

**Daily Report****Tuesday, 10 November 2020**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 November 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:35 P.M., 10 November 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Bicycles: Sales

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[112005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if the Government will publish the most recent data it holds on the proportion of bicycles sold in the UK that are manufactured in the UK.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government does not hold any data on the proportion of bicycles sold in the UK, which are manufactured in the UK.

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[110115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support businesses seeking to hire new employees during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

This Government is committed to both protecting existing jobs as well as supporting job creation to ensure we build back better after this crisis. At the heart of these plans is a £30 billion investment in jobs. In his Summer Economic Update, the Chancellor – as part of his Plan for Jobs - announced a £3 billion investment in green infrastructure to create thousands of green jobs, a cut to Stamp Duty to support an industry that employs almost 750,000 people, a £2 billion investment in the Kickstart scheme to get our youth into work, as well as doubling the number of work coaches and tripling the number of traineeships.

Our investment includes:

- Construction Talent Retention Scheme – Supports the redeployment of workers at risk of redundancy to opportunities across the UK.
- Green Jobs Challenge Fund – The Government will invest up to £40 million in a Green Jobs Challenge Fund for environmental charities and public authorities to create and protect 5,000 jobs in England.
- Kickstart Scheme - Provides funding to create new job placements for those aged 16-24 on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment. Employers of all sizes can apply for funding which covers National Minimum Wage, NICs and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.

**Selaine Saxby:**

[\[908546\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support businesses to achieve an environmentally sustainable recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

As my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister has said, we are determined to build back greener, and deliver millions of new green jobs. We are taking action to deliver on that commitment, including committing over £3 billion to reduce emissions from our buildings across the UK. There are an estimated 460,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains across the country, and we want that to rise to 2 million by 2030.

**Alison McGovern:****[R] [908551]**

What assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on corporate social responsibility.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government welcomes the social responsibility that most businesses have shown in responding to the pandemic, including making their premises Covid-secure by using the Safer Working guidance led by Government. Groups such as Business in the Community are continuing to coordinate help for communities in need; and the CBI-backed Good Business Charter continues to promote corporate social responsibility.

**■ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme****Liam Byrne:****[110060]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many banks are offering loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

**Paul Scully:**

There are currently 115 lenders accredited to provide loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Accredited lenders include a range of alternative finance providers alongside more traditional banks.

**Liam Byrne:****[110061]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether statutory protections from changes to interest rates are available to recipients of the Coronavirus Business Loan Interruption Scheme.

**Paul Scully:**

Under the terms of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), interest rates do not change once agreed between the lender and borrower at the beginning of the term.

Lenders undergo periodic audits to check that scheme eligibility rules and processes are being followed. If it is determined that a lender is not passing on the economic benefits of the CBILS Guarantee to borrowers, the lender will be obligated to take such action as is required by the British Business Bank to rectify this.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Mr Marcus Fysh:****[110172]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps (a) his Department and (b) other public bodies (i) have taken and (ii) are planning to take to help ensure that the (A) objective and (B) outcome of covid-19 candidate vaccine trials are preventing (1) covid-19 transmission and (2) serious covid-19 cases and fatalities.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The National Institute for Health Research provides support and critical infrastructure for clinical trials – making the UK well-suited to facilitate clinical trials that are essential to the development of any vaccine.

All vaccines are tested through three phases of clinical trials, to ensure they meet the usual rigorous standards, data must include the results of clinical trials, animal studies, manufacturing and in-process quality controls, consistency in batches production, and testing data. Clinical trials of any vaccine must follow a predefined development pathway, with regulatory oversight provided by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The MHRA will seek advice from the independent expert advisors on the Commission on Human Medicines and its Expert Advisory Group on the risks and benefits of any vaccine. A vaccine will only be deployed once it has been proved to be safe and effective.

**Mr Marcus Fysh:****[110173]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps (a) his Department and (b) other public bodies are taking to help ensure that emerging covid-19 vaccine candidates (a) research, (b) production and (c) administration capacity is used by vaccine candidates which have the prevention of contraction, transmission and fatal impact of covid-19 within their clinical trial objectives and outcomes for that candidate vaccine.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is working at pace to secure a safe and effective vaccine for all. To date, we have secured 350 million doses through six different vaccine developers.

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) are helping to fund and/or deliver a range of 'rapid response' research to better understand and tackle COVID-19, including research into vaccines, treatments and diagnostic tests. The government has also invested over £230 million in manufacturing facilities, to manufacture a vaccine quickly, if and when a candidate becomes successful. Manufacturers and wholesalers of COVID-19 vaccine candidates must meet the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) standards of good manufacturing practice (GMP) and good distribution practice (GDP). MHRA carries out inspections to check if manufacturing and distribution sites comply with GMP or GDP.



## ■ Fireworks: Children

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[110244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that fireworks are not sold to people under 18 years of age.

**Paul Scully:**

It is illegal to sell fireworks or sparklers to any person under the age of 18 years and all premises supplying fireworks are required to display a notice highlighting it is illegal to sell fireworks to under 18's or for those under 18 to possess fireworks in a public place.

Local Authority Trading Standards have powers to enforce the law and work with businesses to help them comply. The Government has worked with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute to provide training to front-line officers on firework enforcement. The maximum penalty for supplying fireworks to a person under 18 is a fine or three months imprisonment.

The Government launched an awareness campaign on 20 October to promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks, and we have partnered with organisations including retail bodies to ensure retailers understand their responsibilities when selling fireworks.

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[908549\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help ensure that Green Homes Grant Scheme improvements offer significant (a) environmental benefits and (b) value for money.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

My Rt hon friend the Prime Minister has made clear that energy efficiency is a Government priority. The Green Homes Grant provides economic stimulus, supporting over 80,000 jobs. Through the scheme, households could save up to £600 a year on energy bills.

## ■ Land Registry: Artificial Intelligence

**Chris Stephens:**

[\[112078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) artificial intelligence and (b) machine learning projects are being (i) undertaken and (ii) considered for the Land Registry.

**Amanda Solloway:**

HM Land Registry has been exploring new and emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning as part of its Digital Street research and development project since 2017. It is aiming to begin to use Machine Learning capabilities within its casework management systems in 2021/22, and is building its Data Science capability to explore and exploit future opportunities that Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning may provide.

**■ Post Offices: Community Development****Scott Mann:** [\[908552\]](#)

What plans his Department has to transform post offices into community hubs.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Post Offices are very much at the heart of their communities, often operating alongside other key community services such as libraries or pubs. Postmasters and the Post Office will continue to work with their communities to meet their needs.

**■ Post Offices: ICT****Tonia Antoniazzi:** [\[908547\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support sub-postmasters affected by failings in the Horizon IT system.

**Paul Scully:**

Post Office Ltd has admitted it got things wrong in relation to Horizon and has apologised. I have announced an Independent Inquiry to ensure that we understand fully what went wrong and that this situation will never be repeated.

**■ Spaceflight: Government Assistance****Ben Everitt:** [\[908555\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support the UK space sector.

**Amanda Solloway:**

We are committed to establishing a commanding lead in space and other industries of the future. My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister has established a National Space Council to deliver this ambition.

We are investing in the next generation of satellite technologies, backing exciting new spaceports in Scotland and Cornwall, and using UK space expertise to tackle climate change.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Commonwealth: Veterans****Ben Bradley:** [\[109618\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to support the Commonwealth Veterans 8 faced with unaffordable bills for healthcare due to their residential status.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The NHS provides a range of outstanding physical and mental health care support for the Armed Forces community. There are some Armed Forces veterans whose residency status does not currently entitle them to free healthcare for conditions not related to their Armed Forces service; discussions are underway to address this

anomaly. All non-UK personnel who serve in the Armed Forces for a minimum of four years, and those medically discharged before then as a result of an attributable injury or illness, have the option to settle in the UK at the conclusion of their service through bespoke Armed Forces immigration arrangements which include the full use of the NHS.

There is also provision in existing immigration rules for individuals who have served in the Armed Forces to re-apply to have their immigration status reviewed under certain circumstances or to apply where the normal timeframes for an application have expired. There should be no doubt the Government is committed to making it easier for service personnel and their families to settle in the UK once they have completed their service and is exploring ways to achieve this

## ■ **Construction: Finance**

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

**[109674]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a requirement for all publicly-funded building projects first to investigate retrofitting of existing buildings.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government has already put in place a number of measures that require decision-makers in the public sector to consider refurbishment and retro-fitting improvements to existing buildings, rather than commissioning new-build solutions automatically.

## ■ **Contracts for Services: Coronavirus**

**Rachel Reeves:**

**[101271]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment the his Department has made of the value of insourcing services as part of the Government's covid-19 response.

**Julia Lopez:**

Working with the private sector has been a vital part of the government's response to tackling the coronavirus crisis, with private sector workers standing alongside those from the public sector on the front line. Collaborative working between the public and private sectors has enabled us to respond to the challenges of Covid, including rapidly manufacturing over 15,000 mechanical ventilators for use by the NHS, sourcing over 32 billion items of PPE and building the capacity to carry out more than 500,000 tests per day. When making decisions on how to deliver public services, departments should consider various possible delivery methods including in-house, joint ventures or via the private sector.

**■ Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum****Stephen Morgan:** [\[106476\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking in response to representations from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum on the provision of central Government funding for completion of Operation Transmission; and if he will make a statement.

**Julia Lopez:**

I refer the hon. Member to the [answer](#) given to PQs 106475 and 106474 on 28 October 2020.

**■ Pets: Travel****Claire Hanna:** [\[109736\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department has made in discussions with the EU Commission on obtaining part one listed status with respect to pet travel.

**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[110778\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the EU on ensuring the continuation of seamless pet travel following the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Guidance on pet travel is set out on gov.uk.

Any changes to this guideline is dependent on the category that is given to Great Britain at the end of the Transition Period, with this being conditional on the ongoing discussions being had with the EU Commission.

DEFRA has submitted an application to the European Commission to become a 'Part I' listed third country in relation to the non-commercial movement of pet dogs, cats and ferrets into the EU, which the Commission is considering.

Discussions with the European Commission are ongoing. Updates will be announced in the usual way.

**DEFENCE****■ Defence: Equipment****Sir John Hayes:** [\[111422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the UK defence industry can supply the defence equipment required to meet future threats.

**Jeremy Quin:**

In March this year I announced DSIS - a cross-Government review into the UK's defence and security industrial sectors, we are identifying how we can enhance our strategic approach to ensure we have competitive, innovative and world-class defence and security industries that underpin our national security and drive investment and prosperity across the Union now and in the future.

The MOD has been leading this review, with input from other relevant Government Departments, to ensure that we have the industrial capabilities that we need to meet current and future threats to our national security.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Saudi Arabia****Zarah Sultana:**[\[110258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) of his Department's civilian staff based in the UK, (b) of his Department's civilian staff based in Saudi Arabia, (c) military personnel based in the UK and (d) military personnel based in Saudi Arabia were employed by the (i) Saudi Arabian National Guard Communications Project and (ii) Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Project on 1 April 2020.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The number of civilian and military personnel based in the UK and Saudi Arabia who were employed by the Saudi Arabian National Guard Communications Project (SANGCOM) and the Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Projects (MODSAP) on 1 April 2020 is shown below. The Saudi Arabian Government reimburses the UK Ministry of Defence for these staff costs..

**MANPOWER NUMBER AS AT 1**

<b>APRIL 2020</b>	<b>SANGCOM</b>	<b>MODSAP</b>
UK-based Civilian Staff	4	68
UK-based Military Staff	0	34
Saudi-based Civilian Staff	43	38
Saudi-based Military Staff	21	67

**Zarah Sultana:**[\[110259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much money from the public purse was spent on the (a) Saudi Arabian National Guard Communications Project and (b) his Department's Saudi Armed Forces Project in 2019-20; and what the budget is for those projects in 2020-21.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The costs incurred by the Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Projects (MODSAP) in financial year 2019-20 amounted to £64.10 million. The budget for

financial year 2020-21 is £62.24 million. The costs of MODSAP are met in full from a management fee received from the Saudi Arabian Government.

There is no expenditure charged to the UK Ministry of Defence's budget for the Saudi Arabian National Guard Communications (SANGCOM) Project, as it is entirely funded by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[112066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2020 to Question 106364 on Overseas Aid, how many projects were applied for by his Department under the Integrated Activity Fund; what the titles were of those projects; and how many of those projects were (a) approved and (b) subject to Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment in each financial year since 2016-17.

**James Heappey:**

We do not disclose information related to Integrated Activity Fund projects as it would, or would be likely to, prejudice our relations with other States.

## ■ Trident Submarines

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[112000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when contracts (a) will be signed with Rolls Royce for the reactors for the Dreadnought ballistic missile submarines and (b) need to be delivered by so as not to delay the overall Dreadnought-class build programme.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As referenced in the 2019 Annual Update to Parliament on the UK's Future Nuclear Deterrent, the contract to deliver the nuclear propulsion power plants for all four Dreadnought class submarines was awarded to Rolls-Royce in May 2019. Equipment deliveries to the BAE Systems' Barrow-in-Furness shipyard are ongoing and will support the entry to service of the First of Class in the early 2030s.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

## ■ Archery: Coronavirus

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[111619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to provide additional financial support for outdoor archery clubs during the period of new national covid-19 lockdown restrictions from 5 November 2020.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Sports and physical activity providers and facilities are at the heart of our communities, and play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support, which many sport clubs have benefited

from. On 22 October, the Government announced a £100m support fund for local authority leisure centres. In addition, Sport England's Community Emergency Fund has also provided £210 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic.

We are continuing to work with organisations to understand what they need and how we may be able to support them.

## ■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[112119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will provide a timetable for the resumption of conferences and exhibitions.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

We are aware that many in the sector support the notion of publishing a timetable for reopening conferences and exhibitions.

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.

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 an extensive package of financial support in place, including the extension of various government-backed loans, new business grants and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes.

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[112120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what targeted support the Government 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.

Events businesses have been able to access a number of the Government's support measures throughout this period. In the context of new national restrictions, events businesses and individuals can continue to seek support in the form of various government-backed loans, new business grants and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes. The recently announced discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant guidance for Local Authorities specifically refers to businesses in the events sector.

We are engaging 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.

### ■ Gyms: Coronavirus

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[110897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing gymnasiums to remain open during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**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. The difficulty is that, when you unpick one thing, the effectiveness of the whole package is compromised. 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.

### ■ Museums and Galleries: Coronavirus

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[111612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support the Government is providing to help ensure that museum curatorial staff are able to continue scientific work during the period of new national covid-19 lockdown from 5 November 2020.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

Museums and galleries have been ordered to close under the national restrictions. In line with the regulations, curatorial staff are still able to undertake their work on site where it is not reasonably possible for them to do so from home.

Museums and galleries have made their workplaces Covid secure, in line with the guidance produced by the National Museums Directors' Council with support from DCMS.

The Government has provided substantial financial support for museums through the Culture Recovery Fund, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and other



measures, which will help museums, and other cultural organisations, continue their important work.

## ■ Sports: Coronavirus

**Gareth Thomas:**

[110719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the (a) Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and (b) Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential merits of permitting amateur and semi-professional sports clubs to continue to train outdoors throughout the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown period.

**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.

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. The difficulty is that, when you unpick one thing, the effectiveness of the whole package is compromised.

## EDUCATION

## ■ Adult Education

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[109397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people that have completed an adult education course in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The number of adult achievements in Further Education courses in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands, and (c) England from the academic years 2014/15 to 2018/19 are shown in the table below, and published at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/848365/FE\\_and\\_Skills\\_Part\\_and\\_Achieve\\_Final\\_201819.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848365/FE_and_Skills_Part_and_Achieve_Final_201819.xlsx).

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Coventry Local Authority District</b>	14,390	11,800	10,790	11,070	10,080
<b>West Midlands</b>	212,160	176,260	168,310	167,960	58,230
<b>England <sup>6</sup></b>	1,983,190	1,694,520	1,578,910	1,574,420	1,467,580

Figures for the full, final 2019/20 academic year are due to be published in our next 'Further Education and Skills' statistical release, later this month. The exact publication date will be announced on gov.uk soon.

