodged an asylum claim without the constraints of the Shortage Occupation List.

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: Housing****Patrick Grady:****[109459]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what standards her Department sets for contracted asylum accommodation providers to action repair requests from tenants.

Patrick Grady:**[109460]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what requirements her Department sets for contracted asylum accommodation providers to report on the (a) number of repair requests received from tenants, (b) number of repairs completed and (c) timescales for completed repairs.

Chris Philp:

The Government demands the highest standards from contractors and their accommodation and monitor them closely to ensure this is maintained.

Information on the requirements of our contracts, in relation to accommodation standards and defect resolution, can be found in the published version of the contracts, in Schedules 2 and 13:

Wales

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/79fd7209-ce47-453d-8880-a837bfdb3ef9?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08> =

South

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/7dc0db40-c8f9-4cbc-bad5-744a28d6fecf?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08> =

NW

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/ea95799-92db-4968-bf8a-004bd39868de?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08> =

MEE

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/cb6aa97e-a5a8-4e5e-9368-268d4923d68a?p=@UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT08> =

NEYH

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/24c6a868-8e1a-4775-8d4f-ab750854d367>

Scotland

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/a569f254-af0a-4ec8-a6a1-6622baa435ab>

NI

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/24c6a868-8e1a-4775-8d4f-ab750854d367>

■ Asylum: Legal Aid Scheme

Tim Farron:

[109252]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of access to legal aid immigration advice by asylum seekers housed at the (a) Napier Barracks in Folkestone and (b) Penally Training Camp in Pembrokeshire; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

All asylum seekers have access at all times to Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE), a single, integrated service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help.

The AIRE service provides advice and guidance to asylum seekers on the asylum process, their rights and signposts different services.

This includes information on the availability of legal advice and representation, including legal aid, upon induction into temporary accommodation.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Syria

Adam Holloway:

[110292]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many TPIMS are in force for British citizen returnees from Syria.

James Brokenshire:

The number of people on TPIMs is published quarterly by the Home Secretary. The Home Office does not comment on the background or circumstances of individual TPIM notices.

■ Children: Exploitation

Peter Kyle:

[105462]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to review the effectiveness of police forces in (a) identifying and (b) supporting victims of child criminal exploitation.

Peter Kyle:

[105469]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to issue guidance for police forces on (a) recognising and (b) responding to signs of child exploitation at the point of arrest.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government takes child criminal exploitation extremely seriously and is determined to tackle it. Last year we published a Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit to help the police and other frontline safeguarding professionals understand and access tools to target the sexual and criminal exploitation of children and young people. We have also published specific guidance on county lines which provides advice on how to recognise the signs and respond appropriately so victims get the help and support they need.

We continue to work across government to identify further opportunities to strengthen and improve the response to child criminal exploitation, including regular meetings with frontline youth workers and charities to listen to their experiences. As part of this work we are examining the recommendations and learning from HMICFRS report 'Both sides of the coin' and the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report 'It was Hard to Escape', as well as those from other safeguarding reviews relating to child criminal exploitation.

We also continue to invest in support for children and young people who are criminally exploited. This includes £860,000 this year to expand specialist one-to-one support for victims of county lines exploitation in London, the West Midlands and Merseyside. Additionally, through the Trusted Relationships Fund we are identifying innovative approaches to tackling vulnerability among children and young people at risk of exploitation including child criminal exploitation, by fostering healthy, trusting relationships with responsible adults.

■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing**Holly Mumby-Croft:**[\[109765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase support available to the police for tackling non-covid-secure protests, illegal gatherings, and other similar breaches of social distancing rules.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government has been clear that it will provide police forces with the support they need to continue protecting the public and keeping communities safe through the coronavirus pandemic.

The government continues to work closely with policing partners on the approach to managing the pandemic and on 8 October the Government announced an additional £30m for police forces in England and Wales to step up their enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions through the autumn and winter months. This includes enforcing against unlicensed music events, unlawful gatherings and protests that do not comply with Covid regulations.

■ Detention Centres: Coronavirus

Alison Thewliss: [109449]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many detainees and staff at (a) Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre and (b) Brook House Immigration Removal Centre have tested positive for covid-19 in the last 60 days.

Alison Thewliss: [109451]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people held in immigration detention in (a) prisons and (b) Immigration Removal Centres (i) have been advised to shield in their cells and (ii) are shielding.

Alison Thewliss: [109454]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many covid-19 tests have been administered to detainees in Immigration Removal Centres in the last 60 days.

Alison Thewliss: [109455]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many covid-19 tests have been administered to Immigration Removal Centre staff in the last 60 days.

Alison Thewliss: [109456]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the tests for covid-19 carried out in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) in the last 60 days have been positive; and at what IRCs those positive results have occurred.

Alison Thewliss: [109457]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps are taken to protect (a) detainees, (b) staff, and (c) people who are vulnerable when a positive covid-19 test occurs at an Immigration Removal Centre.

Chris Philp:

The Government takes the welfare of staff and detained individuals in its care very seriously. Earlier this year, the High Court ruled that our approach to detention and COVID-19 was sensible, with the appropriate precautionary measures in place.

Guidance regarding the principles for managing the detention estate during the COVID-19 pandemic is published on GOV.UK and can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921491/detention-and-escorting-services-guidance-during-covid-19_v3.0.pdf

Further preventative measures in place include full 'reverse cohorting' staffed by dedicated teams, single occupancy rooms and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Additionally, in response to an increasing rate of infection in the community, as of 21 October, all staff and visitors to IRCs and Short-Term Holding Facilities are required to wear a face mask at all times when in the main centre(s).

For the week commencing 26 October, management information shows that there were 45 individuals detained in an IRC who were considered to be at heightened risk

from COVID-19 and had been offered protective isolation (shielding) measures. Individuals can decline the offer of protective isolation measures and change their minds at any subsequent point. The protective isolation or shielding of those detained under immigration powers in prisons is managed by the Ministry of Justice.

All immigration removal centres have dedicated health facilities run by doctors and nurses which are managed by the NHS or appropriate providers. As per the guidance published by Public Health England, any individual with symptoms of COVID-19 will be placed in protective isolation for 7 days. Those individuals who are severely unwell will be transferred to appropriate healthcare facilities with usual escorts and following advice on safe transfers. Appropriate PPE equipment is available to contractor and healthcare staff when interacting with detained individuals being held in isolation.

Since Thursday 3 September to date, management information indicates that 35 individuals in detention have been tested for COVID-19 due to their circumstances (such as being symptomatic). In the same time period, there has been one confirmed case of COVID-19 in an individual who was detained in a Residential Short-Term Holding Facility. The individual was in medical isolation and did not require hospital treatment.

As of 2 November, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in detained individuals in the immigration detention estate. There have been no deaths in immigration removal centres or short-term holding facilities as a result of COVID-19.