To note:

- 1) Volumes are rounded to the nearest ten.
- 2) The data source is the Individualised Learner Record and include full, final year data for each year.
- 3) In this table, full-year numbers are a count of the number of achievements at any point during the year.
- 4) Figures for 2018/19 are based on the geographic boundaries as of April 2019. Figures for 2014/15 to 2017/18 based on geographic boundaries as of May 2010.
- 5) Region and local authority district are based upon the home postcode of the learner.
- 6) The England row here includes learners achieving in England but where the learner's home postcode is outside of England, and also a small number of learners where their postcode is not known.

## ■ Apprentices: Coronavirus

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[110177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to (a) financially support apprentices who cannot finish their programme as a result of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on normal assessment procedures and (b) introduce alternative arrangements for those apprentices.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Apprenticeships are more important now than ever in helping businesses to recruit the right people and develop the skills they need to recover and grow following the COVID-19 outbreak. Ensuring apprentices can continue to progress and achieve their apprenticeships during the disruption caused by COVID-19 continues to be a priority.

We have introduced a range of flexibilities in the delivery of training and apprenticeship assessment to support apprentices and their employers to ensure they can continue with and complete their apprenticeships. These include encouraging the remote delivery of training, introducing flexibilities to end-point assessments, and allowing furloughed apprentices to continue their apprenticeships and end-point assessments. We continue to monitor closely the availability of assessments and to address any identified barriers to participation and assessment.

Where apprentices are made redundant, we have taken steps to support these individuals and ensure more can continue and complete their apprenticeship. The department introduced a redundancy support service for apprentices which provides clear, accessible advice and guidance to individuals on the impact of redundancy, their options and next steps. As part of this service we also launched a vacancy sharing scheme to help redundant apprentices find new apprenticeship opportunities with employers. Over 1000 employers have signed up to the service to offer opportunities to redundant apprentices, including Bupa Dental and Taylor Wimpey.

We have amended legislation so that all apprentices who have less than 6 months of their apprenticeship remaining or have completed 75% of their apprenticeship at the point of redundancy can be funded to complete their apprenticeship. This change will mean more apprentices can complete their apprenticeship, maximising the value of public and employer investment in their training and putting them in a stronger position to secure new employment.

To help support employers to offer new apprenticeships, including to those that have been made redundant, employers are now able to claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25, and £1,500 for those 25 and over, until 31 January 2021.

## ■ Children: Financial Services

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[112056]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the age at which children's attitudes towards money are shaped; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions, and know where to seek further information when needed. In 2014, for the first time, financial literacy was made statutory within the National Curriculum as part of the citizenship curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study>.

We also introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides young people with the knowledge and financial skills to make important financial decisions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study>. The Government has published statutory

programmes of study for mathematics and citizenship that outline what pupils should learn about financial education from Key Stages 1 to 4.

In the primary mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic that pupils should have. This knowledge is vital, as a strong understanding of numeracy and numbers will underpin the pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, percentages. There is also some specific content about financial education such as calculations with money.

The Department trusts schools to use their professional judgement and understanding of their pupils to develop the right teaching approach for their particular school, drawing on the expertise of subject associations and organisations such as Young Money.

For the longer term, the Department will continue to work closely with The Money and Pension Service and Her Majesty's Treasury, to consider how to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools .

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Students**

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[107730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential risk to public health of students returning from universities in Tier 3 areas to areas with lower covid-19 restrictions.

**Michelle Donelan:**

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

As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced to the House on Tuesday 29 September, the department is working with universities to make sure that all students are supported to return home safely and spend Christmas with their loved ones, if they choose to do so.

We are working through measures to mitigate transmission risks and why we are planning to publish guidance on students returning home safely at Christmas.

#### ■ **Education: Coronavirus**

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[112133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the finding by the National Autistic Society's report of 7 September 2020, Left stranded, that seven in 10 children were unable to complete school work during the covid-19 lockdown; and if he will make a statement.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government recognises the significant challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak has presented for children and young people and their families. Supporting children

with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those with autism, continues to be a priority for this government, and their wellbeing has been central to our response throughout the outbreak.

As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, made clear in his statement of 31 October 2020, our priority remains keeping all early years settings, schools and colleges open to all children and young people during the lockdown period commencing from 5 November. Schools and colleges should continue to ensure that children and young people with autism receive the education, therapeutic or specialist support and reasonable adjustments required to enable them to successfully engage with school or college.

To support those children who cannot attend school for any reason, we have invested over £195 million to support remote education and access to online social care, delivering over 220,000 laptops and tablets during the summer term for disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access to a digital device. We are also providing support by making over 340,000 additional laptops and tablets available in the autumn term to support disadvantaged children that might face disruption to their education. Since September, over 100,000 of these have been delivered to schools.

To support the hard work of schools in delivering remote education, Oak National Academy was very quickly brought together by over 40 teachers, their schools and other education organisations. The department has made £4.84 million available for Oak National Academy to provide video lessons in a broad range of subjects for reception up to year 11. The department also funds the Autism Education Trust (AET) to deliver training to education professionals and embed good autism practice in schools and colleges across England. AET has developed a hub of guidance and resources for families, teachers and other professionals aimed at supporting children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is available here: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/?s=covid>.

## ■ Educational Institutions: Inspections

**Stephen Timms:**

**[111990]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to calls by the Association of School and College Leaders that Ofsted inspections should not return until September 2021, what discussions he has had with the Chief Inspector for Ofsted on resuming inspections on state (a) schools, (b) nurseries and (c) colleges.

**Nick Gibb:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has regular discussions with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, about a range of matters, including Ofsted's inspection approaches and programmes. The Department is committed to keeping under review the current suspension of Ofsted's routine inspections, which has now been in place since March 2020. That process continues. It will be important for school inspections to start up again in the new year, but at the

right time and in the right way. The Department is carefully considering with Ofsted and the sector how this can be achieved safely and sensitively, with a clear focus on provision for pupils whether in the classroom or remotely.

## ■ English Language: Education

**Luke Pollard:** [\[109646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of English language schools at risk of closure as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[109647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what advice he is giving to English language schools at risk of closure which are not eligible for covid-19 financial support.

**Luke Pollard:** [\[109648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has allocated additional funding to ensure the financial viability of English language schools during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We support English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses as part of our wider effort to improve adult literacy in England. Funding is available through the Adult Education Budget for courses and qualifications at pre-entry, entry level 1 to 3, level 1 and level 2. In 2018/19, the department supported 120,500 adult learners to improve their levels of English through ESOL classes.

However, English Language Teaching Centres are private language schools, and as such are not in receipt of any funding from the department. We have therefore made no assessment of the adequacy of support for them during the COVID-19 outbreak. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has announced an extensive and unprecedented package of support measures for businesses across the country and as such we have delivered one of the most generous and comprehensive packages of support globally, with a total fiscal response of close to £200 billion.

The measures introduced, including loan schemes, grant funding, tax deferrals and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has also announced an extension to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and other loan schemes until 31 January, ensuring there is further support in place for firms who need it during this ongoing period of difficulty.

On 31 October, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced that the CJRS will remain open until December, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500. Under the extended scheme, the cost for employers of retaining workers will be reduced compared to the previous version of the scheme, which was due to end on 31 October. This means

the extended furlough scheme is more generous for employers than it was in October.

In addition, business premises forced to close in England are to receive grants worth up to £3,000 per month under the Local Restrictions Support Grant. A further £1.1 billion is being given to local authorities, distributed on the basis of £20 per head, for one-off payments to enable them to support businesses more broadly.

## ■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

**Jon Trickett:**

[110045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the monthly cost to the public purse of the provision of £15 weekly food vouchers for pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

**Vicky Ford:**

Our national voucher scheme supplier, Edenred, has reported that over £380 million worth of voucher codes have been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by families through the scheme as of 19 August 2020. The scheme was launched on 31 March 2020. Over 20,350 schools have placed orders for the scheme as of 28 July. The free school meal (FSM) voucher scheme has now closed. Now schools and their kitchens are open, normal free school meal provision has resumed, enabling children to have a nutritious healthy meal at school.

Our latest FSM guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[110289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 74468 on Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes, how much commission Edenred has earned through its delivery of the free school meals voucher scheme since the start of that scheme.

**Vicky Ford:**

As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID-19.

Our latest guidance for schools is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>.

These are rapidly developing circumstances; we continue to keep the situation under review and will keep Parliament updated accordingly.

The contract for the national free school meals voucher scheme was let against Crown Commercial Service framework RM6133. The successful provider is the sole provider on the framework and direct awards are permitted action. The department



does not comment on the commercial arrangements of third parties but can confirm that we are only paying for the face value of goods delivered – in this case, vouchers.

#### ■ Free School Meals: West Yorkshire

**Jon Trickett:** [110041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children were eligible for Free School Meals on (a) 1 January 2020 and (b) 1 October 2020.

**Jon Trickett:** [110042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children were eligible for Free School Meals in (a) Wakefield, (b) Leeds, (c) Kirklees, (d) Bradford and (e) Calderdale Local Authority areas on 1 January 2020.

**Jon Trickett:** [110043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children were eligible for Free School Meals in (a) Wakefield, (b) Leeds, (c) Kirklees, (d) Bradford and (e) Calderdale Local Authority areas on 1 October 2020.

**Vicky Ford:**

The number of children that were eligible for Free School Meals in England and (a) Wakefield, (b) Leeds, (c) Kirklees, (d) Bradford and (e) Calderdale Local Authority areas in January 2020 is given in the table below.

AREA	HEADCOUNT	PER CENT
England	1,440,788	17.3
Wakefield	9,285	17.2
Leeds	25,488	20.1
Kirklees	14,215	21.0
Bradford	20,938	20.7
Calderdale	7,014	19.1

Source: School census, January 2020 - <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/96abea42-23cf-4412-910b-85d104f9be9d>.

Data for October 2020 is currently being collected through the autumn term school census and is not yet available.



## ■ Music: Coronavirus

**Adam Afriyie:**

[112016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether one to one music lessons can continue during the November lockdown, provided that they are covid secure.

**Nick Gibb:**

On Saturday 31 October 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced new national restrictions from Thursday 5 November 2020 until Wednesday 2 December 2020 to control the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak. On 4 November 2020, the Department for Education published guidance for schools and nurseries regarding the impact of these restrictions. The guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020>.

The Government continues to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of children and young people and will not be closing early years settings, schools, further education colleges or universities.

The Government is committed to all pupils receiving a high-quality education. Music, including one-to-one lessons, can be undertaken in school, college, or university so long as safety precautions are undertaken.

Advice is provided in the full opening guidance which sets out how teaching music can be conducted safely in schools. This includes visits by peripatetic teachers for the purposes of one-to-one music lessons, such as tutors from music education hubs.

Where provision is taking place before or after the school day, this should only operate where the provision is reasonably necessary to enable parents to work, search for work, or attend education or training, or where the provision is used for the purposes of respite care, including for vulnerable children.

Out-of-school activities that are primarily used by home educating parents as part of their arrangements for their child to receive a suitable full-time education (which could include, for example, private tutors, tuition centres, supplementary schools) may also continue to operate.

All other out of school activities, not being primarily used by parents for these purposes, should close for face to face provision but can offer remote education for the duration of the national restrictions.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

**Tom Hunt:**

[110256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing financial support to pre-schools during the covid-19 outbreak to help prevent the closure of those pre-schools.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government recognises the importance of supporting the early years sector financially during the COVID-19 outbreak.

That is why on 20 July 2020 we announced that we will continue to fund childcare at the same level as before the COVID-19 outbreak, until the end of the calendar year. This will give nurseries and childminders another term of secure income, regardless of how many children are attending. Early years settings will continue to benefit from a planned £3.6 billion funding in the 2020-21 financial year to create free early education and childcare places for children.

In addition to this, the government has provided a package of support for individuals and businesses which are directly benefitting providers of childcare. This includes business rates relief and grants, the extended Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Job Retention bonus and the extended Job Retention scheme, which will remain open until December 2020, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500.

Around £60 million per year of supplementary funding is also being provided to local authorities, to enable them to protect maintained nursery schools' funding. On 24 August 2020, we announced that we will continue to provide this for the whole of the 2020-21 academic year.

We continue to work closely with both local authorities and the early years sector organisations to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the sector.

**■ Pupils: Coronavirus****Justin Madders:****[110163]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils in England have had to self-isolate since the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is estimated that up to 361,000 pupils in state-funded schools, excluding schools on half term, did not attend school for COVID-19 related reasons as on Thursday 5 November 2020. Of these, it is estimated that up to 301,000 pupils are self-isolating due to potential contact with a case of COVID-19. It is not possible to estimate the total number of pupils who have had to self-isolate since the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year.

It is a priority for the Department to keep a close track of the situation in schools in relation to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. The Department is currently collecting data from schools on a daily basis, as well as gathering information from local areas and following up with individual settings. This includes confirming that procedures for requiring pupils to isolate are well understood and that necessary decisions are being made based on public health advice.

Data is collected on the number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment measures and the Department has attendance data for schools that have done so. We are currently looking at the quality of that data with a view to publishing as part of the official statistics series. The series already includes published data on school openings, attendance, and absences, which can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

## ■ Schools: Drinking Water

**Derek Thomas:**

**[102890]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure all school pupils continue to have easy access to drinking water throughout the coronavirus outbreak.

**Derek Thomas:**

**[102892]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to ensure all pupils have good access to toilets and wash rooms throughout the school day during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

The guidance sets out the system of controls, which provides a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff.

As part of the system of controls, pupils and staff must clean their hands thoroughly more often than usual. Schools should consider whether they have enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all pupils and staff can clean their hands regularly. Skin friendly cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative. Schools must also introduce enhanced cleaning, including regular cleaning of toilets. Schools can consider allocating different groups their own toilet blocks to help pupils to maintain the appropriate distance but this is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it.

Following a risk assessment, some schools may determine that small adaptations to their site are required, such as additional wash basins. This will be at the discretion of individual schools, based on their particular circumstances. We do not consider it necessary for schools to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all children back to school.

Drinking water must be provided free of charge at all times to registered pupils on school premises. It is for schools to consider the most appropriate way to do this, within their wider system of controls. It is still recommended that pupils limit the

amount of equipment they bring into school each day to essentials, but this can include water bottles.

### ■ Schools: Fire Extinguishers

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[107746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of making the implementation of sprinkler systems in new build and substantially refurbished schools mandatory.

**Nick Gibb:**

Sprinklers must be fitted in schools where they are deemed necessary to keep pupils and staff safe. All new school building projects must also comply with building regulations, including on fire safety, and this must be independently checked by Building Control or an Approved Inspector before buildings are occupied.

We are currently updating Building Bulletin 100 (BB100), the department's guidance on fire safety design in schools. A revised version of BB100 will be the subject of a full public consultation in due course. This will give full consideration to the implementation of various fire safety measures, including the use of sprinkler systems.

All schools have to follow strict fire safety regulations, including having a fire risk assessment designed to ensure they are as safe as possible and well prepared in the event of a fire.

### ■ Schools: Manchester

**Jim McMahon:**

[\[110207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason the Regional Schools Commissioner did not engage in the Q1 Serious Case Review conducted by the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership; and whether that decision was based on the policy of his Department.

**Nick Gibb:**

Regional School Commissioners do not have a direct role in handling safeguarding cases and are not expected to act themselves.

### ■ STEM Subjects: Further Education

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[109394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of students studying STEM-related courses in further education colleges in each of the last five years.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Table 1 in the attached file provides the number of learning aims (i.e. courses, programmes, qualifications and units) taken in STEM-related sector subject areas in education and training provision for each academic year between 2014/15 and

2018/19 and covers all further education (FE) providers. In addition, Table 2 provides apprenticeship participation on STEM-related apprenticeships delivered at FE and tertiary colleges. Both tables include students of all ages for learning in England.