Numbers of staff being tested for COVID-19 is recorded on a weekly basis. Since the week commencing 30 August, 152 members of staff working in the immigration detention estate (supplier staff and healthcare providers) have been tested for COVID-19. Since 3 September, there have been a total of 17 positive COVID-19 tests of Home Office and supplier staff (including healthcare providers) working in the immigration detention estate.

To supplement the preventative measures already in place, the Home Office have begun a program of voluntary COVID-19 testing on induction for individuals arriving at an IRC. Induction testing began at the Heathrow and Gatwick estates from 26 October (those tested on induction are not included in the figures provided above). The induction testing program will be rolled out to other centres in coming weeks.

■ **Diplomatic Service: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

Adam Holloway:

[109224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Home Office, what counter UAV technology is available to close protection details assigned to travelling Government (a) VVIPs and (b) foreign missions.

James Brokenshire:

It is our long-standing policy not to provide detailed information on the security arrangements for protected individuals. To do so could compromise the integrity of those arrangements and affect the security of the individuals concerned.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime

Andrew Griffith:

[109777]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle county lines drug trafficking in Sussex.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is determined to crack down on the county lines gangs who are exploiting our children and have a devastating impact on our communities.

That is why we are delivering a £25m programme of investment to help put a stop to these ruthless gangs. Our overall package launched in October last year and includes: expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre; increased disruption on the rail networks by the British Transport Police County Lines Taskforce; operational activity against high harm lines in the three major exporting force areas (the Metropolitan Police, Merseyside, West Midlands); investment in new technology; and increased support for victims. Our funding has supported joint operations across England and Wales, including with Sussex Police.

Our investment is already delivering results. Following the £5m we invested in 2019-2020, pilot police forces and British Transport Police have closed nearly 140 deal lines, seized cash and drugs with a total value of over £3 million, and made over 100 weapons seizures between November 2019 and March 2020.

In addition, between 2019 and 2021 we are investing £1.76m for the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to develop a multi-agency Violence Reduction Unit which brings together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and others to identify the drivers of serious violence, including county lines, and put in place a multi-agency response.

We have also invested £2.2million over 2019 and 2021 to 'surge' the operational police response to serious violence in Sussex - this has included collaborative work between Sussex Police and British Transport Police to target county lines activity on the rail network, leading to weapons seizures and arrests of key offenders.

■ Human Trafficking: Organised Crime

Jim Shannon:

[106348]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps her Department has taken to address trafficking gangs in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government is committed to tackling modern slavery, and drug and firearms trafficking.

Our response to these threats is set out in:

- Serious and Organised Crime Strategy: (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf)

- 2019/20 Modern Slavery Annual Report:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2020-uk-annual-report-on-modern-slavery>

This year, the Home Office is providing £2 million funding to continue to support the police under the new Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme (MSOIC). This funding will enable us to support the police to drive forward work to increase modern slavery prosecutions and build capability to respond to organised immigration crime.

We are also investing £25m over two years (2019/20 to 2020/21) to boost law enforcement efforts to tackle the county lines model of drugs distribution, including through expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC), boosting operational activity in the three major exporting force areas (the Metropolitan Police, Merseyside, West Midlands), and increasing support for victims.

■ Immigrants: Coronavirus

Neil Coyle:

[110141]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she will take to support people whose visas are due to expire and who cannot return to their country of origin as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kevin Foster:

We have published guidance on exceptional assurance for visa applicants in the UK and abroad:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>

It confirms if you intend to leave the UK, but have not been able to do so and you have a visa or leave which expires between 1 November and 30 November 2020, you may request additional time to stay, also known as 'exceptional assurance', by completing the online form. <https://hsforms.smartcdn.co.uk/webform.html>

If you are granted 'exceptional assurance' it will act as a short-term protection against any adverse action or consequences after your leave has expired. If conditions allowed you to work, study or rent accommodation you may continue to do so during the period of your exceptional assurance. Exceptional assurance does not grant you leave.

Whilst an application for 'exceptional assurance' is being considered, you will not be treated as an overstayer or suffer any detriment in any future immigration applications for this consideration period.

■ Immigrants: Detainees

Alison Thewliss:

[109450]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are in immigration detention in (a) Immigration Removal Centres and (b) prisons.

Alison Thewliss:

[109452]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have (a) entered immigration detention and (b) been released from immigration detention in the last 60 days.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes statistics on people entering and leaving detention in each quarter, and the number of people in detention on the last day of each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on people entering and leaving detention under immigration powers, are published in Table Det_01 of the '[Summary tables](#)' and of those in detention, by location in Table Det_03a. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

Further breakdowns can be found in the [Immigration detention detailed datasets](#).

Figures on people in detention in Q3 2020 will be published on 26 November 2020.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ **Radicalism: Republic of Ireland**

Ian Paisley:

[908206]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with her Irish counterpart on tackling extremism.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Secretary has engaged with the Irish Government as part of a wider dialogue, but not to specifically discuss extremism.

■ **Slavery: Victim Support Schemes**

Peter Kyle:

[105466]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many victims of modern slavery have been moved on from their Government-funded accommodation under the Victim Care Contract since 6 August 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

The Victim Care Contract (VCC) provides accommodation to adult victims of modern slavery who are referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and who have a need for safe house accommodation. The VCC provider, The Salvation Army, publishes an annual report which provides statistics for those that have exited VCC accommodation.

■ Slavery: Victims

Alex Norris: [105518]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which languages the National Referral Mechanism Referral form for referring potential victims of trafficking or modern slavery is published in.

Victoria Atkins:

Referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are made by First Responders via the Modern Slavery Online Portal. As the referral can only be made by designated First Responders, the portal is only available in English.

The First Responder is responsible for identifying potential victims of modern slavery, gathering information in order to understand what has happened to them and referring them to the NRM, or notifying the Home Office under the Duty to Notify where an adult does not consent to referral to the NRM.

Further information on the referral pathways can be found in the Modern Slavery Act 2015: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims>.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Stuart C McDonald: [102851]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons she used the phrase activist lawyers in her tweet of 3 September.

Chris Philp:

The Government rejects the underlying insinuation of this question. Lawyers play an important role in upholding the law and ensuring people have access to justice. They are however, just like politicians, not immune from criticism.

■ Undocumented Migrants: Immigration Controls

Sir Roger Gale: [109130]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many illegal immigrants have been apprehended while entering the UK in each of the 12 months from September (a) 2018 and (b) 2019.

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 operations 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/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020>

Details on the number of people who have crossed the Channel in small boats between January 2018 and June 2020 was published, via a letter from the Home Secretary to the Home Affairs Select Committee, in September 2020.

The information is available at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2333/documents/22962/default/>

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Equality: Training

Sir John Hayes:

[109158]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the total cost is of the unconscious bias training commissioned by the House of Commons.

Pete Wishart:

The total cost will be £9,750.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Layla Moran:

[110234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the additional Government funding that has been allocated to local authorities who prior to the second national covid-19 lockdown announcement were in Tier (a) 1, (b) 2, and (c) 3 of local covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and whether that funding will continue to be delivered by local authorities despite that lockdown announcement.

Luke Hall:

Government has already provided £6.4 billion directly to councils since the start of the pandemic. This included a commitment by the Department of Health and Social Care of up to £465 million in funding for English local authorities through the Local COVID Alert Level system, on top of £300 million already allocated to local authorities in England for test, trace and contain activity.

We are now providing new funding as we head into the national restrictions. With national restrictions replacing local ones on Thursday 5 November, Government has confirmed further support for local authorities through the extension of the Department of Health and Social Care's Contain Outbreak Management Fund, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Additional Restrictions Grant and Business Grants for closed businesses, together with backdated cash

grants for businesses in Local Alert Level 2 and 3 areas and additional funding for supporting the clinically extremely vulnerable.

Layla Moran:

[110236]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much additional funding his Department will provide for local authorities per clinically vulnerable person in their council area for the duration of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Luke Hall:

On Monday 12 October, the Prime Minister confirmed around £1 billion of new funding will be made available to councils across England with over £900 million of this funding provided to councils for their ongoing work to support vulnerable people and local communities during the pandemic. This brings the total funding given directly to councils during the pandemic, so far, to £6.4 billion. In addition to this, MHCLG will provide councils with over £32 million to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people. This is intended to help those who do not otherwise have a support network to access food and meet other needs, enabling CEV individuals to stay at home as much as possible. Councils will also have access to the NHS volunteer responders to assist them in this role.

■ Coronavirus: Religious Buildings

Rachael Maskell:

[110179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the evidential basis is for the closure of covid-19 secure places of worship under the lockdown restrictions announced on 31 October 2020; and what assessment he has made using public health data of the level of infection from those places of worship during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

The Government has listened carefully to the views of the scientific community, in particular the information from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its sub-groups when taking decisions on the best way to tackle the pandemic. SAGE advice continues to inform the decisions made by the Government, including the announcement made on 31 October.

In view of the increase in the R Rate, we had to take action to reduce the level of infection to protect our communities and save lives which is why we made the decision to close a broad range of premises, including places of worship for communal prayer. These measures are designed to limit the number of interactions that people have and therefore reduce the risk spread.

Data and scientific advice informing the fight against COVID-19 are published on gov.uk and specific relevant findings are shared in presentations accompanying significant policy announcements.

■ Night Shelters: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[105417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his announcement of 13 October 2020 entitled COVID-19: provision of night shelters, if he will publish the advice his Department received from Public Health England.

Kelly Tolhurst:

[Holding answer 22 October 2020]: We have worked extensively with Public Health England (PHE) to provide Operating Principles for the sector, to help them open shelters as safely as possible where necessary, when self-contained accommodation can't be made available and when local partners agree that it's the right thing to do. PHE were closely involved in the production of the Operating Principles and offered advice as part of our Night Shelter Working Group. .

The Operating Principles are part of a wider package. Last week we announced a £10 million Cold Weather Fund to support councils to tackle homelessness this winter and bring forward self-contained accommodation and COVID-secure accommodation, as well as a £2 million fund for the sector to help them transform their traditional models to be COVID-secure.

■ Religious Buildings: Coronavirus

Conor McGinn:

[\[110175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the latest public health guidance on covid-19 and (a) communal worship and (b) private worship in churches, synagogues, mosques and temples in England.

Luke Hall:

Our approach has always been guided by scientific and medical advice and we have listened carefully to the views of the scientific community, in particular the information from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its sub-groups. The number of Covid-19 cases is growing at an exponential rate so we have needed to act to limit our interaction with others.

This has sadly meant that we have had to make the difficult decision to close our places of worship for communal worship as we need to minimise social contact wherever we can for this short period of time.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[110197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the scientific evidence used to support the decision to extend covid-19 lockdown restrictions to places of worship and religious gatherings.

Luke Hall:

We have had to make some tough decisions to fight this deadly virus and the decision to close our places of worship has not been taken lightly.

In all decisions we have been guided by scientific and medical advice and we have listened carefully to the views of the scientific community, in particular the information from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its sub-groups. The R-Rate is above 1 across England, therefore we must limit our interaction with others.

This has sadly meant that we have had to close a broad range of premises where people interact and gather, including places of worship.

Afzal Khan: [\[110237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to provide updated covid-19 guidance for places of worship in advance of the forthcoming national lockdown.

Luke Hall:

On 2 November, we convened a meeting of the Places of Worship Taskforce and held a series of roundtables with representatives of our major faiths. This gave us the opportunity to provide the latest information to our faith representatives and to hear their concerns. This has helped us to shape the guidance ahead of the new regulations coming into effect on 5 November.

Afzal Khan: [\[110238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Muslim Council of Britain on providing guidance to Mosques ahead of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Luke Hall:

On 2 November we held a meeting of the Places of Worship Taskforce. We have also held roundtables with a broad range of representatives from all major faiths, including from the Islamic faith, to discuss the forthcoming restrictions,

These discussions, as they have been throughout the pandemic, have proved invaluable in sharing information with all our faith communities, and for hearing their concerns. We remain very grateful for the understanding of faith communities during these difficult times.

■ Religious Hatred: Islam

Afzal Khan: [\[110239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 107102 on Religious Hatred: Islam and with reference to the Government's commitment on tackling Islamophobia, what representations his Department has made to the Muslim Council of Britain on that tackling Islamophobia.

Luke Hall:

This Government stands strongly against the discrimination and intolerance faced by Muslim communities and we are determined that Muslims in our country should be able to practice their faith in freedom. The Government engages closely with a broad spectrum of Muslim voices to tackle hatred towards Muslim communities.

Afzal Khan:

[\[110240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 107103 on Religious Hatred: Islam, what steps the Government has taken to adopt a formal definition of Islamophobia to help tackle that issue.

Luke Hall:

This Government is committed to fighting any discrimination and intolerance faced by Muslim communities and we are working to develop a definition of anti-Muslim hatred.

■ **Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus**

Layla Moran:

[\[110235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what additional financial support his Department is making available to local authorities to assist rough sleepers following the Prime Minister's announcement of 31 October 2020 of further lockdown restrictions.

Kelly Tolhurst:

During the pandemic, we have worked closely with local authorities and the sector to offer vulnerable people safe accommodation and support. That work is ongoing and has not stopped. In September, we had successfully supported over 29,000 people, with 10,000 in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move on support.

We will continue to work with councils, charities and other partners - backed by over £700 million of government funding this year alone - to protect the most vulnerable in society. This includes a new £10 million Cold Weather Fund to support councils to tackle homelessness this winter and bring forward self-contained accommodation where possible. We are also providing local authorities with £91.5 million for interim accommodation and £150 million for long-term homes via the Next Steps Accommodation Programme to prevent those accommodated during the pandemic from returning to the streets.