Figures for the full, final 2019/20 academic year are due to be published in our next 'Further Education and Skills' statistical release later this month. The exact publication date will be announced on gov.uk soon.

**Attachments:**

1. 109394\_Table  
[109394\_Table\_showing\_number\_of\_learning\_aims\_taken\_in\_STEM\_FE\_subjects.xls]

■ **Teachers: Mental Health**

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[112071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help improve morale of (a) teachers and (b) other education professionals.

**Nick Gibb:**

The morale and wellbeing of staff in schools is of vital importance to the Department. Last year, the Department set up an Expert Advisory Group to advise on the wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges. Their recommendations were accepted by ministers and published in June 2020 and can be viewed at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/890547/Nick\\_Gibb\\_letter\\_to\\_EAG.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/890547/Nick_Gibb_letter_to_EAG.pdf).

The Department has made a range of commitments to support the wellbeing of teachers and other education professionals in schools and colleges, including the creation of a wellbeing charter for the teaching sector. The charter will help to create an open culture around wellbeing and mental health, and to break down stigma. It will include a range of commitments by the Government, and for employers in schools and colleges, to promote and protect staff wellbeing.

The Department recognises the excellent job that all of those working in education are doing during these challenging circumstances. The Department sponsors the 'Thank a Teacher' campaign, run by the Teaching Awards Trust, so that any pupil, parent or member of the public can show their appreciation for education staff working in schools and colleges. Thousands of thank you cards have been sent to education staff since the outbreak of COVID-19, and this year's Thank a Teacher Day in May was the biggest ever.

The Department also sponsors the National Teaching Awards, which recognise excellence in teachers, schools and education professionals across the UK. We look forward to celebrating the gold winners when they are announced later this year.

## ■ Young People: Unemployment

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[110268]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on setting and monitoring objectives to reduce the rate of 18 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training; and whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the Youth Employment Group report entitled Securing a place for young people in the nation's economic recovery.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We want to give young people the best chance to succeed, despite these challenging and unsettling times. We know that young people are likely to be disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

We welcome the work of the Youth Employment Group (YEG) and the contribution the report makes to helping our understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and what the government might do to mitigate these risks. I was pleased to meet YEG chairs in September 2020 and appreciated hearing from them how we can better support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). We continue to work closely with the YEG as part of our stakeholder work.

The department is working with a range of partners including local authorities and key stakeholders to monitor the situation and, across government, to review the impact on young people NEET as the situation emerges.

As part of my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Plan for Jobs, we made a number of skills commitments such as a significant expansion of the traineeships programme, the introduction of high value courses for year 13 leavers to continue in learning, and payments for employers to hire new apprentices. Kickstart will also create high quality work placements for young people claiming Universal Credit who are deemed at risk of long-term unemployment. It will create more sector-based work academy programmes that will provide vocational training and guaranteed interviews for more people, helping them gain the skills needed for jobs in their local area. We will be monitoring progress and take up of these offers alongside NEET numbers.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Inland Waterways: Standards

**Mr Steve Baker:**

**[112040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking under the Sewage (Inland Waters) Bill to improve the health of (a) rivers and (b) other inland waters.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Sewage (Inland Waters) Bill is a Private Members' Bill sponsored by my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Ludlow. The Government is very supportive of the intentions

of the Bill. With regard to measures to improve the health of rivers and other inland waters, the Government remains committed to bringing at least three quarters of our waters to as close as possible to their natural state as soon as is practicable. In support of this, we will be bringing forward a further legally binding target as part of the targets setting processes set out in the Environment Bill.

Sewage management by some water companies and diffuse pollution from agriculture are the two biggest sources of pollution affecting England's water environment. Through regulation, enforcement, financial incentives and educational schemes, we are improving poor farming practices which lead to water pollution. Our new Environmental Land Management scheme will be a critical part of that.

With regard to sewage pollution, water companies are committed in the five-year business planning period (2020-2025) to a significant programme of improvements to the monitoring and management of storm overflows at a cost of around £1.2 billion. However, I recognise that there is more to do. I met water company CEOs in September and made clear that the volumes of sewage discharged into rivers and other waterways in extreme weather must be reduced. To achieve this, I have set up a new Taskforce bringing together the Government, the water industry, regulators and environmental NGOs. This Taskforce will set out clear proposals to address the volumes of sewage discharged into our rivers. The Taskforce is also exploring further short-term actions water companies can take to accelerate progress on storm overflows.

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Mr John Baron:**

**[111997]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to answer the letter of 17 August from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay and follow up correspondence of the 17 September and 8 October 2020 regarding a constituent.

**Victoria Prentis:**

I apologise for the delay in responding to my hon Friend. Defra is currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. A reply to my hon. Friend's correspondence is being prepared and will be sent out very shortly.

#### ■ **Pets: Coronavirus**

**Adam Afriyie:**

**[112015]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether (a) dog groomers and (b) other pet grooming (i) venues and (ii) businesses are required to close under the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown regulations.

**Victoria Prentis:**

According to the regulations you may leave your home for the purpose of caring for or exercising your pet and other animals you own or keep. It is acceptable to leave your home where this is reasonably necessary for animal welfare reasons. Veterinary



practices, pet shops and dog grooming salons are not on the list of businesses that are required to close.

Travelling to a boarding kennel or cattery to admit or collect your pet also meets the conditions whereby you are allowed to leave your home when reasonably necessary for animal welfare reasons. Equally, pet owners could ask if the boarding kennel or cattery could bring their pet back home to them.

The Canine and Feline Sector Group has issued [advice](#) for pet businesses, including dog and other pet groomers, and animal boarding establishments, on how to operate safely within the new restrictions; this includes a protocol for the handover of pets. All admission and return of pets should be by appointment only to ensure social distancing can be applied. Some providers will operate a collection and drop-off service.

## ■ Rivers: Dredging

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[110293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the Environment Agency's funding allocation for de-silting work.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Between 2015 and 2020 we committed around £1 billion on the maintenance of flood defence assets. This is a real terms increase in spending compared to the £812 million spent in the previous five years.

De-silting (also referred to as dredging) and clearing channels, are important parts of the Environment Agency's (EA) river maintenance regime. The EA will undertake these activities where there is evidence that they will reduce flood risk to local properties cost effectively without increasing flooding downstream.

Typically, over each of the past 3 years the EA have spent between £5 million and £11 million on dredging across England. This equates to approximately 100-200km of river channel each year. The EA regularly reviews its river channel maintenance programme to identify where an increase in river channel maintenance, including dredging, will provide a net positive economic benefit by reducing flood risk.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## ■ Education: Children

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[110248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure an expansion of gender-responsive social protection following the covid-19 pandemic to help keep children, particularly girls, in school.



**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) supports some of the poorest and most vulnerable people through social protection programmes in over 25 countries. We recognise their potential to deliver gender equality outcomes, including girls' education, and are working with governments and international partners to strengthen the gender responsiveness of social protection policies and programmes in developing countries. Our Gender-Responsive Social Protection and Better Assistance in Crises programmes are providing expert advice to FCDO country offices, governments and partner organisations on how to strengthen social protection measures in the COVID-19 response, including how to deliver more effectively for women and girls. We will continue to encourage a strong gender focus in social protection programmes and systems in the COVID-19 recovery.

The UK is committed to supporting children in developing countries to return to school when it is safe to do so, and recognises the important role social protection can play in safeguarding the wellbeing of individuals and their families during times of crisis, and in helping families to meet the direct and indirect costs of sending girls to schools. This is part of the FCDO's wider education programme response to COVID-19 which includes work with partner countries to ensure they have the knowledge and resources to facilitate a safe return.

**■ Education: Females****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:****[110247]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 October to Question 101064, with reference to Save the Children's finding that the covid-19 pandemic has put 2.5 million girls at risk of child marriage and 1 million girls at risk of child pregnancy, what steps his Department is taking to prioritise the provision of safe education for girls in developing countries.

**Wendy Morton:**

The need to support education, particularly girls' education, has never been greater. The UK is committed to a safe return to school for children around the world. We must support education systems to respond and ensure girls and the most vulnerable get back to school and catch up on lost learning.

The UK is the largest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which has flexed £400 million to support education systems globally at this unprecedented time. The Prime Minister recently announced that next year the UK will co-host GPE's financing summit: this will be a crucial step towards achieving this Government's ambition of 12 years of quality education for every girl.

The UK is the largest donor to Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the global fund for education in emergencies, and has provided an additional £5 million to reach the most vulnerable children in 33 countries during the pandemic. We announced £5.3 million of new UK funding to UNHCR to enable more than 5,000 teachers to provide vital education for children in 10 refugee-hosting countries up to early 2021.

Bilaterally, we have adapted and reprioritised our education programmes in 18 countries to provide education and keep pupils safe.

## ■ Gender: Equality

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[110267]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK's international response to the covid-19 pandemic tackles gender inequality.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is widely recognised for its leadership on gender equality and women and girls' rights. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's political empowerment and participation, women's economic empowerment, and ending gender-based violence, including conflict related sexual violence, are more acute now, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to engage virtually with our international partners and champion gender equality in multilateral fora including in the UN to ensure that this issue is a central element of the COVID-19 recovery. This was reiterated by the Foreign Secretary in his statement at the UN General Assembly on 29 September. He said that our global recovery must be inclusive and support the most vulnerable who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and we must commit to leaving no one behind. That includes standing up for gender equality and in particular every girls' right to 12 years of quality education. Baroness Sugg was appointed by the Prime Minister as the UK Special Envoy for Girls' Education in March 2020 and she works closely with international partners to encourage greater global ambition, coordination, and investment on girls' education.

The UK Government continues to build on our Strategic Vision for Gender Equality alongside our National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security. Also, through our Presidency of COP26, we will be promoting a clean, inclusive and resilient recovery by giving a voice to those most affected by climate change, including women and girls.

## ■ Government Departments: Overseas Aid

**Brendan O'Hara:**

**[112064]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2020 to Question 106365 on Overseas Aid, how many projects were applied for under the Integrated Activity Fund in the 2018-19 financial year by (a) the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (b) the Cabinet Office, (c) the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, (d) the Ministry of Defence, (e) the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (f) the Department for International Trade, (g) the Home Office, (h) HM Revenue and Customs and (i) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 10 November 2020]:* We do not disclose information related to individual Integrated Activity Fund projects to maintain the confidence and confidentiality of our Gulf partners.

**Haiti: Climate Change****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[110059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Haitian counterpart on the potential effect of climate change on Haiti.

**Wendy Morton:**

In August, the COP26 President Designate, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy hosted a virtual round table discussion on climate change with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at which the Haitian Minister of the Environment participated. The meeting discussed the climate change agenda, with a particular focus on helping Caribbean countries on accessing finance, climate change mitigation and adaptation and resilience. This was the first Ministerial discussion on climate change with CARICOM in 2020 and paved the way for strong partnership with all Caribbean Small Island Developing States. We have since partnered with the region on building stronger pipelines of foreign direct investment in renewables, promoting youth engagement on building a more climate resilient future, and provided technical and financial support in the development of National Determined Contributors. We are acutely aware of the vulnerability of Haiti and all Small Island Developing States and remain committed to developing their resilience and promoting their moral voice within multilateral fora.

**Haiti: Elections****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[110057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the Government of Haiti deliver free and fair elections.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK recognises the challenges faced by Haiti, particularly in the face of COVID-19. The UK continues to use its platform at United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to call for credible and transparent elections as soon as possible, to ensure Haiti is governed by strong democratic institutions. The UK also supports the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN Special Political Mission, BINUH, in their ongoing diplomatic engagement with the Haitian authorities on elections. We also support BINUH's advisory role in support of the Haitian National Police's efforts to ensure a safe and secure environment for the conduct of elections. The UK supported UNSC's decision for a one year extension for BINUH.

**Haiti: Poverty****Fabian Hamilton:**[\[110058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help tackle poverty in Haiti.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK recognises the severe impacts caused by poverty in Haiti. The impact of COVID-19, alongside environmental and political challenges has caused a rise in food insecurity with over 4.1 million people assessed as being at levels 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency) of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. As a UN Security Council P5 member, the UK has supported the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), which is now preparing to implement socio-economic interventions aimed at addressing and reducing the root causes of community and gang violence, by developing employment opportunities with a focus on youth most at risk.

**Middle East: Overseas Aid****Brendan O'Hara:**[\[112063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2020 to Question 106366 on Overseas Aid, how many of those 29 projects were delivered solely in (a) Bahrain, (b) Saudi Arabia, (c) Kuwait, (d) UAE, and (e) Oman under the Integrated Activity Fund in (i) 2018-19 and (ii) 2019-20.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 10 November 2020]:* We do not disclose information related to individual Integrated Activity Fund projects to maintain the confidence and confidentiality of our Gulf partners.

**Brendan O'Hara:**[\[112065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2020 to Question 106366 on Overseas Aid, how many projects were delivered solely in (a) Bahrain, (b) Saudi Arabia, (c) Kuwait, (d) UAE (e) Oman and (f) Qatar under the Integrated Activity Fund in 2016-17.

**James Cleverly:**

During the 2016/17 financial year the Integrated Activity Fund was managed by the Cabinet Office and detailed information is not held by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

**Myanmar: CDC****Rushanara Ali:**[\[110136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure that increased CDC investment in Myanmar does not benefit military companies.

**Nigel Adams:**

Development Finance Institutions like CDC can bring investments in infrastructure, renewable energy and the financial sector to help support inclusive growth and tackle poverty. As part of the UK's enhanced private sector due diligence regime, the FCDO requires partners to review supply chains and remove military owned companies from their supply chains. This includes careful work to ensure CDC investment does not benefit the military. CDC's investments in Myanmar are subject to a rigorous assessment of business integrity risks; this assessment includes a review of a business's potential exposure to the military. CDC proactively manages this risk at three levels; through pre-investment due diligence, ongoing monitoring and engagement with investees, and requirements placed on investees. CDC continues to evolve its approach to learn lessons of how businesses can become exposed to the military and how to decrease and eliminate this exposure for its investees.

**■ Myanmar: Elections****Rushanara Ali:**[\[110130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the authorities in Myanmar on the decision by the Union Election Commission to cancel voting in parts of that country.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are concerned by ongoing conflict which restricts the ability to hold a free and fair vote. We were concerned by the announcement of cancellations across Rakhine and elsewhere in the country. The Foreign Secretary raised these concerns with the Myanmar Minister for International Cooperation in the run up to the elections. He pressed for further transparency on the mechanism through which constituencies are declared safe for voting to take place. He also urged the Government to commit to holding elections in areas of cancellation as soon as it is possible.

**Rushanara Ali:**[\[110131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has for monitoring the forthcoming elections in Myanmar, both in the days before and after polling day and on election day itself, to ensure internationally accepted democratic norms are upheld and human rights are respected.

**Nigel Adams:**

Independent election monitoring is vital for free and fair elections. Covid-19 prevented largescale international observation missions like those seen in 2015. This year, the UK Embassy will run a small in country observation mission.

We are funding domestic observation to ensure that there was some level of monitoring and oversight of the polling process. We have consistently raised the importance of domestic monitoring in country with both the UEC and the Government, to ensure transparency and oversight of the process.

**Rushanara Ali:**

**[110132]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to review the provision of support to the Union Election Commission in Myanmar in response to its decisions to prevent voting in parts of the country.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK provides technical assistance to the Union Election Commission through IFES and other partners. This is to help the UEC to implement reform to align with international and regional best practices, and to provide the training (e.g. on countering hate speech, women's political participation etc.) that will allow the UEC to work towards more fair, credible, open and inclusive elections.

We are not providing any direct financial support to the UEC. Support is aimed at building the principles of inclusion and impartiality. We will continue to watch and assess UEC conduct in relation to these values. Impartiality of the election commission is an essential part of a fair democratic process. Our Ambassador and Development Director regularly raise issues of concern with the UEC.

**Rushanara Ali:**

**[110133]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of arrests of peaceful protestors and other restrictions on freedom of expression in Myanmar on the credibility of its 2020 general election.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK has long been a supporter of Myanmar's democratisation. We strongly believe all individuals should have the right to participate freely in the democratic process. Our Ambassador and Development Director have both highlighted the importance of allowing free and open debate when they meet the Union Election Commission and the Government of Myanmar.