This is in addition to £6.4 billion to help local authorities to support their communities throughout this pandemic, which includes their work to support rough sleepers.

We are monitoring the situation closely and will be setting out further information on support for rough sleepers shortly.

■ **Social Services: Children**

Steve McCabe:

[\[108203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Devolution White Paper on the provision of local authority children's services.

Luke Hall:

My department works closely with the Department for Education and partners across the country to ensure local authorities have the right tools and approaches to deliver high quality children's services. The Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper will set out government's place-based regional economic strategy to move us from recovery into levelling up. Where any devolution involves proposals for local government restructuring, these should be locally led by those who best know the area; and any such proposals would need to demonstrate that the services to be delivered by new organisations, including children's services where appropriate, would be improved.

Westferry Printworks: Planning Permission**Apsana Begum:**[\[108204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timescale is for his Department's re-consideration of the Westferry Printworks planning application by North and Shell.

Apsana Begum:[\[108301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with his (a) advisers and (b) Departmental officials on the Westferry Printworks development since June 2020.

Apsana Begum:[\[108302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which role in his Department is leading the reconsideration of Westferry Printworks development planning proposal; and what progress has been made on that matter.

Christopher Pincher:

As the Secretary of State has said, he will not be involved in deciding the redetermined planning appeal and has had no discussions or meetings on the redetermination of this case. No decision has yet been made as to which Minister will decide the appeal. My officials will be writing to the parties in due course setting out the arrangements for the redetermination of the appeal.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**Bicycles: China****Bill Esterson:**[\[110124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of maintaining anti-dumping duties on imports of bicycles originating from the People's Republic of China after the end of the transition period.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In preparation for the end of the transition period, the Department for International Trade has assessed whether the EU anti-dumping measure on bicycles should

continue to apply after the transition period. This was done through a Call for Evidence process, which was a technical exercise based on objective evidence from businesses, validated through reputable publicly available sources.

Each measure was considered against set criteria. Based on current evidence, this measure does not meet the criteria and that's why the Department has determined that the measure should not continue to apply after the transition period. British consumers would bear the brunt of higher prices if anti-dumping measures were unnecessarily retained.

British bicycle producers can, of course, appeal this decision and provide the Department with further information if there are changes to domestic market share before the end of the transition period.

■ **Diplomatic Service: USA**

Emily Thornberry:

[110094]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department has had with the US Ambassador to the UK on the Crown Estate's long-term leasing arrangements for the ambassador's Winfield House residence in Regent's Park.

Greg Hands:

The department holds no records of discussions with the US Ambassador to the UK on the Crown Estate's long-term leasing arrangements for Winfield House.

■ **Internally Displaced People: Indonesia**

Alex Sobel:

[109603]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to reports of up to 45,000 civilians displaced by Indonesian military operations in Nduga, West Papua, if the Government will stop the (a) sale of arms and (b) provision of training programmes to Indonesia.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously. All export licence applications are assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria').

The Consolidated Criteria takes into account our obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant rules of international law. It provides a thorough risk assessment framework and requires us to think hard about the possible impact of providing equipment and its capabilities. These are not decisions we take lightly.

HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria, including where we assess there is a clear risk that it might be used for internal repression.

The United Kingdom supports counter-terrorism training for the Indonesian National Police, through the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC). This

includes a broad range of counter terrorism investigation and analytical skills; essential equipment to enhance Indonesia's forensic, surveillance and IT capabilities; and training on the post-terrorist incident response, including first aid training. All training requires rights and responsibilities to be upheld. We do not provide training to Papua based units but continue to monitor the situation in Papua closely. HM Government respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia, which includes Papua and West Papua provinces.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Emily Thornberry: [\[110090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department has had with the US Ambassador to the UK on the potential effect of a UK ban on the import of fur and fur products on the prospects for a UK-US free trade agreement.

Emily Thornberry: [\[110091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with the British Fur Trade Association on the potential effect of a UK ban on the import of fur and fur products on the prospects for a UK-US free trade agreement.

Emily Thornberry: [\[110092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department has had with the US Department of Commerce on the potential effect of a UK ban on the import of fur and fur products on the prospects for a UK-US free trade agreement.

Emily Thornberry: [\[110093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department has had with the Office of the US Trade Representative on the potential effect of a UK ban on the import of fur and fur products on the prospects for a UK-US free trade agreement.

Greg Hands:

No such discussions have taken place with the parties listed on the potential effect of a UK ban on the import of fur and fur products on the prospects for a UK-US free trade agreement.

JUSTICE

■ Air Pollution

Geraint Davies: [\[110038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of reforms to the judicial review system on the numbers of legal cases brought against the Government on illegal levels of air pollution.

Chris Philp:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to PQ97451 on 9th October 2020.

Further to that answer the Government has also committed to undertaking a review of the Environmental Costs Protection Regime, and will set out further details in due course.

Courts: Disability**Karl Turner:****[R] [110118]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many courts in England and Wales are accessible for disabled users; and what steps he has taken to improve access for disabled users of the courts system.

Chris Philp:

We are committed to ensuring our courts are accessible to all our users and we aim to list cases at suitable venues when there are access needs. We are unable to provide information on the number of courts that are accessible for disabled users in the time allocated.

HMCTS will provide reasonable adjustments for court and tribunal users with disabilities and takes steps to avoid treating people less favourably because of their disability. Court and tribunal users are encouraged to get in touch before a hearing to discuss any particular adjustments they may need. Various mitigations will be explored, depending on the support required. For buildings, adjustments may include use of video-conferencing from a remote site, ensuring venues have ramps or accessible toilets, lifts able to accommodate wheelchairs, or hearing loops.

The modernisation and investment taking place across the justice system will mean that fewer people will need to attend court, as we make use of technology such as video-conferencing and online services. We have rapidly expanded our audio and video technology capability in direct response to the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19), enabling more remote hearings which reduce the need for people to attend a physical court building.

Solicitors: Legal Aid Scheme**Karl Turner:****[R] [110119]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors held a criminal legal aid contract as of 1 November 2020.

Karl Turner:**[R] [110120]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors held a civil legal aid contract as of 1 November 2020.

Karl Turner:**[R] [110121]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much money from the public purse was spent on criminal legal aid for from 1 March 2020 to 31 October 2020.

Karl Turner:

[R] [110122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much money from the public purse was spent on civil legal aid from 1 March 2020 to 31 October 2020.

Alex Chalk:

Please note for the figures provided that some firms may have more than one office. There are currently 1,130 firms which hold a Criminal Legal Aid Contract. There are currently 1,466 firms which hold a Civil Legal Aid Contract. This data is correct as at 2 November 2020.

Information on legal aid expenditure is published in the Legal Aid Agency's National Statistics, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>. At the time of writing, the most recent period for which data has been published covers up to and including March 2020; pre-publication laws preclude us from releasing figures for subsequent months at this time. Figures are also available under the closed claim expenditure measure in the same release with data up to June 2020 available. This provides only the total value of payments made to legal aid providers in relation to pieces of work that are completed in the period, and which could cover wide time periods, but does not include income received or expenditure in relation to debt write-offs.

The Legal Aid Agency frequently reviews market capacity to make sure there is adequate provision around the country and moves quickly to ensure provision where gaps may appear.

Earlier this year we announced an independent review to look at the sustainability of the legal aid market and have introduced changes to inject up to £51m per year.

■ Victims: Administration of Justice

Colum Eastwood:

[110279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support his Department has given to victims of clerical abuse to access justice.

Alex Chalk:

Rape and sexual abuse are devastating crimes that can have a life-long impact, and the Government is committed to ensuring the victims of these crimes have access to high-quality support services to help them cope and, as far as possible, recover. These services are available to all victims whether or not they report to the police.

In 2020/21, the Ministry of Justice awarded £12m to 91 rape support centres across England and Wales to provide independent, specialist support to female and male victims of sexual violence, an increase of £4m from 2019/20. This includes £1.8m of ringfenced funding for victims of recent and non-recent child sexual abuse.

The government has also recently doubled the financial support it provides to national organisations that support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to £2.4m.

The new funding is in addition to the £4.79m provided to Police and Crime Commissioners by the Ministry of Justice to support victims of child sexual abuse

(part of the £69m provided this year for them to commission victim support service based on local need).

We are committed to ensuring that victims can continue to access such support during the pandemic, and recently announced a £76m package of funding for victims, with £10 million ringfenced to provide support for victims of sexual violence specifically. This has helped fund technology to enable charities to offer services remotely.

The Government also recently announced that an additional £4m per annum until 2022 will be invested in recruiting more Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) to help victims feel informed and supported at every stage of their recovery journey. ISVAs provide an important link between police, support services and criminal justice agencies.

We will continue to work with the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse to expose what went wrong in the past and to learn the lessons for the future.

■ Young Offenders

Peter Kyle:

[\[109507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will update his Department's 2016 report entitled Understanding the educational background of youth offenders for the most recent year for which sentencing and educational data is available.

Lucy Frazer:

MoJ are in the process of updating the 'Understanding the educational background of youth offenders' report using the most recent MoJ/DfE analytical data share. We will be updating our future release schedule when we are in a position to commit to a publication date. The data in this share relates to offenders with at least one caution or conviction from 2000 or later, who were on the Police National Computer at the end of 2017 and were matched to individuals on the National Pupil Database.

SCOTLAND

■ Economic Situation: Scotland

Andrew Griffith:

[\[109772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Scottish business representatives on the recovery of the Scottish economy from the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Alister Jack:

My ministerial team and I have regular discussions with Scottish businesses and trade bodies.

Scottish businesses of all sizes are benefitting from the UK-wide Covid-19 support measures, with over £2.9 billion in loans taken out by nearly 80,000 Scottish businesses, over 290,000 claims worth around £770 million made through the UK-

wide Self Employment Income Support Scheme, and our furlough scheme continuing to benefit workers and businesses in Scotland.

In addition to these UK-wide measures, the Scottish Government has received an additional £7.2 billion to support Scotland's response to Covid-19.

■ **Spaceflight: Sutherland**

Andrew Griffith: [\[109774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the progress of the planned space port in Sutherland.

Andrew Griffith: [\[109775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the progress of the planned space port in Sutherland.

Mr Alister Jack:

The UK Government regularly engages with the Scottish Government and Space Hub Sutherland on their plans to build the vertical launch site at Melness. The launch site is expected to create up to 250 jobs, 61 of which will be in the Caithness and Sutherland area.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on receiving planning permission earlier this year and I look forward to seeing how the proposal develops in future.

TRANSPORT

■ **Bicycles: Repairs and Maintenance**

Rosie Duffield: [\[110217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the next tranche of repair vouchers under the Fix Your Bike scheme will be released.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department plans to release a further batch of vouchers shortly. The release of vouchers is being staggered to prevent repairers from being overwhelmed and to ensure that people can get their bikes fixed without significant delay.

Rosie Duffield: [\[110218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many vouchers have been claimed under the Fix Your Bike scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As of 3 November, 62,101 Fix Your Bike vouchers have been allocated to members of the public.

TREASURY■ **Business: Coronavirus****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[110264\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether covid-19 grants allocated to businesses will be classed as income for the 2020-21 financial year irrespective of when those moneys were received.

Jesse Norman:

Grant income received by a business is taxable. COVID-19 grants allocated to businesses should be considered by businesses in line with standard accounting principles, and treated as income in the appropriate accounting period. Only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme****Naz Shah:**[\[110147\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether employers will be able to make new claims under the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Neither the employer nor the employee needs to have previously claimed or have been claimed for under CJRS to make a claim under the extended CJRS (if other eligibility criteria are met). Furloughed employees must have been employed and on an employer's PAYE payroll on 30 October 2020. This means a Real Time Information (RTI) submission notifying payment for that employee to HMRC must have been made on or before 30 October 2020. If employees were on payroll as of 23 September 2020 (i.e. notified to HMRC on an RTI submission on or before 23 September) and were made redundant or stopped working for their employer afterwards, they can also qualify for the scheme if their employer re-employs them.

■ **Directors: Coronavirus****Bill Esterson:**[\[110123\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason financial assistance was not offered to limited company directors during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has not taken a principled stance against support for company owner-managers who pay themselves via dividends. Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages. Under current reporting mechanisms it is not possible for HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources, and between dividends in lieu of employment income and as returns from other corporate activity.

This means, unlike announced support schemes which use information HMRC already hold, targeting additional support would require owner-managers to make a claim and submit information that HMRC could not efficiently or consistently verify to ensure payments were made to eligible companies for eligible activity. This is about identifying what is operationally feasible, managing technical complexities and fraud risks, and ensuring that other forms of support the Government has already committed to are delivered in a timely way.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[110191]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefits of providing financial support to people who are (a) freelancers (b) take their pay through dividends, (c) newly self-employed, (d) have both self-employed and PAYE income and (c) other labour groups previously ineligible for financial support packages during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided, and will continue to provide, generous support to the self-employed, including freelancers, through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension.

The Government has acknowledged that it has not been able to support everyone as they would want. The practical issues that prevented the Government from being able to include those self-employed individuals who take their pay through dividends, namely not being able to verify the source of their dividend income without introducing unacceptable fraud risk, still remain.

Similarly, the issues that prevented eligibility being extended to the newly self-employed under previous SEISS grants, namely that HMRC will not have access to their self-assessment returns in time to verify their eligibility, also remain.