**Rushanara Ali:**

**[110135]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government has taken in response to the disenfranchisement of the Rohingya from the 2020 general election in Myanmar.

**Nigel Adams:**

As we made clear in our statement on 9 November, the UK is very concerned that the Rohingya and other minority ethnic groups, were excluded from these elections. Universal suffrage for all people in Myanmar, including the Rohingya, and the right to stand as a candidate, is a key part of achieving effective democracy. We are clear that the 1982 Citizenship Law is deeply flawed and enables the exclusion of Rohingya and other minorities on spurious grounds. The Rohingya, who have lived in Myanmar for generations, should be granted full citizenship and the associated rights. They should not be excluded from Myanmar elections. We have made this clear to the Myanmar government. The Foreign Secretary raised these issues with the Minister for International Cooperation in advance of the election and I [Minister

Adams] raised my concerns when I spoke to the same Minister in June. We continue to call for elections to be credible and inclusive, allowing individuals of all communities to participate.

## ■ Myanmar: Peace Negotiations

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[110137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to review its support to the peace process in Myanmar in response to increased conflict in that country since that process began.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK is deeply concerned about ongoing conflict across Myanmar, including in Rakhine and Chin which pose challenges for Myanmar's formal peace process. In May we called a meeting at the UNSC to discuss the conflict and afterwards issued a national statement calling for a ceasefire. We continue to raise our concerns with the Government and call on all sides for a de-escalation of hostilities, a resumption of political dialogue and an inclusive process. We know that it will take time to secure peace and inclusive political settlement, but it is essential if the country is to consolidate its transition to a prosperous and democratic future. We remain committed to supporting Myanmar's Peace Process and democratic transition.

## ■ Myanmar: Political Prisoners

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[110134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to Aung San Suu Kyi on the detention of almost 200 political prisoners in Myanmar; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:**

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned that repressive laws have been used to violate people's civil liberties, including freedom of expression and religious belief in Myanmar. The UK regularly voices its concerns about democratic and religious freedoms in Myanmar and uses its communications with the Government to raise cases of those imprisoned for expressing their opinions on government policies. The UK is clear that freedom of expression and the rule of law are necessary components of a democratic system. We will continue to urge the Government of Myanmar to avoid the use of repressive legislation to clamp down on free speech and criticism.

## ■ Overseas Aid: Disclosure of Information

**Brendan O'Hara:**

[\[112062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to on the Transparency of the Integrated Fund on 22 October 2020, to clarify (a) for which financial and/or calendar year(s) they will provide summaries of activities funded by the Integrated Activity Fund/Gulf Strategy Fund, (b) when these summaries will be published, and (c) what information will these summaries contain.



**James Cleverly:**

We will publish a Programme Summary of the Gulf Strategy Fund for 2020/21 in March 2021. This is in line with the timetable for publication of summaries of other programmes under the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office International Programme. The Programme Summary will set out how the Fund has been used in each country and the amounts allocated.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **Air Pollution: Health Hazards****Colleen Fletcher:**[\[97595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of air pollution-related illness to the NHS in each of the last five years.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* In 2018 Public Health England (PHE) published an estimation of the potential health burden and costs to the National Health Service and social care system arising due to diseases related to air pollution. Between 2017 and 2025, the total cost to the NHS and social care from air pollution in England is estimated to be £1.60 billion for fine particulate matter (PM 2.5 ) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO 2 ) combined (£1.54 billion for PM 2.5 and £60.81 million for NO 2 ) where there is robust evidence for an association between exposure and disease. Where there is less robust evidence for an association, then the estimate is increased to an overall total of £2.81 billion for PM 2.5 and £2.75 billion for NO 2 in England between 2017 and 2025.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse****Sir Alan Campbell:**[\[96776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the September 2020 report by the Commission on Alcohol Harm, whether she plans to publish a new alcohol strategy.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government is committed to tackling health harms from alcohol and supporting the most vulnerable at risk from alcohol misuse. Action on alcohol abuse continues through commitments in the Prevention Green Paper, the NHS Long Term Plan, funding to support children of alcohol dependent parents, and action to reduce alcohol-related crime. This wide-ranging approach negates the need for a separate stand-alone alcohol strategy.



## ■ Arthritis

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[105458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people living with rheumatoid arthritis in (a) England, (b) London and (c) Lewisham constituency are currently in remission.

**Helen Whately:**

This data is not held.

## ■ Arthritis: Children

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[106344\]](#)

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

**Helen Whately:**

This data is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Arthritis: Females

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[106431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has been made of the reasons for the greater prevalence of rheumatoid arthritis among women; and what bespoke support is made available to women as a result of that increased prevalence.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are aware that women are three times more likely to develop rheumatoid arthritis (RA) compared to men. Research to date has revealed factors and characteristics that may explain these differences, including hormone production, genes, physiological features, gender-based roles and behavioural expectations. Research remains ongoing, with a particular emphasis on genetics.

Services for people with RA are a matter for local clinical commissioning groups. Advice and support for people with RA is available via commissioned rheumatology services with multi-disciplinary teams, departmental advice lines and patient charities such as Versus Arthritis and the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society.

## ■ Autism: Diagnosis

**Cat Smith:**

[\[104120\]](#)

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 autism diagnosis waiting times for (a) children and (b) adults.

**Helen Whately:**

We have not yet been able to assess the impact of COVID-19 on autism diagnosis waiting times. NHS Digital started collecting and reporting on diagnosis waiting times in November 2019. These are experimental statistics and NHS Digital is working to improve the data quality and completeness of these statistics for future use.

**Batten Disease: Coronavirus****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[81944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support has been provided to families of people diagnosed with Batten Disease during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The Government recognises the vital role unpaid carers play, especially during this difficult period now more than ever, and we recognise the difficulties this pandemic has placed on those caring for family, relatives and their loved ones. On 8 April we published guidance for unpaid carers on GOV.UK, which includes general advice, links to other information and support, and advice on caring where someone has symptoms. We have provided funding to extend Carers UK's helpline, information and advice services so unpaid carers are able to access trusted information and advice. We have listened to unpaid carers' concerns about getting access to testing and have made them a priority group for COVID-19 testing. We will continue to work closely with carer organisations and others to support unpaid carers during this period.

**Blood Cancer: Coronavirus****Henry Smith:**[\[86632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the increased (a) risk and (b) effect of covid-19 on people living with blood cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

Blood cancer patients have a higher chance of severe disease if they contract COVID-19 compared to other cancers, which is why they were placed on the extremely clinically vulnerable list and were advised to shield. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, some treatments were delayed when the risk of contracting coronavirus was higher than the risk of delaying treatment.

**Blood Cancer: Health Services****Henry Smith:**[\[86633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on people living with blood cancer being able to make an informed choice on their long-term care and treatment.

**Jo Churchill:**

Support and information for all cancer patients, including blood cancer patients, is provided through four personalised care interventions:

- Personalised care and support planning based on holistic needs assessments;
- Health and wellbeing information and support, including nutritional advice and psychological support;
- End of treatment summaries, that provide symptom management information; and
- A Cancer Care Review with their general practitioner.

As outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan, these interventions will be implemented in full by 2021.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all personalised care and support has continued by telephone, video, online or by post if face to face appointments and group sessions have not been possible.

**Henry Smith:**[\[86634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to introduce a shared decision-making model within the NHS to help meet the complex needs of people living with blood cancers throughout their patient journey.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan sets the ambition to offer personalised care to all cancer patients and transform follow-up care, giving people choice and control over the way their care is planned and delivered. This includes ensuring that shared decision-making in care, and personalised care and support planning, are routine for all patients including those with blood cancer.

**■ Blood Cancer: Medical Treatments****Henry Smith:**[\[96848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people with blood cancer have had (a) CAR-T cell therapy and (b) a stem cell transplant in each of the last six months for which data is available.

**Jo Churchill:**

The data collected is for all conditions that are commissioned for stem cell transplant by NHS England and NHS Improvement. It should be noted that there will be changes to the data in the last quarter due to the time lag in the reporting arrangements.

	STEM CELL TRANSPLANTS
March 2020	164
April 2020	69
May 2020	63
June 2020	89
July 2020	120
August 2020	123
Total	628

The numbers for CAR-T are collected via an alternative route and are correct to the end of September 2020.

	CAR-T INFUSIONS
April 2020	13
May 2020	17
June 2020	21
July 2020	21
August 2020	9
September 2020	24
Total	105

## ■ Bowel Cancer: Screening

**Paul Bristow:**

[R] [\[92910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many screenings for bowel cancer have taken place in the NHS, as part of the NHS Bowel Screening Programme, in each month since April 2019.

**Jo Churchill:**

Monthly data is not centrally available, but data on participation and coverage for bowel cancer screening is published on a quarterly basis.

The proportion of eligible men and women aged 60 to 74 years invited to participate in bowel cancer screening who adequately participated since April 2019 (Q1) is as follows:

	2019-20	Q1 62.1%
Q2	67.5%	
Q3	64.5%	

Full quarterly data is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-screening-programmes-kpi-reports-2019-to-2020>

## ■ Breast Cancer: Screening

**Bob Blackman:**

[107634]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the size of the breast imaging and diagnostic workforce.

**Helen Whately:**

'We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/21 – action for us all' sets out actions to support transformation across the National Health Service. This includes Health Education England (HEE) prioritising the training of 400 clinical endoscopists and 450 reporting radiographers. HEE is also facilitating a number of initiatives within breast imaging, including setting up and funding a National Breast Imaging Academy to tackle national workforce issues.

Alongside most other allied health profession students, diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers studying pre-registration courses at English universities are eligible for a new, non-repayable training grant of at least £5,000 per academic year – in addition to funding available through the Learning Support Fund and Student Loans Company. They can also benefit from further funding of up to £3,000 to cover, for example, childcare costs.

**Paul Bristow:**

[R] [92909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many screenings for breast cancer have taken place in the NHS, as part of the NHS Breast Screening Programme, in each month since April 2019.

**Jo Churchill:**

We do not hold monthly data on the number of people being screened for breast cancer. Data for the NHS Breast Cancer Screening Programme is collected on an annual basis; annual data for 2019-20 (up to 31 March 2020) is not yet available. The latest available annual series can be accessed at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/breast-screening-programme>

**■ Cancer****Julian Sturdy:** [94404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the number of people diagnosed with cancer in (a) 2020 and (b) the last five years.

**Jo Churchill:**

In the most recent year for which data are available, 2018, 320,395 primary cancers were diagnosed in England. The total for the most recent five years for which data are available, 2014-2018, was 1,528,923.

The data is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cancer-registration-statistics-england-2018-final-release>

The data presented represents diagnoses of cancer rather than individual people as people may be diagnosed with more than one type of cancer in a given year.

**■ Cancer: Coronavirus****Theresa Villiers:** [93551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS has the capacity to catch up on the backlog of cancer (a) tests and (b) treatments which have accrued as a result of being postponed due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

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

We are working with general practitioners and the public 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. Additionally, all cancer screening programmes will be fully restarted.

**■ Cancer: Health Services****Rachael Maskell:** [83873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he estimates cancer diagnosis and treatment waiting times will return to pre-covid-19 levels.

**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 at a local level to restore the number of people

coming forward and being referred with suspected cancer to at least pre-pandemic levels.

To support this, systems will ensure there is sufficient diagnostic capacity in COVID-19 secure environments through the use of independent sector facilities and the development of Community Diagnostic Hubs and Rapid Diagnostic Centres. Endoscopy capacity will be increased to normal levels, and the capacity of surgical hubs will be expanded to meet demand. Specific actions will be put in place to support any groups of patients who might have unequal access to diagnostics and/or treatment, and all cancer screening programmes will be fully restarted.

These plans were implemented at the start of September 2020 and plan for all services to be at pre-pandemic levels by March 2021.

**Tim Farron:**

**[84996]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on the cancer treatment backlog; and what estimate he has made of the number of people waiting for (a) cancer treatment, (b) cancer screening, (c) diagnosis and (d) out patients cancer appointments in the latest period for which figures are available.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England is committed to monitoring cancer waiting times on a provider level and publishes monthly statistics on cancer waiting times and treatments. These can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/>

Restoring full operation of all cancer services is a key commitment of the COVID-19 response, as set out in NHS England's letters dated 10 June and 31 July 2020 at the following links:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/second-phase-of-nhs-response-to-covid-19-for-cancer-services/>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/07/20200731-Phase-3-letter-final-1.pdf>

In July 2020, 95.1% of patients with a decision to treat a first treatment of cancer received treatment within 31 days.

## ■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

**Henry Smith:**

**[86630]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 May 2020 to Question 43622, how many people received chemotherapy treatment in (a) May 2019, (b) June 2019, (c) April 2020, (d) May 2020 and (e) June 2020 for the treatment of (i) breast cancer, (ii) bowel cancer, (iii) lung cancer, (iv) blood cancer and (v) prostate cancer.



**Jo Churchill:**

The data in the following table shows first or subsequent treatment of chemotherapy in May 2019, June 2019, April 2020, May 2020 and June 2020 for the treatment of breast cancer, lower intestinal cancer, lung cancer, urological cancer and haematological cancer:

	BREAST	LOWER GASTROINTESTINAL	LUNG	UROLOGICAL	HAEMATOLOGICAL
May 2019	1,856	1,148	1,154	817	1,982
June 2019	1,744	1,127	1,070	793	2,021
April 2020	1,044	750	639	381	1,335
May 2020	1,480	1,066	815	508	1,525
June 2020	1,610	1,095	863	725	1,697

**Grahame Morris:**[\[89678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much additional funding he has made available for (a) cancer drugs, (b) chemotherapy and (c) radiotherapy to help cancer services return to pre-covid-19 levels.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 17 September 2020]:* During the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement have ensured that National Health Service providers have sufficient funding for all services, including cancer, offering a guaranteed minimum level of income. In addition, recommendations have been made about expanding the list of COVID-19-friendly cancer treatments and extending the period of access until the end of this financial year, which the NHS has agreed to fund and is expected to cost in the region of £100 million.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[94387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people waiting for cancer treatment whose (a) diagnosis and (b) screening were delayed during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

In the five months of published data covering the pandemic period, March – July 2020, cancer treatments were carried out at 82% of the level over the same period last year. Treatment activity has also been affected by the drop in urgent referrals; this is now on the rise and in July 2020 were at 81% of the level in July 2019.

At the end of August, the number of people waiting longer than 62 days following an urgent referral had fallen by 39% from its peak near the end of May.

## ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

**Martyn Day:**

[\[108268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage companies to (a) increase collection of high-quality evidence through randomised control trials and (b) pursue regulatory approval for cannabis-based medicinal products.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) to establish clinical trials to develop the evidence base to support further commissioning decisions for cannabis-based medicinal products (CBPMs).

The NIHR has identified research on cannabis-based medicinal products as a priority and has issued two calls to encourage high quality research proposals in this area. Industry also needs to step up and invest in robust clinical trials to improve understanding of how patients might benefit from these products.

CBPMs are subject to the same licensing rules as other medicines, and the medicines regulator will assess any applications from manufacturers to determine the quality, safety and efficacy of a medicine.

## ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

**Sir Graham Brady:**

[\[104049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to amend the guidance on hospital and care home visitations under the Tier 2 and Tier 3 covid-19 rules to accommodate visits beyond exceptional circumstances at end of life.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Care homes and hospitals look after some of the most vulnerable members of our society. We recognise this has been a difficult time for many residents, patients, their families and staff members and that visits are important for those in care settings. However, the first priority must remain to prevent infections and local hospitals being overwhelmed from outbreaks.

Visiting is allowed in inpatient settings, in a very careful and COVID-19-secure way. Unfortunately, in local Covid alert level high areas and above, this means visiting restrictions will be limited to exceptional circumstances. Where visiting is restricted, care homes and hospitals should support visiting in a virtual manner. We will keep these regulations under regular review.

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[106429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to facilitate safe contact between the guests of care homes and their families to mitigate the effects of loneliness on mental health during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

We are aware that limiting visits in care homes has been difficult for many families and residents who want to see their loved ones.

We published updated visiting guidance on 15 October 2020, which set out tightened infection prevention and control measures to enable visits to continue safely, based on the views of their local Director of Public Health.

Care homes should provide support to visitors on how to prepare for a visit, including the appropriate infection control precautions.

For areas at local COVID alert level medium visits to care homes can continue as set out in the care homes visiting guidance. For areas at local COVID alert level high and very high visits to care homes should return to exceptional circumstances only such as end of life.

Our priority remains the prevention of infection in care homes to protect staff and residents and we are considering plans to test specific family and friends to reduce the risk of visiting care homes. We will set out further details in due course.

**Rosie Cooper:**[\[45061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing an oropharyngeal swab for testing care homes residents with dementia for covid-19 in order to reduce distress in those residents.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department is looking at a range of new methodologies for testing including oropharyngeal swabs to increase our ability to test in the most effective way possible across a range of circumstances. These methods are rigorously validated both scientifically and in the proposed setting before adoption.

**■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing****Stuart Anderson:**[\[95222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all care workers have adequate supplies of personal protective equipment in (a) Wolverhampton South West constituency and (b) across the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

Across the United Kingdom, everybody working on the frontline deserves to have the equipment they need to do their job safely. A large number of Government departments are working together to make sure that happens. Amid unprecedented global pressures on supply chains over 3.5 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been delivered to frontline workers thanks to the efforts of the Government, the National Health Service, industry and the armed forces to massively scale up distribution networks.

We have significantly strengthened and diversified our supply chains for PPE – looking to new suppliers abroad as well as boosting our domestic manufacturing capability. This has helped to build resilience into the future. We have moved from an

emergency situation a few months ago to a stable position, which allows us to prepare for any second spike or a new wave in the autumn or winter.

## ■ Carers

**Jim Shannon:**

[106349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to provide support for family carers.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government recognises the vital role unpaid carers play, especially during this difficult period and we continue to work closely with carer organisations to support them.

During the pandemic, we have provided funding to Carers UK to extend their support phoneline, produced a leaflet to help carers identify themselves and published guidance specifically for carers and young carers, which includes further information about sources of support.

We have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance to help local authorities restart respite services. In addition, through the Government's Infection Control Fund, we have extended some of this funding to be used to support day services adopt infection control measures to help them reopen safely.

## ■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

**Paul Bristow:**

[R] [92908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many screenings for cervical cancer have taken place in the NHS, as part of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme, in each month since April 2019.

**Jo Churchill:**

We do not hold monthly data on the number of people being screened for cervical cancer. Data for the cervical screening programme is collected on an annual basis; the data for 2019-20 (up to 31 March 2020) is not yet available. The annual series is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/cervical-screening-annual>

Management information is published for the cervical screening programme on a quarterly basis. This provides a count of how many women have been screened in the last 3.5/5.5 years at the end of that quarter, rather than for that quarter alone. The latest period covers data to Quarter 4 2019-20 and is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/cervical-screening-programme/cervical-screening-programme-coverage-statistics-management-information>

## ■ Chronic Illnesses: Students

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[101013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available for university students with (a) cystic fibrosis and (b) other long-term health conditions who are required to self-isolate on campus, to ensure they can access appropriate medications, dietary requirements and medical care.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Higher education providers have a duty of care to provide practical support to students during self-isolation and we are continuing to work closely with the Department for Education to help meet student needs.

This includes ensuring that students with cystic fibrosis or other long-term health conditions who are required to self-isolate have the right access to additional support from their university or National Health Service volunteers to access food or medical provision.

## ■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[\[97686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who are unable to download the NHS covid-19 app as a result of their phones not support operating systems iOS 13.5 and Android 6.0 Marshmallow or newer.

**Helen Whately:**

We estimate that around 10% of smartphone users are unable to download the National Health Service COVID-19 app due to their phones not supporting the necessary version of iOS or Android.

## ■ Coronavirus

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[104032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people in England who have a natural immunity to covid-19; and what evidence he has on whether that immunity is not compromised by vaccinations against influenza.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2020]:* Currently there is insufficient evidence to establish the number of people in England who may have a natural immunity to COVID-19 and therefore the impact of the flu vaccination. The Government is considering the advice of leading academics and research from around the world to better understand immunity. A series of studies in the United Kingdom, some of which are among the largest in the world, will help us to better understand the body's immune response and aim to determine the limits of natural immunity.

**Claudia Webbe:**

[\[98787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commission a public inquiry into the disproportionate impact of covid-19 cases and fatalities amongst BAME, migrant and low-income workers.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government has no plans to commission a public inquiry into the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 and fatalities amongst black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), migrant and low-income workers.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) is leading cross-Government work on the findings from Public Health England's reports to better understand the drivers behind the disparities in the risk and outcomes from COVID-19 and the relationships between the different risk factors. Her work will help us to improve understanding of the virus and who it affects so we can build on and protect our most vulnerable communities.

In addition, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities has been set up to explore issues faced by minorities in this country and to champion the success of BAME groups. The aim is to set out a new, positive agenda for change – balancing the needs of individuals, communities and society, maximising opportunities and ensuring fairness. Challenges identified in COVID-19 response will be part of the Commission's work and we anticipate a report on their findings and recommendations by the end of this year.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Alcoholic Drinks and Take-away Food**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[110729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the evidential basis for (a) restricting the sale of alcoholic drinks with takeaway meals by public houses and (b) allowing the the sale of alcoholic drinks and takeaway meals by supermarkets during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[110801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the scientific evidential basis for the closure of leisure centres, gyms, golf clubs, tennis clubs and other outdoor sports facilities under the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2020]:* In recognition of the importance of transparency in these unprecedented times, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has been publishing the statements and the accompanying evidence it has reviewed to demonstrate how the scientific understanding of COVID-19 has continued to evolve as new data emerges, and how SAGE's advice has quickly adapted to new findings that reflect a changing situation.

The Government has these restrictions constantly under review.

## ■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

**Ian Byrne:**

[\[102196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 cases in Liverpool, West Derby constituency were affected by the reporting error in NHS Test and Trace; and what steps (a) were taken and (b) are being taken to ensure those affected are made aware of that reporting error.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 16 October 2020]:* A total of 875 of 15,841 COVID-19 cases not initially reported to Public Health England between 25 September and 2 October 2020 related to individuals from the Liverpool local authority.

This issue did not affect people receiving their COVID-19 test results and all people who tested positive have received their COVID-19 test result in the normal way.

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[95228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to provide an SMS service as part of the covid-19 119 hotline.

**Helen Whately:**

The 119 testing line is currently working to introduce an SMS service.

## ■ Coronavirus: Diagnosis

**Justin Madders:**

[\[52112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS diagnostic tests for covid-19, what tests have been used; which tests are no longer in use; and for what reasons those tests have been replaced or discontinued.

**Helen Whately:**

A large number of different tests have been used throughout the programme. As the programme matured from emergency set up phase, and technology was adopted and implemented to massively increase speed and scale, some test types gave way to newer ones as they were not suited to the specifications of a larger scale system.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[100886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason people who have been tested positive and recovered from covid-19 are not exempt from quarantine requirements and other restrictions upon their personal freedom; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* Before considering whether a positive COVID-19 antibody test result/virus test result could ever be used to allow specific individuals certain freedoms or exemptions from social distancing measures, we first need to be



confident in our understanding of how the immune system responds to infection with the virus.

Currently, we do not know if the natural immunity developed from infection is long-lasting, and whether those who are potentially immune can spread the virus to others. We are working with academia to answer the outstanding questions on immunity. Together, we are leveraging the United Kingdom's globally regarded scientific expertise to help understand this virus.

**Justin Madders:**

**[82035]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of staff movement between (a) wards in the same hospital, (b) hospitals, (c) outpatient clinics and (d) care homes on the transmission of covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The United Kingdom guidance 'COVID-19: guidance for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings: infection prevention and control (IPC) recommendations' provides assessment and recommended IPC precautions for operating procedures, staff movements and physical distancing to reduce transmission of COVID-19 between staff and patients in hospital settings.

Regarding staff movement between care homes, Public Health England conducted a study in London in April 2020 to assess occupational risk factors for SARS-CoV-2 infection ahead of publication of the Care Home Support Package. The study identified very high rates of SARS-CoV-2 infection in staff and residents, most of whom were asymptomatic at the time of testing. The study is available at the following link:

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3638267](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3638267)

## ■ **Coronavirus: Newcastle upon Tyne**

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[102070]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution during the Covid-19 update on 12 October 2020 in response to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central, where covid-19 transmission is occurring in Newcastle; and if he will share the Government's evidence on this.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 16 October 2020]:* Newcastle upon Tyne's weekly case rate in the most recent seven days - 8 October 2020-14 October 2020 - is 379.4/100,000. This is a decrease from 553.5/100,000 in the seven days prior to that.

The wards with the highest case rates in the most recent week were Arthur's Hill (1255.0/100,000), South Jesmond (740.6/100,000) and North Jesmond (672.9/100,000). All three have seen a decrease in case rate in the last two weeks. Kenton is the ward with the fourth highest case rate (483.1/100,000) and has seen an increase in cases in the last two weeks.

### ■ Coronavirus: Oil Rigs and Shipping

**Angus Brendan MacNeil:**

[\[71013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution of 7 July 2020, Official Report, column 839, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of testing asymptomatic people for covid-19 on returning (a) merchant mariners and (b) oil rig workers to the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 13 July 2020]:*

Current clinical advice is that testing of individuals without symptoms should be used where clinically appropriate. We continue to use the latest science and clinical advice to inform our approach.

### ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[84376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage people to wear face coverings which are effective in reducing the transmission of covid-19 rather than those made from less effective materials.

**Jo Churchill:**

Everyone can make their own face covering at home, using readily available textiles that can be washed, and reused after every use.

We have published guidance online which provides a step-by-step breakdown of how to make these face coverings and what materials can be used.

### ■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[100562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department provides to parents of children told to self-isolate for fourteen days as a result of another person in their class bubble testing positive for covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Where someone needs to self-isolate because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have been exposed to the virus through close recent contact with someone who has tested positive, NHS Test and Trace helps to make sure that they or, in the case of children, their parents or guardians know how to access local support through their local authority.

The NHS Volunteer Responders programme, developed by NHS England in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service, is also available to help support people in England who need it, including those who are self-isolating. NHS Volunteer Responders carry out simple, one-off non-medical tasks to support people who need help, for instance in accessing essentials.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Rushanara Ali:** [\[45211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many healthcare workers have been tested for covid-19 to date.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Health Service has made testing available to all symptomatic NHS staff as a priority.

We are also testing those who are asymptomatic in specific circumstances where appropriate. For NHS workers specifically, NHS England has published guidance on when testing of this nature might be appropriate, including where an incident has taken place, an outbreak or where high prevalence has been established.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[45225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of testing and chemical supply to support 200,000 covid-19 tests a day.

**Helen Whately:**

Since NHS Test and Trace launched on 28 May, we have exceeded the 200,000 testing capacity target, with current capacity standing at 309,921 as of 12 October 2020.

Along with home-testing and satellite kits, we have established a large network of testing sites across the United Kingdom with 77 regional test sites, 172 local test services (walk through), 21 satellite testing centres and 258 mobile testing units. We will look to increase this in the coming months to meet our needs.

In addition to the five Lighthouse laboratories operating currently, we have announced the addition of new Lighthouse laboratories in Newport, Newcastle, Bracknell and Charnwood to the national laboratory network. We are also using additional 'surge' laboratory capacity to process more tests in the short-term. We are working to ensure that we continue to support scaling capacity, allowing more people to be tested daily.

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[53349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of tests for covid-19 are false negatives.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 8 June 2020]:* False-negative (and true-positive) results are more likely to occur when disease prevalence is high, which is typically at the height of a pandemic or spike in infection. False-positive (and true-negative) results are more likely to occur when disease prevalence is low, which is generally at the beginning and end of a pandemic or a spike in infection rate.

The SARS-CoV-2 RNA tests (PCR is one such example) we are using are very accurate. Where the primer and probe sequences (which is identical to a part of the

virus' genetic code) are detected then the viral RNA is present. The analytical sensitivity is nearly 100%.

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[66018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 June 2020 to Question 51868 on Coronavirus: Screening, what the cost to the public purse is of contracts awarded to commercial organisations to carry out covid-19 testing.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 July 2020]:* The Government has established a multitude of partnerships with industry, academia, local government and others to deliver its testing programme and many of the contracts span multiple activities.

It would be unfeasible to detail each individually and many are subject to confidential commercial agreements that would preclude the department from disclosing them publicly.

The Department plans to make all contracts it enters into available on GOV.UK via the contractor finder service in due course.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[71830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the location of covid-19 walk through centres; and what steps his Department is taking to increase access to testing sites for people who do not drive.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 14 July 2020]:* All our in-person fixed location test sites are viewable on Google Maps.

We have provided a range of ways for people to be tested. For those without access to a car this has included satellite deliveries to centres at places like hospitals that have a particularly urgent or significant need, delivering test kits to people's homes, and offering walk-up appointments at local test sites which are co-designed with local authorities in order to reach the communities that the local authority are targeting.

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[81559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to expand covid-19 testing to ensure all members of the public can access tests.

**Helen Whately:**

We are conducting over 300,000 tests a day and we are working with cutting-edge technology to increase the volume of tests and improve turnaround time. By November we will be able to conduct half a million tests a day and the vast majority of in-person test results are being returned the next day. We are increasing capacity through a combination of expanding our network of testing sites and laboratories, as well as investing in new technologies. We are also increasing our testing capacity which will allow us to expand asymptomatic testing to groups and areas at greatest risk, including in areas with local outbreaks.

**Justin Madders:**

**[87568]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 tests have been delivered by couriers; and how much has been paid to couriers for those deliveries, in each month since March 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 14 September 2020]:* Home testing enables people to get tested without leaving their home. They are self-administered tests. They can be ordered via the self-referral portal. The order is fulfilled by Amazon and the user can drop their test kits into one of more than 35,000 priority post boxes in order to return them. For individuals who are shielding or unable to get to a priority post box the programme offers for the sample to be collected by Royal Mail couriers. We are unable to share commercially sensitive arrangements regarding the individual costs paid to couriers.

**Helen Hayes:**

**[88360]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisations are contracted to deliver covid-19 home test kits to people's homes; and what proportion of deliveries are being handled by each of those organisations.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 15 September 2020]:* Home testing enables people to get tested for COVID-19 without leaving their home. They can be ordered via the self-referral portal. The order is fulfilled by Amazon and the user can then drop their test kits into one of more than 35,000 priority post boxes in order to return them. For individuals who are shielding or unable to get to a priority post box the programme offers for the sample to be collected by Royal Mail couriers.

**Barbara Keeley:**

**[90101]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of covid-19 home testing kits distributed to the public in each week from 3 August to 13 September 2020 were (a) not returned and (b) returned in a compromised or otherwise unusable state.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* We do not hold data in the format requested.

**Paul Bristow:**

**[R] [91163]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department provided to NHS Trusts on the resumption of NHS screening programmes in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement provided guidance to National Health Service trusts on 29 April 2020, recommending that providers should seek to deliver as much routine and preventative work as could be provided safely, including screening, as some routine invitations or appointments had been rescheduled to protect patients and staff during the pandemic. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/04/second-phase-of-nhs-response-to-covid-19-letter-to-chief-execs-29-april-2020.pdf>

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Sarah Owen:** [99129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he is putting in place for the distribution of a covid-19 vaccine to the public.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement are the health and social care delivery organisations responsible for ensuring that a COVID-19 vaccine is deployed and administered safely and efficiently to the public. This includes the planning for distribution and the consideration of the settings and workforce required to vaccinate against COVID-19. All developing programme plans recognise that there are numerous potential vaccine candidates, meaning that we will need to remain flexible.

Public Health England is in regular discussion with potential suppliers of COVID-19 vaccines around the storage and distribution of vaccines from when they may become available.