The self-employed are very diverse and have a wide mix of turnover and profits, and in some cases have substantial alternative forms of income too. The design of the SEISS, including the eligibility requirement that an individual's trading profits must be at least equal to their non-trading income, means it is targeted at those who need it most, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

These eligibility criteria strike the right balance between ensuring support is granted to those who need it, and protecting value for the taxpayer.

Those not eligible for the SEISS Grant Extension may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support package available. This includes

Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

■ **Leisure: VAT**

Stephen McPartland:

[\[107645\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to reduce VAT on health and leisure sector memberships to promote healthy living.

Jesse Norman:

Services linked with sport or physical education provided by certain bodies are exempt from VAT provided they are not run for profit. The services of profit making bodies are subject to the standard rate of VAT in line with the rules for normal business activity.

Extending the current exemption would come at a cost to the Exchequer. The Government has no plans to change the current VAT treatment of health and leisure memberships.

■ **Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland**

Colum Eastwood:

[\[110278\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding has been returned to his Department from the Northern Ireland Executive in each of the last five financial years.

Steve Barclay:

The Statement of Funding Policy sets out the amount that the Northern Ireland Executive is able to put through Budget Exchange, which allows the Executive to carry over underspends from one year to the next. A limit of 0.6% Resource DEL and 1.5% Capital DEL can be carried forward in any year. Any underspends in excess of these limits will be forfeited unless exceptionally agreed otherwise with HM Treasury.

The Northern Ireland Executive publishes information on underspends in end of year accounts and underspends for the past 5 years are published here:

[https://www.finance-](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/FOI%20DOF%202020-0091%20Response.pdf)

[ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/FOI%20DOF%202020-0091%20Response.pdf](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/FOI%20DOF%202020-0091%20Response.pdf)

■ **Public Expenditure: Scotland**

Alan Brown:

[\[109483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Barnett consequential is for Scotland from the Local Restrictions Support Grants announced as part of the expanded winter economic support package.

Steve Barclay:

Any additional funding provided to BEIS for the Local Restrictions Support Grants will result in Barnett consequentials for the Scottish Government.

As is the normal process, changes to departmental and devolved administrations' funding will be confirmed at Supplementary Estimates.

Therefore, to give the Scottish Government the upfront certainty to plan and deliver their coronavirus response, we have guaranteed they will receive at least £7.2bn in additional funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding.

■ **Public Sector: Redundancy Pay**

Matt Western:

[\[109562\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Department's document, Public sector exit payments: Response to the consultation, published in July 2020, what his timescale is for introducing limits on public sector redundancy payments.

Steve Barclay:

The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 as amended by the Enterprise Act 2016 granted HM Treasury the power to implement the £95,000 public sector exit payment cap through secondary legislation in the form of affirmative regulations.

HMT consulted on draft regulations to implement the exit payment cap in 2019 and laid regulations before Parliament in July 2020. The public sector exit payment cap will come into force on 4 November 2020, which is 21 days after the regulations were made.

■ **Self-employed: Coronavirus**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[107738\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support is available for self-employed people who have taken out business loans and are continuing to experience financial hardship as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the impact that the changing path of the virus has had on the self-employed and has taken action to increase the level of assistance available.

The Government has confirmed that it will provide further taxable grants through the SEISS Grant Extension. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced today that the third grant will cover 80% of average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of profits for 1 November 2020 to 31 January 2021, and capped at £7,500 in total. This provides equivalent support to the self-employed as is being provided to employees through the Government's contribution in the CJRS. The fourth grant will cover a three-month period from 1 February 2021 until 30 April 2021. The Government will review the level of the fourth grant and set this in due course.

Furthermore, the Chancellor previously announced approved additional funding to support cash grants of up to £2,100 per month for businesses who may be adversely

affected by the restrictions in high-alert level areas. These grants will be available retrospectively for areas who have already been subject to restrictions, and come on top of higher levels of additional business support for Local Authorities moving into Tier 3 which, if scaled up across the country, would be worth more than £1 billion. These grants could benefit about 150,000 businesses in England, including hotels, restaurants, B&Bs and many more businesses which are not legally required to close but have been adversely affected by local restrictions nonetheless.

For those requiring further assistance, a comprehensive package of financial support is available. The Government has temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor for the duration of the pandemic meaning that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly fallen, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, the self-employed also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, and mortgage holidays.

Sarah Olney:

[110209]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will provide tailored financial support to self-employed cancer patients who are unable to pay themselves sick pay at present.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the challenges presented by COVID-19 for those suffering with cancer, and self-employed cancer patients have access to the current level of unprecedented support for people's incomes.

Self-employed individuals may be eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which remains open for applications and has recently been extended. The SEISS Grant Extension was announced as part of the Winter Economy Plan on 24 September. It provides support to the self-employed, by supporting those who were previously eligible for the SEISS, intend to continue trading and, due to COVID-19, are either temporarily unable to carry out their business or actively continuing to trade but are affected by reduced demand. The scheme will last for six months, from November 2020 to April 2021.

The Government is committed to supporting self-employed cancer patients through any period in which they are unable to work. Individuals with a health condition that prevents them from working or preparing for work may be entitled to an extra amount of Universal Credit (UC). In addition, individuals with sufficient National Insurance contributions may be entitled to "new style" Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if they are incapable of work. The Government has relaxed the UC minimum income floor for all self-employed claimants to support the self-employed during this time.

For those requiring further assistance, the SEISS and welfare measures continue to be just part of a comprehensive package of support for self-employed individuals.

This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Helen Hayes:

[110192]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the eligibility criteria is for the newly self-employed under the extended Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The practical issues that prevented the Government from being able to include the newly self-employed in 2019-20 in the original Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), namely that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will not have access to their self-assessment returns to be able to verify their eligibility, still remain. The latest year for which HMRC have tax returns for all self-employed individuals is 2018/19. 2019/20 returns are not due until the end of January 2021.

Unlike for employees, self-employed income is not reported monthly, but at the end of each tax year on the individual's Income Tax Self-Assessment return. This means that the most reliable and up-to-date record of self-employed income is from the 2018-19 tax returns.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax

Chris Grayling:

[107608]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the revenue from Stamp Duty has been in each of the last 15 years.

Jesse Norman:

Data on Stamp Duty revenue up to 2019-20 is available in HM Revenue & Customs Annual Stamp Taxes publication: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-stamp-tax-statistics>.

■ Transport for London: Coronavirus

Gavin Newlands:

[110166]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions the Government has had with (a) the Scottish Government, (b) the Welsh Government and (c) the Northern Ireland Executive on the disbursement of Barnett consequential funding resulting from the extraordinary funding and financing package for Transport for London announced on 1 November 2020.

Steve Barclay:

Any additional funding provided to the Department for Transport to support Transport for London will result in Barnett consequential for the devolved administrations.