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.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vitamin D

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [105480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to promote the taking of Vitamin D during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2020]:* Existing Government advice is that everybody should take a daily 10 microgram vitamin D supplement between October and early March to maintain musculoskeletal health. This is particularly important for shielded groups, care home residents, prisoners and black, Asian and minority ethnic groups who may be more at risk of not getting enough vitamin D from sunlight.

Public Health England will shortly be updating relevant web pages and public-facing channels to remind people of the importance of taking vitamin D supplements over autumn and winter.

## ■ Coronavirus: West Midlands

**Liam Byrne:** [98885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of the 15,841 covid-19 cases that were not initially reported to Public Health England between 25 September

and 2 October 2020 related to individuals who lived in the West Midlands metropolitan area.

**Helen Whately:**

A total of 1,093 of 15,841 covid-19 cases not initially reported to Public Health England between 25 September and 2 October 2020 related to individuals from the West Midlands metropolitan area.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Disease Control**

**Christina Rees:**

[\[100506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of appointing a Minister for Infection Management.

**Edward Argar:**

Lord Bethell of Romford is the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for health protection and antimicrobial resistance. Infection prevention and control measures, healthcare associated infections, and use of antimicrobials are covered within this remit.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**

**Mr Mark Harper:**

[\[99542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons he has not yet answered Question 84658, tabled on 3 September 2020; and when he plans to answer that Question.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question 84658 on 12 October.

■ **Gambling: Health Services**

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[97047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of delays to the expansion of gambling addiction as a result of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of people (a) seeking help from the NHS where a gambling disorder was a relevant factor and (b) who have (i) taken and (ii) attempted to take their own lives where gambling disorder was a relevant factor.

**Jo Churchill:**

The provision of National Health Service treatment services for problem gamblers has continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with many face to face services switching to remote provision. The NHS continues to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to introduce up to 15 clinics by 2023/24.



## ■ Gender Recognition: Health Services

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[98760]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the 22 September 2020 Government response to its consultation on how to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004, what steps the Government plans to take to radically reduce the waiting times for people to access gender clinics.

**Jo Churchill:**

Healthcare for transgender people did not fall within the scope of consultation on how to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

In 2018 a new service specification was developed for gender identity clinics, this new specification concluded that access to specialist interventions by trained healthcare professionals was needed within primary care and other local health settings. As a result, three new clinics were announced earlier this year. The clinics are based in London, Manchester, and Cheshire and Merseyside. The first of these services began in July 2020 in London and they will be evaluated as pilots over a period of up to three years to determine how they could be expanded nationally.

Access to these new services will initially be given to people who are already on a waiting list at an established Gender Dysphoria Clinic and it is expected that the three new services will reduce the current national waiting list for gender services.

## ■ Health Professions: Coronavirus

**Catherine McKinnell:**

**[107653]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the guidance to track and trace assessors on whether (a) physiotherapists and (b) other medical staff wearing PPE should be required to self-isolate after coming into contact with patients with covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 November 2020]:* Public Health England provides guidance on the management of staff, patients and residents who have been exposed to COVID-19 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings>

This guidance provides advice on the management of staff and patients or residents in health and social care settings according to exposures, symptoms and test results. It includes staff with symptoms of COVID-19, staff return to work criteria, patient exposures in hospital and resident exposures in care settings. This guidance is applicable to both physiotherapists and other medical staff.

## ■ Health Professions: Mental Health Services

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[104746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve mental health support for NHS (a) doctors and (b) nurses.

**Helen Whately:**

A national health and wellbeing support package is available to all National Health Service staff and includes a helpline and text service and access to free wellbeing apps. This will be strengthened in line with commitments we made in July in the NHS People Plan. NHS England and NHS Improvement are investing £15 million to ensure all staff get rapid access to expanded mental health services. Staff referred will be rapidly assessed, treated by local mental health specialists and, where appropriate referred to a specialist centre of excellence. The investment will also fund outreach work among those deemed most at risk such as critical care staff. Support can be accessed via the following link:

<https://people.nhs.uk/help/>

The NHS also funds NHS Practitioner Health for doctors and dentists, which provides confidential mental health and addiction services and supports over 2,500 new patients each year.

## ■ Health Professions: Recruitment

**Theresa Villiers:**

[93550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to enable the NHS to recruit additional specialist staff to improve early diagnosis of cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 September 2020]:* The NHS People Plan – 2020/21, sets out actions to support transformation across the whole NHS, including the following commitment on the cancer workforce.

In 2021, Health Education England is prioritising the training of 400 clinical endoscopists and 450 reporting radiographers. Training grants are being offered for 350 nurses to become cancer nurse specialists and chemotherapy nurses, training 58 biomedical scientists, developing an advanced clinical practice qualification in oncology, and extending cancer support-worker training.

Many of these staff will be trained to improve early diagnosis of cancer.

## ■ Health Services and Social Services: Coronavirus

**Justin Madders:**

[95112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to review guidance on the use of personal protective equipment to protect NHS health and social care workers ahead of a second wave of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* We withdrew the 'Considerations for acute personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages guidance' on 9 September because our supply position has improved.

Public Health England published infection prevention and control (IPC) Guidance on 20 August 2020 'COVID-19: Guidance for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings: Infection prevention and control recommendations'. This guidance supersedes the COVID-19 United Kingdom IPC guidance of 18 June 2020.

**Health: Screening****Paul Bristow:****[R] [91164]**

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 the operation of NHS screening programmes.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement did not provide direction at a national level to suspend National Health Service screening programmes in England during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some clinical services at a regional level rescheduled routine screening invitations to a later date in order to protect patients and staff during this pandemic.

All screening programmes have now restarted and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with providers to catch-up the backlog as quickly as possible. Appointments for those at highest risk have already returned to normal levels, and most providers have restored routine invitations to normal levels.

Time-critical screening services, including antenatal and new-born screening and screening for those at highest risk of cancers, continued to be prioritised throughout the COVID19 response.

**Hearing Impairment: Coronavirus****Elliot Colburn:****[82453]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish guidance on the use of PPE in social care settings for people who (a) are deaf and (b) have communication needs.

**Jo Churchill:**

It is critical that personal protective equipment (PPE) supply reflects equality needs. We are working to understand the different types of PPE that may be needed by those with protected characteristics (as covered under equalities legislation) and how best to distribute that PPE, to address equality for health and social care workers.

The Government recognises that some health and care workers have reported difficulties with the practical use of some PPE. We are committed to understanding

the needs of frontline staff, including those for people with different protected characteristics.

We are currently piloting the use of clear masks in social care settings via Local Resilience Forums.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[87498]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to implement clear face masks in NHS settings to mitigate the effect of mask wearing on patients who are deaf and hard of hearing, and rely on lip reading and facial expressions to communicate.

**Jo Churchill:**

The United Kingdom Government's national personal protective equipment procurement team has been working extremely hard to source clear face masks which comply with UK safety standards.

Specialist masks help support better care for people who rely on lip reading and facial expressions to communicate. We have announced that National Health Service and care workers will be given clear face masks to help them communicate with people with certain conditions like hearing loss, autism and dementia.

At the time of writing, a new deal with United States-based company ClearMask will allow 250,000 masks to be delivered to NHS trusts and social care providers across the UK over the next few weeks. The masks are see-through and have an anti-fogging shield to ensure the face and mouth is always visible to help doctors, nurses and carers communicate better with their patients.

Clear masks will be invaluable for people who need to lip read to communicate during the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

**[95587]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to promote the use of clear face coverings in healthcare and other settings to assist people with hearing problems; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

**[95588]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the introduction of regulations requiring the use of face coverings was linked to an increase in infection rates of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 September 2020]:* On 22 September, the Prime Minister outlined a host of measures, including changes to the face covering regulations, in order to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and prevent a second national lockdown. The Government continues to keep these measures under review and will make changes as necessary.

As part of a pilot, NHS England and NHS Improvement have procured 250,000 transparent facemasks to help facilitate communication with users who rely on lip-

reading and facial expressions. This includes people who are d/Deaf and people with hearing loss, people with dementia, people with a learning disability, autistic people and people with complex needs including behaviour that challenges.

## ■ Home Care Services

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[91072]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to add the category of domiciliary care to the organisation type page of the test booking website, supported by the CQC ID location number in the background database.

**Helen Whately:**

All residents in care homes and asymptomatic care home staff have been offered testing through the whole care home portal, as well as all patients discharged from hospital into care homes. All residential and domiciliary/homecare care staff, volunteers and unpaid carers can access testing via the self-referral or employer referral portal if they have symptoms, and everyone in the United Kingdom with symptoms can now be tested for COVID-19 through the self-referral portal at the following link:

<https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/antigen/name>

## ■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

**Justin Madders:**

[82034]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) transmission pathways, (b) transmission locations and (c) modes of transmission for hospital acquired infections of covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The United Kingdom Government has drawn on wide-ranging scientific evidence and international assessment of the transmission of hospital acquired infections of COVID-19. This includes the World Health Organization's scientific briefing 'Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: implications for infection prevention precautions', which identifies the dominant modes of transmission as airborne particles, contaminated surfaces and contact with others.

The National Infection Prevention and Control Manual is underpinned by a range of literature reviews, including assessments of high risk transmission pathways such as aerosol generating procedures, medical procedures that increase risk of transmission from patient to healthcare worker, staff to patient contact, and environmental contamination. These reviews can be found at the following link:

<http://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/resources/literature-reviews/>

## ■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

**Christina Rees:**

**[100505]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Department has made of the potential merits of developing a holistic and whole-system approach to antimicrobial resistance, sepsis and infection prevention.

**Edward Argar:**

The United Kingdom's five-year national action plan for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) takes a holistic and comprehensive approach across humans, animals, agriculture, the environment and food.

The national action plan includes a strengthened focus on infection prevention and control, with commitments to cut the number of resistant infections by 10% by 2025 and to halve levels of healthcare associated Gram-negative blood stream infections by 2023-2024.

It is critical that our work on sepsis and AMR is closely aligned. Sepsis forms an important part of NHS England and NHS Improvement's AMR Programme, which continues to drive improvements in the prevention and management of infections and optimal antimicrobial use.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[95745]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timetable is for the administering of flu jabs by the NHS to clinically vulnerable diabetic patients; and whether jabs for those patients will be prioritised over jabs for the general public.

**Jo Churchill:**

General practitioners and other NHS service providers have been asked to prioritise flu vaccination for all those who are in the defined clinically vulnerable groups documented in the national guidance, including those with diabetes.

Vaccination of those who are in at risk groups has started and will continue in all areas in England through the winter months.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[96818]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department (a) is taking in the months leading up to and (b) plans to take during the 2020-21 winter period to ensure high public uptake of influenza vaccines.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to ensure that regional teams have plans in place to increase coverage of the flu vaccination this winter. New models of delivery have been shared with regional commissioning teams to encourage innovation, such as mobile and mass vaccination models, and allow for increases in uptake safely, whilst observing social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also introduced an enhanced call and recall system, so that those who are eligible will be reminded to attend a vaccination session, alongside better mechanisms of data collection to target interventions into areas/cohorts with poor uptake during the season.

Alongside this, additional trained workforce is being made available to local providers to help them vaccinate more eligible people. Public Health England will also be launching a new marketing campaign to encourage uptake of flu vaccination amongst eligible groups.

Additional flu vaccine has been purchased by the Department, which will be available to providers to facilitate expansion of the programme.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[98903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle flu vaccine shortages in (a) Tameside and (b) Stockport.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 8 October 2020]:* There is no national shortage of the flu vaccine. We have sufficient vaccine for over 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's local team are currently unaware of any specific issues with shortages in Tameside or Stockport.

General practitioners and pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults, with deliveries phased through the season. In addition, the Department has procured additional doses of seasonal flu vaccine to ensure more flu vaccines are available from November.

**Ruth Cadbury:**

**[98991]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of supplies of flu vaccinations for those over the age of 50.

**Ruth Cadbury:**

**[98992]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase the availability of flu vaccinations for those over the age of 50.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have sufficient vaccine for over 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter, this includes additional stock procured by the Department to increase uptake in existing groups and extend the programme to new cohorts including those aged 50 to 64 years.

General practitioners and pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults, with deliveries phased through the season. Priority should be given to those who are most at risk to the effects of flu, including those aged over 65, and health and social care



workers. The seasonal flu programme will be extended to those aged 50 to 64 years later in the season, following prioritisation of those in higher risk groups. There will be further communication on extending the programme later in the season.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[99104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of influenza vaccinations for winter 2020-21 in (a) Cheshire and (b) Merseyside.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's local team are currently unaware of any specific issues with the local supply in Cheshire or Merseyside.

We have sufficient vaccine for over 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter.

General practitioners and pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults, with deliveries phased through the season. In addition, the Department has procured additional doses of seasonal flu vaccine to ensure more flu vaccines are available from November.

#### ■ **Joint Biosecurity Centre**

**Andy Slaughter:**

[\[95029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to recruit additional consultants to work in the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:* The Joint Biosecurity Centre is likely to have an ongoing requirement for consultancy support, for example to fill very specialised epidemiology, data science and data engineering roles.

#### ■ **Joint Biosecurity Centre: Contracts**

**Andy Slaughter:**

[\[95025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out the competitive process used to award contracts at the Joint Biosecurity Centre; and if he will confirm how many companies put in bids for these contracts.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 29 September 2020]:*

The United Kingdom is facing the biggest public health challenge in a generation. The Joint Biosecurity Centre has been set up at pace to ensure decision makers at local and national levels have access to the best available information. This involved awarding contracts for a range of goods and services. Contracts were awarded in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

## ■ Joint Biosecurity Centre: Recruitment

**Alison McGovern:**

**[100978]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many psychologists and behavioural scientists are working to support the Joint Biosecurity Committee; when they were recruited; and from which Departments or academic institutions.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* The Joint Biosecurity Centre has recruited a range of staff from across the Civil Service and academic institutions. As the number of psychologists and behavioural scientists working within the Joint Biosecurity Centre is currently falls below 10, due to the small number, we are unable to provide the exact number of staff, when they were recruited and from which Departments or academic institutions. This is due to the likelihood of individuals being easily identifiable.

## ■ Lung Cancer: Medical Treatments

**Derek Twigg:**

**[96775]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of to Question 81540, if he will publish data on waiting times by (a) borough, (b) NHS hospital Trust, (c) region for lung cancer patients for (i) referral to diagnoses and (ii) for treatment to commence in respect of chemotherapy, immunotherapy and surgery, for the most recent period for which figures are available; and what those waiting times were in the same period in 2019.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* Waiting times standards for all cancers, and for lung cancer individually are published each month by NHS England and are available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/>

This data is available by region and National Health Service provider. Data covers time from referral to treatment and from decision to treat to first treatment. However, data by treatment modality are not published for individual cancers.

## ■ Meat Products: Labelling

**Patricia Gibson:**

**[97621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's proposed health marks for meat are finalised and in use by the end of the transition period.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* Competent Authorities responsible for the application of the health mark, are aware of the new form of the mark to be applied after the 31 December 2020 and have already taken steps to ensure new health

marks are available to officials working in United Kingdom approved slaughterhouses.

■ **MMR Vaccine**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[92696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made on the effect of anti-vaccination campaigns on the number of young children receiving the MMR vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

We take the issue of vaccine misinformation extremely seriously and are working across Government to tackle this.

Parental attitudinal surveys conducted by Public Health England demonstrate that there is high confidence in our vaccine programmes and that 94% of parents rate the NHS as the most trusted source of information on immunisation.

However, despite a recent uptick in measles, mumps and rubella vaccine uptake rates, the Department remains concerned about the slow and steady decline in vaccine uptake rates since 2013. We are working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and social media companies on innovative ways to tackle the proliferation of anti-vaccine messaging and ensuring that reputable sources such as NHS.UK are the most prominent.

■ **National Institute for Health Protection**

**Rachel Reeves:**

[\[95621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the National Institute for Health Protection's status as an administrative unit, executive agency or non-departmental public body will be announced.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 September 2020]:* We are currently developing the transition process to support full and formal establishment of the National Institute for Health Protection. The administrative classification of the new body will be determined as part of this process over the coming months.