As is the normal process, changes to departmental and devolved administrations' funding will be confirmed at Supplementary Estimates.

Therefore, to give the devolved administrations the upfront certainty to plan and deliver their coronavirus response, we have guaranteed they will receive at least £14bn in additional funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding. This means a total increase this year of at least £7.2bn for the Scottish Government, £4.4 billion for the Welsh Government, and £2.4 bn for the Northern Ireland Executive.

■ Union Learning Fund: Coronavirus**Patrick Grady:**[\[110167\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of continuing finance for the Union Learning Fund to provide support for workers affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

My officials continually consider assessments of the value for money of public spending.

The government has provided unprecedented support for jobs, and remains committed to investing in adult skills and retraining. The Plan for Jobs provided funding for skills and training to help workers affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, and the forthcoming Spending Review will confirm details of the National Skills Fund to help more people learn new skills and prepare for the jobs of the future.

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[110117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on extending the uplift to universal credit beyond April 2021.

Steve Barclay:

The temporary £20 per week increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits was introduced specifically to provide support to those who have seen their income fall as a result of the pandemic. This is just one part of a wide-ranging package of support the Government has provided to protect people's jobs and incomes. We are continuing to respond to the economic situation as it evolves and are keeping all measures under review. Making the £20 per week increase permanent would require a substantial ongoing increase in borrowing or tax rises, with 2020-21 spending on working-age benefits set to be the highest since records began as a share of national income.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Coronavirus Act 2020****Abena Oppong-Asare:****[94583]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 on people with protected characteristics.

Kemi Badenoch:

An equalities assessment was carried out on the Coronavirus Act and was published on the 28 July. - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-act-2020-equality-impact-assessment>

We are undertaking a wide range of analysis to support decision making across government. We are keeping Parliament and the wider public updated on the analysis of covid including through several survey publications on business and social impacts available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-statistics-and-analysis#social-impacts>.

More broadly, equality impacts have been identified as part of an ongoing process to support policy development and have been a key part of the decision-making process. The responsibility for equalities impact assessments lies with departments, who take this responsibility very seriously.

It is important to note that protected characteristics refer to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation; the Equality Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of any of these characteristics.

■ Disability: Railways**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[106463]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on accessibility on the rail network.

Kemi Badenoch:

Officials in my Department have recently been in discussions with the Department for Transport on its Transport Regulatory Review, in which the Government Equalities Office and the wider Equalities Hub has an interest, particularly in relation to disability.

This builds on publication in 2018 of our Inclusive Transport Strategy which sets out what we are doing to improve access across all transport modes and we will continue to seek further improvements.

Economic situation: coronavirus**Yasmin Qureshi:****[106309]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor on the economic effect of the Winter Economy Plan on (a) women, (b) disabled people and (c) BAME people.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government economic support schemes provide support to the most vulnerable, including those employed in sectors that employ disproportionately large numbers of women, people from some ethnic minorities, and the young. The Job Support Scheme and Job Support Scheme Expansion are particularly important to help these groups that are at a higher risk of unemployment.

Government Equalities Office: Written Questions**Owen Thompson:****[100478]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to answer Questions 95141, 95142 and 95143 tabled on 24 September 2020 by the hon. Member for Midlothian.

Kemi Badenoch:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer to PQs [95141 and 95143](#) and my answer to PQ [95142](#).

WORK AND PENSIONS**Universal Credit: Coronavirus****Hywel Williams:****[110064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason she did not extend the £20 uplift in universal credit to legacy benefits; and whether she plans to extend that uplift to those legacy benefits.

Will Quince:

The Government introduced measures earlier this year that could be quickly and effectively put in place to benefit those facing the most financial disruption during the pandemic, including the £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year. There are no plans to extend this to legacy benefits.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Prosperity Fund Annual Report 2019/20

Paymaster General (Penny Mordaunt):

[[HCWS557](#)]

I wish to inform the House of the publication of the Prosperity Fund's fourth Annual Report for the Financial Year 2019/20.

Over the last four years, the Prosperity Fund has aimed to promote economic growth and reduce poverty in developing countries. As well as contributing towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Fund has responded to the increasing demand from developing countries to build deeper trade, investment partnerships, and economic relations with other countries.

I am placing a copy of the Prosperity Fund Annual Report 2019/20 in the library of both Houses. The publication of the report reflects the Government's continuing commitment to transparency in the delivery of Official Development Assistance.

Attachments:

1. Prosperity Fund Annual Report 2019/20 [FCDO0029 Prosperity Report 2019-20 v5.pdf]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Independent Review of Insurance

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Domestic Environment)
(Rebecca Pow):**

[[HCWS554](#)]

On 27th December 2019 my Rt Hon Friend the then Secretary of State (Theresa Villiers) commissioned an independent review following the severe flooding in South Yorkshire in November 2019. The River Don recorded its highest ever peak flows at Rotherham and Doncaster, with South Yorkshire experiencing its wettest November on record - seeing over two and a half times its average rainfall and over 760 properties reported as having flooded.

This independent review has been led by Amanda Blanc, former chair of the Association of British Insurers (ABI) who was appointed on 14 April 2020 and was supported by BMG Research. Amanda Blanc has provided me with a comprehensive report that sets out her findings into why some residents of Doncaster did not have sufficient insurance cover, and in some cases no insurance at all. Where necessary, it considers and makes recommendations for action to mitigate the impact of future flood events. (Full terms of reference for the Review can be found on Gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-insurance-review-2020-blanc-review/terms-of-reference-flood-insurance-review-2020>)

I would like to thank Amanda for her investigation and recommendations, which the Government will now consider.

Report Findings

This report sets out the findings of the review in relation to the level of insurance cover held by those affected in Doncaster, the barriers they may have faced in obtaining cover and whether there are any systemic issues in the provision of flood insurance.

The report identifies that 95% of homeowners were able to confirm that they had both buildings and contents insurance. This compares with 94% of households at risk of flooding in Defra's national [2018 survey](#) looking at the availability and affordability of flood insurance. I am pleased that this shows the sustained availability of home insurance for homeowners especially in this area of high flood risk. However, amongst homeowners who had insurance, 6% of buildings insurance policies did not cover flooding, and 7% of contents insurance policies did not cover flooding.

The report also found that there were significant differences between the insurance cover held by homeowners and tenants, and that *"owner-occupiers were generally far better protected than renters"*. Whilst tenants are responsible for arranging their contents insurance, they do not organise their buildings insurance as this is the responsibility of landlords. The evidence shows that only 25% of tenants had contents insurance that covered flood damage. The report identifies reasons why tenants did not have suitable contents insurance that covered against the risk of flooding, such as the cost of the insurance, the time it takes to renew the insurance policy, and not being able to find a quote that included flood cover.