■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[95589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer to Question 55014, what estimate he has made of the proportion of (a) eye protection visors and (b) other items of personal protective equipment being supplied to NHS England which have been manufactured in the UK; and if he will take steps to increase the quantity of PPE manufactured in the UK.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

**[95590]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to permit NHS Trusts in England and other health bodies to procure their own personal protective equipment products direct from UK manufacturers; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 September 2020]:* The United Kingdom manufacturing response to the crisis has been a significant achievement with, on average, UK-based supply anticipated to meet 70% of forecasted demand in England in December for all categories of personal protective equipment (PPE) excluding gloves. We are considering the best way to incentivise and sustain this high level of UK PPE manufacture.

PPE will continue to be procured nationally, funded and overseen by the Department, until March 2021 at the earliest. National Health Service organisations should continue to utilise national reserves. The Department's national reserves are being expanded to cover months of supply in preparation for the winter period, including building supply from UK manufacturing sites. The Department does not expect additional local procurement or locally co-ordinated manufacture of equipment to be necessary to meet demand for PPE items and therefore no funding is available outside of system funding envelopes.

## ■ **Obesity: Children**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[97521]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to tackle childhood obesity by making it mandatory to label the nutritional value of food in a way that is easy for consumers to understand.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* In July, as part of 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives', we published a four-nation public consultation to gather views and evidence on our current front-of-pack 'traffic light' nutrition labelling scheme. We welcome and will consider all responses to the consultation. If evidence suggests that improvements are required, we will consult again on all policy options.

The consultation 'Building on the success of front-of-pack nutrition labelling in the UK' was open until 21 October and the outcomes will be published shortly.

## ■ **Ovarian Cancer: Mental Health Services**

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[82574]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what priority his Department has accorded to ensuring that psychological support services are available for people diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

The NHS Long Term Plan sets a clear ambition that where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer should have access to personalised care by 2021. Over the next five years, Cancer Alliances will be embedding personalised care interventions, which will identify and address the changing needs of cancer patients from diagnosis onwards.

National Health Service mental health services, including Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services, have remained open for business throughout this time, including delivering support digitally and over the phone where possible. For those with severe needs or in crisis, NHS England has instructed all NHS mental health trusts to establish 24 hours a day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines, clearly accessible from trust websites.

**■ Prostate Cancer: Screening****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[96781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the UK National Screening Committee's review of the process of screening for prostate cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* The United Kingdom National Screening Committee's (UK NSC) three-month public consultation on prostate cancer screening/prostate specific antigen testing in men over the age of 50 closed on the 21 September 2020. The responses are being carefully reviewed internally and with the external reviewer before this is submitted to the UK NSC to make a final recommendation.

Information about the outcome of the 2020 evidence review and the recommendation on prostate screening is estimated to be completed by December 2020. It will be updated and be made available at the following link:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/prostatecancer>

**■ Protective Clothing: Eyes****Justin Madders:****[97600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the assessed requirement for PPE eye protection was for the period May to December 2020; and whether that amount has been procured.

**Jo Churchill:**

Amid unprecedented global pressures on supply chains, since 25 February 2020, over 3.7 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been delivered to frontline workers thanks to the efforts of the Government, National Health Service, industry and the armed forces to massively scale up distribution networks.

Our PPE Strategy, published on 28 September, sets out how the Government is preparing for a potential second wave or current pandemic alongside winter seasonal pressures.

PPE delivery statistics are published on a weekly basis and provide the latest number of PPE items which have been distributed for use by health and social care services in England. They are available online at GOV.UK.

## ■ Protective Clothing: Standards

**Patrick Grady:**

**[101034]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that face coverings sold privately for use by the general public are of a high standard and effective.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* In the United Kingdom, face coverings are being sold by a large number of retailers online and in store. Details of a product's conformance to any standards can be found under the product details section online, or on the packaging or label of the covering itself.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards has produced [guidance for manufacturers and sellers of face coverings](#), which is available online.

In June 2020, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) approved a Workshop Agreement with performance requirements, methods of testing and uses of community face coverings.

The British Retail Consortium has released a [specification for Textile Barrier Face Coverings](#) designed for both disposable and reusable coverings. The specification sets out the design, performance and chemical requirements of coverings, as well as labelling instructions.

The British Standards Institution will not be creating a separate standard and intend to adopt the CEN Workshop Agreement. Copies of both the [CEN](#) and [AFNOR](#) documents are freely available for the public to download.

## ■ Public Health

**Owen Thompson:**

**[103576]**

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 effect of mutual recognition principle in the UK Internal Markets Bill on public health objectives across the UK.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* Clause 14(2) of the Bill makes clear that the core public functions of public bodies such as the National Health Service are not in scope of mutual recognition for goods. Supplies of goods by public bodies will only be in scope if they are supplied for purely commercial purposes – such as a souvenir sold by a gift shop in a public museum.

Equally, health and social care services are excluded from the mutual recognition principle for services in Part 2. This means that health services will not be affected by the mutual recognition rule for services.

## ■ Public Health: Finance

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[96143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he had made of the adequacy of funding for public health departments within local authorities in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 October 2020]:* The Public Health Grant to local authorities is £3.279 billion in 2020-21. This is in addition to what the National Health Service spends on public health, which included over £1.3 billion in 2019-20 on national public health programmes such as immunisations and screening. Local authorities have also been provided with £4.3 billion in 2020/21 to support their response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Funding beyond 2020-21 will be set out at the next Spending Review.

## ■ Smoking

**Alex Norris:**

[\[97688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of levels of compliance with the ban on menthol cigarettes; and what steps the Government is taking to remove illegal products from the market.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* No assessment has been made regarding levels of compliance with the ban on menthol cigarettes since its introduction in May earlier this year. We expect the tobacco industry to comply with the requirements of The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. A breach of the regulations could result in enforcement action being taken.

## ■ Spinal Muscular Atrophy: Medical Treatments

**Darren Jones:**

[\[108279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans NICE has to review recent research on the (a) use of and (b) eligibility for Spinraza for treatment of type three spinal muscular atrophy.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has committed to reviewing new evidence that becomes available for non-ambulant spinal muscular atrophy type 3 patients during the five-year course of the existing managed access agreement (MAA). This review will assess whether any new evidence has become available to support a change in the MAA treatment eligibility criteria.



NICE expects to commence the review later this year.

■ **Test and Trace Support Payment**

**Anneliese Dodds:**

[\[101059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when local authorities will be provided with guidance on how to set up the discretionary fund accompanying the new £500 self-isolation payment.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 13 October 2020]:* The Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 was introduced on 28 September, to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate by National Health Service Test and Trace and will lose income as a result.

We have worked closely with local authorities on the implementation of these payments and have provided them with support and guidance on how to administer the scheme, including discretionary payments.

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[99514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people eligible for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment are able to claim the payment on more than one occasion in the event that they have to self-isolate more than once.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* A person can claim a Test and Trace Support Payment for each period of self-isolation required by National Health Service Test and Trace, provided they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual claim and their periods of self-isolation do not overlap.

■ **Vaccination: Coronavirus**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[82200\]](#)

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 his Department's ability to meet immunisation targets.

**Dan Carden:**

[\[82323\]](#)

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 immunisation targets.

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[82379\]](#)

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 his Department's ability to meet immunisation targets.

**Jim Shannon:**

**[83812]**

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 the achievement of immunisation targets.

**Jo Churchill:**

The impact of COVID-19 on immunisation targets has been variable. Preliminary data suggests that, whilst there was an initial decrease in the number of pre-school vaccinations delivered in primary care during the early weeks of the pandemic compared with the same period in 2019, the situation rapidly stabilised and recovered. In contrast, school-aged immunisation programmes were more impacted as a result of school closures. Providers have been working with schools to catch-up those programmes as schools have re-opened.

Due to the public health advice on social distancing and shielding, general practices were not expected to offer the opportunistic shingles vaccine to those aged 70, unless the patient was already in the general practitioner practice for another reason. Coverage among those turning 70 or 78 during quarter 4 – who were vaccinated up to the end of June 2020 - achieved lower coverage (9.3% and 10.4%, respectively) than among those who turned 70 or 78 after the same eligibility interval in previous quarters.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Electric Scooters: Seized Articles

**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[112004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many privately-owned e-scooters have been seized or confiscated by the police for illegal use on the road or pavement, by police force.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics annually on police use of powers (available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales>) including fixed penalty notices issued for motoring offences, however information on the numbers of vehicles removed or seized by the police is not collected.

Enforcement of road traffic law is an operational matter for individual police Chief Officers in conjunction with local policing plans.

### ■ Immigration: Cyprus and Malta

**Catherine West:**

**[112094]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to extend preferential e-gate access at airports and ports to citizens of (a) Malta and (b) Cyprus after the end of the transition period.

**Catherine West:**

[\[112095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether EU citizens will be able to access e-gates at UK ports and airports on the same conditions as now following the transition period.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government has already confirmed EU, EEA and Swiss citizens will continue to be able to use e-Gates to enter the UK after the end of the transition period. The necessary legislative change to allow this was made by a Statutory Instrument laid in Parliament on 22 October.

No distinction will be made at the end of the transition period between citizens of different EU and EEA countries: citizens of Malta and Cyprus will have the same entitlement to use e-Gates as citizens of all other EEA countries.

This policy will be kept under review to ensure we continue to run our border in the UK's best interests.

## ■ Police Stations: Closures

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[112070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police stations have closed in England in each of the last ten years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office does not hold information centrally on police station closures across England. Decisions on the number of police stations and their locations are for Chief Constables and directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Mayors with PCC functions. They are best placed to make these decisions based on their local knowledge and experience.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## ■ Collective Worship and Marriage: Coronavirus

**Sir Edward Leigh:**

[\[110039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the (a) covid-19 lockdown process on the human right to practice religion corporately and (b) ban on marriages during lockdown on the right to family life.

**Luke Hall:**

Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right, and one which underpins many of the others. The closure of our places of worship for communal prayer and for weddings is a step to be considered only in the most exceptional circumstances. However, our view is that this is a qualified right, subject to necessary limitations in the interest of public safety.

This includes the protection of health to protect the fundamental right to life of the population set out in Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Article 2 remains the overriding concern for the protection of the nation's health as a whole.

### ■ **Collective Worship: Coronavirus**

**Sir Edward Leigh:**

[\[110040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Places of Worship Taskforce was consulted on the announcement that communal worship will not be allowed during the new covid-19 lockdown.

**Luke Hall:**

The Places of Worship Taskforce met on 2 November. In addition, roundtables have been held with the country's major faith groups to discuss the now published guidance.

Discussions with our faith groups at these meetings, as they have been throughout the pandemic, have proved to be extremely helpful in sharing information with our faith groups, as well as hearing of their concerns. We are very grateful to all members of the Taskforce for their support and understanding during these difficult times for our faith communities, and we will continue to draw on the expertise of the Taskforce members.

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[110113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support communal religious worship while churches, mosques and other premises are closed for services.

**Luke Hall:**

We know how important communal worship is within many of our faith communities, but to limit the spread of the virus, places of worship will be closed for communal prayer. However, they will be permitted to open for individual prayer and to record or livestream services so that worshippers can participate at home. In addition, funerals can be attended by a maximum of thirty people.

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[110896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing communal worship to continue during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**Luke Hall:**

With regret, places of worship will be closed for communal prayer. As the rate of infection is rising, we have made the decision to close a broad range of premises, including places of worship. These measures are designed to limit the number of interactions that people have and therefore reduce the risk spread.

Places of worship are permitted to open for individual prayer and for the recording or live streaming of services so that worshippers can participate at home. In addition, funerals are also permitted and can be attended by a maximum of thirty people.

The regulations now in force will expire on 2 December, at which point we hope to be able to ease restrictions.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Mark Menzies:**

[\[110114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has put in place to ensure that (a) older and (b) clinically vulnerable people (i) have continued access to essentials and (ii) are not socially isolated at home during winter 2020-21.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has committed an unprecedented multi-billion package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector so that they can continue their vital work to support vulnerable people through the coronavirus outbreak. The NHS Volunteer Responders Programme - including the check in and chat service - will also continue to be available until at least March 2021. MHCLG is providing councils with over £32 million to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people for the 28-day period that the additional guidance is in place. It is designed to give councils flexibility in providing appropriate support to CEV individuals, such as access to food and to local support services, enabling them to stay as safe as possible over this period.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[112036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to account for population age in the Covid-19 Relative Needs Formula.

**Luke Hall:**

When developing the Covid-19 Relative Needs Formula, the Government used data provided by councils themselves through monitoring returns. We used this data to test potential drivers of this reported covid-related expenditure. Total population and deprivation, as well as a consideration of how costs of delivery vary across the country, were found to have a good statistical fit with this data.

## ■ **Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Coronavirus**

**Jon Cruddas:**

[\[110740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2020 to Question 49601 on Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Coronavirus, how many local authorities have responded to his Department's financial monitoring survey on numbers of claimants; and how many local authorities have yet to respond.

**Luke Hall:**

The Department collects monthly monitoring returns on the financial impact of Covid-19 on local authorities, including data on the number of local council tax support claimants. In the most recent round, returns were received from 310 out of 314 billing authorities surveyed.

**Jon Cruddas:**

**[110741]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2020 to Question 49601, when he plans to publish data on the number of additional households claiming local Council Tax Support as a result of covid-19 and the subsequent economic downturn.

**Luke Hall:**

The Department publishes quarterly official statistics recording the number of local council tax support claimants, at the following address:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/910192/LCTS\\_claimants\\_2020-21\\_Q1.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910192/LCTS_claimants_2020-21_Q1.xlsx) . The next release covering the second quarter of 2020/21 is planned for 25 November.

**Jon Cruddas:**

**[110742]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will commission independent research into the additional costs to local authority council tax support schemes of covid-19 and the subsequent economic downturn.

**Luke Hall:**

The Department publishes annual revenue budget and outturn data on local authority revenue expenditure and financing. These include council tax revenue foregone under local council tax support schemes. Outturn data for 2020-21 are scheduled for publication by Autumn 2021. These will capture costs to local authorities of providing local council tax support during the pandemic and will be available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing#2020-to-2021> .

## ■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[112017]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what financial support the Government plans to provide in addition to statutory sick pay to ensure that (a) people with cystic fibrosis and (b) other clinically extremely vulnerable people can access essential (i) items and (ii) services for themselves and their families during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Christopher Pincher:**

MHCLG is providing councils with over £32 million to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people for the 28-day period that the additional guidance is in place. It is designed to give councils flexibility in providing appropriate support to CEV individuals, such as access to food and to local support services, enabling them to stay as safe as possible over this period. The Government has extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) until March, which CEV individuals may be eligible for. CEV employees may also be able to get help through the Access to Work scheme. Those who cannot work from home may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA), as well as Universal Credit (UC).

## ■ Environment Protection: Planning

**Layla Moran:**

**[110232]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Planning for the Future White Paper published in March 2020, what steps he is taking to (a) maintain and (b) enhance (i) green spaces, (ii) nature and (ii) biodiversity and growth and renewal zones.

**Christopher Pincher:**

*Planning for the Future* included the proposal that local plans would categorise all land as areas for growth, for renewal or for protection. If that reform is taken forward, a local authority would still be expected to protect and enhance valued green spaces and biodiversity in areas earmarked for growth or renewal. Legal protections for landscape and habitat will remain in force, and local plans and decisions should still accord with policies in our National Planning Policy Framework on the natural environment and biodiversity net gain, local green space, and provision of open space for outdoor recreation. Consultation on the White Paper closed on 29 October 2020. Following consideration of all the feedback received, the Government will publish its response in due course. This will set out any decisions and how we would propose to implement them.

## ■ Evictions: Coronavirus

**Sarah Olney:**

**[112097]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reinstating the ban on rental evictions in the context of the covid-19 lockdown.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Following the stay of possessions that ended on 20 September, housing possession claims are able to be actioned through the courts, but evictions will not be enforced apart from in the most serious cases. The Government believes this strikes the right balance between prioritising public health and supporting the most vulnerable renters, whilst ensuring landlords can access and exercise their right to justice.