Report Recommendations

The report makes 12 recommendations for actions that can be taken by the insurance industry, Flood Re, landlords, local authorities, Government and others to help enable homes and businesses to access sufficient insurance cover for flooding, while also informing any future policy decisions in this area:

- Four recommendations focus on the role of insurers, insurance brokers and their representative bodies in helping customers find the most suitable flood insurance to cover individual needs.
- Two recommendations focus on the need for landlords to make sure tenants are adequately supported in the case of a flood event.
- Two recommendations relate to the need for further evidence gathering at a national scale, through a repeat of a national 2018 survey on the affordability and availability of insurance.
- One recommendation calls for Flood Re to reduce the cost of its contents insurance premium for Council Tax band A and B properties.
- Other recommendations focus on the need for increased awareness of flood risk for communities, highlighting the role of Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and representative bodies.

The report will be published today on Gov.uk.

This Review is essential in identifying some of the barriers that are in place for residents in high flood risk areas and understanding how we can take positive action to improve the protection available to residents moving forward.

The Government will be working with the insurance industry, Flood Re and the Environment Agency to explore the recommendations within the report and will respond formally to the recommendations in due course.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ FCDO Services

Minister for Asia (Nigel Adams):

[\[HCWS556\]](#)

My Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) has made the following Written Statement:

FCDO Services operates as a trading fund of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Notwithstanding Covid-19, I have set the following ambitious performance targets for 2020-2021:

1. Achievement of the return on capital employed (ROCE) of at least 3.5% (weighted average before accounting for costs directly associated with Covid-19);
2. A productivity ratio of at least 80%, measuring actual billable hours versus available billable hours (Q3 and Q4 only – normalised for the impact of Covid-19);
3. An in-year customer satisfaction rating average at least of 80% (Q3 and Q4 only - normalised for the impact of Covid-19); and
4. An average Your Say score for “My Manager” measuring 63%.

In addition to the performance targets, FCDO Services will continue to maintain high levels of staff engagement for 2020-2021 throughout the period.

FCDO Services will report to Parliament on its success against these targets through its Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-2021.

FCDO Services is a Trading Fund of the FCDO. It provides a range of integrated, secure services worldwide to the FCDO and other UK Government departments, supporting the delivery of government agendas. Services include protective security, estates and construction, cloud computing, communications and monitoring, logistics, translation and interpreting. This is combined with a portfolio of global maintenance work. FCDO Services also manages the UK National Authority for Counter Eavesdropping (UK NACE), helping protect UK assets from physical, electronic and cyber-attack.

■ NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab): [\[HCWS555\]](#)

The hon. Member for Lanark and Hamilton East (Angela Crawley) has replaced the hon. Member for Dunfermline and West Fife (Douglas Chapman) as a Member of the United Kingdom delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Rough sleeping update

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): [\[HCWS559\]](#)

Today, in light of the national restrictions, I have announced targeted, additional support for areas with higher numbers of rough sleepers, to enable local authorities to protect the most vulnerable in our society from the effects of COVID-19.

This continues our ongoing work to support rough sleepers, to keep them safe during the pandemic and to provide a long-term sustainable end to rough sleeping.

This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping and we have already taken huge steps to working with local authorities and their partners to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic. The Government is spending over £700 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year alone.

I am today launching the Protect Programme which builds on the ongoing success of Everyone In and ensures we are protecting the most vulnerable in our communities during the 4-week period of restrictions and across the winter period.

This programme will see Government working intensively with a selection of local areas with the highest levels of rough sleeping, backed by £15 million of funding.

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

These efforts have been backed by significant government support:

- Over £6.4 billion provided to councils to help them to manage the impacts of COVID-19, which we have been clear includes their work to support rough sleepers. This is alongside wider additional funding for councils to support local test, trace and contain activities, and their local businesses.
- Worked with councils to develop tailored local plans to support rough sleepers over the coming months.

- A £266 million Next Steps Accommodation Programme aims to ensure that as few people as possible return to the streets. This includes the £91.5 million allocated to 274 councils in September to fund their individual local plans for rough sleepers over the coming months, and £150 million which is being used to bring forward 3,300 new homes for rough sleepers this year.
- £112 million provided to local areas through the Rough Sleeping Initiative.
- A £10 million Cold Weather Fund for all local authorities to bring forward COVID-secure accommodation this winter; a new £2 million Transformation Fund for the voluntary sector; and comprehensive guidance on reopening night shelters more safely, where not doing so would endanger lives.

In light of the recently brought in national restrictions, we will work with local authorities and their partners, to build on this work and make sure that they have updated plans in place to protect some of the most vulnerable in our society.

All councils in England will be asked to update their rough sleeping plans and consider interventions for anyone sleeping rough.

We recognise that areas with high numbers of rough sleepers will require an increased health focus alongside accommodation for those sleeping rough, prioritising those who are clinically vulnerable. This support will continue throughout winter. The Protect Programme will provide £15 million, alongside targeted Government support, to ensure additional support for rough sleepers is available over this winter period in the areas that need it most.

We will set out further detail about how local areas can access this additional support under the Protect Programme imminently and I encourage all relevant partners and local authorities to consider how they can best use the available support to protect the most vulnerable.

JUSTICE

■ Chief Coroner's sixth and seventh annual reports to the Lord Chancellor

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice (Alex Chalk):
[\[HCWS558\]](#)

I am pleased to lay and publish the Chief Coroner's combined sixth and seventh annual reports to the Lord Chancellor on the operation of coroner services under section 36 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). The joint report covers both 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020.

Publication of the sixth report was delayed last year and, in light of the emerging Covid-19 pandemic at the start of 2020, it was considered preferable to postpone its publication until later in the year and release it as a joint edition with the seventh report.

In particular, the Chief Coroner's report sets out:

- The work that he as well as coroners, their officers and their staff have achieved to manage the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- The continuing work to promote consistency in the resourcing of and practices in coroner offices across England and Wales;
- The training and guidance that coroners and their officers have received and the engagement with a wide range of stakeholders; and
- Recommendations to improve coroner services further.

Annexed to the report are the Chief Coroner's revised "A Model Coroner Area" blueprint, the list of cases over twelve months old reported to the Chief Coroner and tables of senior and area coroners' salaries.

I am very grateful to His Honour Judge Mark Lucraft QC for building so effectively on his previous achievements as well as those of his predecessor, His Honour Sir Peter Thornton QC. I also thank him for his excellent and much-appreciated service since October 2016 as he now moves on to become the full-time Recorder of London. I am particularly grateful that he continued to serve as Chief Coroner over the last months to guide and support coroners in facing the incredibly difficult challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am grateful too to all coroners and their officers and other staff, for having supported the Chief Coroner to improve services for bereaved people and for their valued and continuing frontline work. Their work in managing the impact of the pandemic on their own services but also more widely, in support of their Local Resilience Fora, has been inestimable.

The report will be available online, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-coroners-combined-annual-report-2018-to-2019-and-2019-to-2020>.