Bailiffs have been asked not to enforce evictions across England whilst the new, national restrictions apply from 5 November. The only exceptions to this will be the most egregious cases, including cases of illegal occupation, fraud, where tenants have demonstrated anti-social behaviour or are the perpetrator of domestic abuse in social housing and where a property is unoccupied following the death of a tenant. With a pause on evictions starting in December, evictions will not be enforced in England until the 11 January 2021 at the earliest, except in the most serious circumstances.

To further protect renters over winter, we legislated in August to increase notice periods to 6 months in all but the most serious circumstances. This means that most tenants served notice now would not be asked to leave until at least May 2021.



These measures build on the Government's major economic package of support including assistance for businesses to pay wages which have now been extended to March 2021; boosting the welfare safety-net by more than £9 billion; increasing Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile; and providing £180 million funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, for local authorities to distribute to support renters needing additional help. Our primary consideration remains, as it has been throughout, to protect public health and ensure public services can provide support to those who need it.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

**Royston Smith:**

**[110299]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to assist leaseholders whose homes are in high-rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding while their Building Safety Fund applications are under consideration.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is aware of the impact on leaseholders and residents living in high rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding and has introduced the £1 billion Building Safety Fund to help make homes safer, more quickly and for the long term. The Building Safety Fund is to cover costs of the remediation of unsafe non-Aluminium Composite Material cladding but not for any service charge fees that might be incurred in the interim. In addition, Government Advisor Michael Wade is accelerating work to identify financing options for future remediation work that will protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs, while ensuring these do not fall to the taxpayer. However, it must be recognised that it is the responsibility of building owners – not Government or the tax payer – to ensure their buildings are safe for leaseholders and other residents.

**Royston Smith:**

**[110300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the average per household costs born by leaseholders addressing fire safety in high-rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding that (a) qualify and (b) do not qualify for the Building Safety Fund.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The purpose of the Building Safety Fund is to increase the pace of remediation of unsafe non-Aluminium Composite Material cladding in residential buildings 18 metres and above. Any costs for leaseholders will depend on the extent of other remediation work to be carried out which is beyond the scope of the Fund. For remediation costs in general, the draft Building Safety Bill includes an impact assessment which is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-building-safety-bill](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-building-safety-bill). Further analytical work will be undertaken to update the impact assessment, including the cost estimates for leaseholders, which will be published when the Bill is formally introduced to Parliament.

**■ Landlord and Tenant****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[110185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to protect the right to a fair reference for tenants in rented accommodation.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The reference process is a private matter between the parties involved and not something it would be appropriate for the Government to intervene in.

Landlords and letting agents may wish to obtain references from their prospective tenant's former landlords or letting agent but cannot charge the tenant a fee for this process. As part of the referencing process, landlords may take into account various factors when deciding whether to let to a tenant, including previous or outstanding rent arrears. Where these factors have been adversely affected by circumstances arising from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we would encourage landlords and letting agents to be considerate of this when deciding whether to accept or recommend such tenants. When completing the referencing process, both the previous landlord and prospective tenant should therefore provide any necessary contextual information to aid these considerations. For example, this could include details of any voluntary arrangements or payment holidays which were agreed.

**■ Planning Permission****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[110784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance he has issued to local councillors on considering planning applications over the internet.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has made clear that local planning authorities should continue to prioritise decision-making during the coronavirus pandemic to ensure that the planning system continues to function, especially when this will support the local economy. Most planning applications are determined by planning officers through a local planning authority's scheme of delegation. Where decisions need to be made by committee, we have introduced legislation that allow council planning committee meetings to be held virtually for a temporary period to allow the determination of applications to continue. The Planning Advisory Service has produced guidance for local planning authorities on how to adapt their planning services in response to Covid-19, including information on virtual planning committees.

**■ Planning Permission: Enforcement****Scott Mann:**[\[110874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he holds information on examples of local authority planning enforcement having been outsourced to private companies.

**Christopher Pincher:**

It is for local planning authorities to decide how best to carry out their planning enforcement functions. The Department does not hold information on which authorities have outsourced enforcement work to private companies.

**■ Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[110184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support shielding tenants in private rented accommodation whose landlord requests that a third party access their property at short notice.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Tenants have a right to the quiet enjoyment of their property and must be given at least 24 hours' notice of any visit to the property. If a tenant is self-isolating, no work should be carried out in their home unless it is to remedy a direct risk that affects their safety or the safety of their household. Landlords of clinically extremely vulnerable people can carry out routine repairs and inspections, provided the latest guidance on social distancing, working safely in people's homes and guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals is followed. It remains a crime for a landlord to harass a tenant. Tenants who are concerned should contact their local authority or the police.

**■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions****Sarah Olney:**[\[112098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to ban section 21 orders to end no fault evictions.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is committed to abolishing Section 21 through a Renters' Reform Bill, which will enhance renters' security and improve protections for tenants.

Repealing Section 21 represents the largest change to renting in 30 years and it is only right that the reforms are taken forward in a considered manner. It is important that providing tenants with greater security of tenure is balanced with an assurance that landlords are able to recover their properties where they have valid reasons to do so. This is vital to ensuring the future supply of good quality housing in the rented sector.

We will bring forward the Renters' Reform Bill in due course once the urgencies of responding to the pandemic have passed.

## ■ Religious Buildings: Coronavirus

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[110078]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the risk of covid-19 spreading in places of worship where hygiene and social distancing measures are followed.

**Luke Hall:**

We are very grateful to our faith communities for all their efforts to ensure their places of worship are as Covid-secure as possible. However, the evidence from the scientific community, and from SAGE is that the rate of infection continues to rise and we need to reduce the level of interaction and the number of gatherings that take place. The closure of places of worship for communal prayer is one such decision.

These restrictions have not been introduced lightly. We recognise that religious practice is of fundamental importance to millions of people which is why we are enabling individual prayer in places of worship for those religions who practice in this way.

The regulations now in force will expire on 2 December, at which point we hope to be able to ease restrictions.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[110079]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the closure of places of worship in response to covid-19 lockdown restrictions on the (a) mental health and (b) physical wellbeing of people who regularly attend religious services and gatherings.

**Luke Hall:**

We know how vital places of worship are to many people's health and wellbeing. They play an important role in spiritual and mental health, and in bringing our communities together.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that the rate of infection is rising. The closure of our places of worship for communal prayer is to limit the number of interactions, thereby protecting the health of our community and the NHS.

The regulations now in force will expire on 2 December, at which point we hope to be able to ease restrictions.

## ■ Service Charges

**Apsana Begum:**

**[109711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of (a) the transparency of service charges and (b) the level of consultation with people paying services charges on their landlord's maintenance and repair programmes.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[109712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the average (a) number and (b) category types for service charge components in London; and what recent estimate he has made of average service charges in London.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[109714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the components of services charges for (a) social housing, (b) shared ownership and (c) privately (i) rented and (ii) leasehold properties.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[109715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing regulation of service charges applied by landlords.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[109716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of trends in incidents where leaseholders or residents have been charged by landlords for work that has not been undertaken or where services have been provided that they do not have access to.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government believes very strongly that service charges should be transparent and communicated effectively, and that there should be a clear route to challenge or redress if things go wrong. The law is clear that service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard. Disputes may be resolved informally between leaseholders and the freeholder, or leaseholders may make an application to the First-tier Tribunal to make a determination on the reasonableness of their service charges. There are two service charge codes of practice approved by the Secretary of State for the residential leasehold sector and private retirement housing published by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Association of Retirement Housing Managers, which can be taken into account at court or tribunal proceedings where relevant. The Department does not hold information about the average number of and category types for service charge components, nor the average service charge amount in London. We also do not hold information on trends in incidences where leaseholders challenge their service charge because work was not undertaken, or because they do not have access to the service provided. Free initial advice regarding service charges as well as other leasehold matters may be obtained via the Leasehold Advisory Service, the specialist advisory body funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to provide assistance to leaseholders. The law requires that leaseholders paying variable service charges must be consulted before a landlord carries out qualifying works or enters into a long-term

agreement for the provision of services (Section 20 of the of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985). The Government established an independent working group chaired by Lord Best to raise standards across the property sector, which also considered improvements to the transparency of service charges and major works consultations. The working group published its final report to Government (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulation-of-property-agents-working-group-report> ). We are considering the report's recommendations and will announce next steps in due course.

### ■ **Sleeping Rough: Harlow**

**Robert Halfon:**

**[110782]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated to support rough sleeping programmes in Harlow in the last 12 months.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

In 2020/21, we are providing over £700 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping across England.

Harlow has so far been allocated £411,718 through rough sleeping programmes in 2020/21:

- £328,435 through the Rough Sleeping Initiative;
- £1,650 from the COVID-19 Emergency Rough Sleeping Fund; and
- £81,633 from the short-term portion of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme.

Harlow has also been allocated £460,902 in homelessness funding in 2020/21:

- £360,351 from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant; and
- £100,551 through the Homelessness Reduction Grant.

## JUSTICE

### ■ **Barristers: Northern Ireland**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[111519]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on access to justice of barristers registered with the Bar of Northern Ireland and who are based in Great Britain reportedly being precluded from claiming travel and accommodation expenses in connection with Northern Ireland court cases.

**Alex Chalk:**

Under the framework established by the Legal Services Act 2007, the legal services sector in England and Wales is independent of government, and lawyers are regulated by their own independent regulators. Similarly, the Government is not responsible for the regulation of legal services in Northern Ireland. The Code of

Conduct of the Bar Council of Northern Ireland sets out how barristers practicing in Northern Ireland should calculate their fees and expenses for a case.

## ■ Courts and Tribunals: Coronavirus

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[110219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how long he plans to keep in place covid-19 flexible operating hours in courts and tribunals in England and Wales.

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[110220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the covid-19 flexible operating hours pilots.

**Chris Philp:**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has led the way internationally in continuing justice, restarting jury trials ahead of all other comparable systems.

We continue to make significant progress on Criminal Courts Recovery. Since August, magistrates' courts have been consistently completing more cases than they are receiving, dealing with over 21,000 cases each week and tackling the backlog.

In the Crown Court, we are listing over 150 jury trials and conducting thousands of other hearings each week.

As part of the Criminal Courts Recovery we have considered adopting different operating hours to maximise HMCTS' own estate. Magistrates' courts are already responding flexibly at a local level, and a number of Crown Court buildings are now testing and refining a blended COVID Operating Hours model. It is important to note that COVID Operating Hours would be a time-limited measure and whilst they would mean that our buildings will be open for longer, no one party would be required to attend court for longer.

We identified seven Crown Court locations to test and refine the COVID Operating Hours model. We are monitoring the pilots and will assess them all by the end of November before a decision on further implementation is taken.

## ■ Courts: Access

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[112053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the accessibility of all court buildings in England and Wales.

**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.

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.

### ■ **Magistrates: Age**

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[112055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of extending the cut-off age for magistrates beyond 70 on the administration of justice in magistrates' courts; and whether his Department plans to implement that change.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government has consulted on an increase to the mandatory retirement age for all judicial office holders, including magistrates. That consultation set out our assessment that increasing the mandatory retirement age could help to retain valuable judicial resource and expertise.

The consultation closed on 16 October, with over 1000 responses received from the magistracy, judiciary and legal professions and analysis of these responses is underway. We intend to publish the Government's response in the near future, with a view to legislate for any changes we decide to make at the earliest opportunity.

### ■ **Prisoners' Release**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[111469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will estimate the average cost of a recall to prison for (a) an adult woman, (b) a young person and (c) an adult man who has been sentenced to a tariff lower than or equal to (i) 6, (ii) 12, (iii) 18 and (iv) 24 months.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[111470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many recalls to prison there have been for (a) an adult woman, (b) a young person and (c) an adult man who has been sentenced to a tariff lower than or equal to (i) 6, (ii) 12, (iii) 18 and (iv) 24 months in each of the last five years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The length of time which an offender will spend in custody following recall will depend on whether it is a fixed-term or standard recall and on the length of sentence which the offender is serving. Therefore, it is possible to provide only the average annual cost of holding a prisoner, including a recalled prisoner, in custody. The table below

sets out that average cost, for the year 2019-20; a more detailed breakdown of costs can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-performance-statistics-2019-to-2020>

FUNCTION	COST PER PRISONER PER YEAR
Male category B Trainer	£29,013
Male category C Trainer	£23,975
Male dispersal	£47,974
Female closed	£34,736
Female local	£44,476
Female open	£39,199
Male closed YOI (ages 18-21)	£50,915
Male YOI young people (ages 15-17)	£92,158
Male local	£30,532
Male open	£21,458
<b>All prisons</b>	<b>£28,974</b>

The table below sets out the number of recalls over the last five years broken down by sentence length of less than 12 months and 12 months or more as recorded on our data management system. A more detailed breakdown of sentence length is not available.

#### Number of Recalls by gender, sentence length and age

RECALL YEAR	SENTENCE LENGTH	ADULT MALE	ADULT FEMALE	YOUNG PEOPLE
2015	Less than 12 months	4,554	434	
	12 months or more	15,727	721	31
2016	Less than 12 months	7,091	726	1
	12 months or more	13,069	652	20
2017	Less than 12	7,839	986	

RECALL YEAR	SENTENCE LENGTH	ADULT MALE	ADULT FEMALE	YOUNG PEOPLE
	months			
	12 months or more	12,417	665	7
2018	Less than 12 months	7,933	1,044	
	12 months or more	14,385	880	26
2019	Less than 12 months	7,927	1,097	
	12 months or more	16,395	1,060	24

**Table notes :**

- Recalls of those sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment began from February 2015.
- An adult is an offender who was 18 years old or more at the time of the recall
- The figures detailed in the answer have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Public protection is our priority. Offenders on licence are subject to strict licence conditions and supervision. When an offender breaches a condition of their licence the Probation Service will undertake a thorough risk assessment to determine whether it is necessary, for the protection of the public, to recall that offender to prison.

## ■ Prisoners: Exercise

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[111468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will estimate the number of prisoners who were living under custodial regimes allowing for only (a) 30, (b) 60, (c) 90 and (d) 120 minutes of unlocked time per day in the week commencing 26 October 2020.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We have had to introduce a number of necessary restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and to protect both staff and prisoners, however, we have continued to offer as much time out of cells as possible, with necessary adaptations to manage infection.

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

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

The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Rape: Prosecutions

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[110250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recent report by the Office of the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, what steps the Government plans to take to tackle the annual and proportionate decline in the (a) number of rape cases considered by the CPS and (b) conviction rate among those cases since 2016-17.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government recognises that the decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being charged and prosecuted in England and Wales is a cause for significant concern. That is why we are carrying out an end-to-end review of how the Criminal Justice System responds to rape. Through this review we are working with operational partners from across the Criminal Justice system including the police, CPS and victims' groups to ensure we can improve the way rape cases are dealt with.

We welcome the Office of the Victims' Commissioner's research and will consider its findings carefully. The Government is intending to publish its initial findings and recommendations for action before the end of the year, and is committed to continuing to work after that publication to make further changes to improve the system in the longer term.

## ■ Trials: Coronavirus

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[110221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many jury trials were completed in each of the last six months.

**Ellie Reeves:**

[\[110222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) receipts and (b) disposals there were in (a) magistrates courts, (b) Crown courts and (c) employment tribunals in each of the last 12 months.

**Chris Philp:**

HMCTS publishes quarterly official statistics for the criminal courts here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020>.

HMCTS also publishes weekly Management Information for all jurisdictions, including the Magistrates' Court, Crown Court and Employment Tribunal here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/hmcts-weekly-management-information-during-coronavirus-march-to-september-2020>.

These weekly MI figures reflect the data held on the relevant case management systems and hence have some definitional and timing differences from any official statistics.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland****Stephen Farry:****[112126]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what official term is used by his Department to refer to the proposed series of checks on the movement of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland after the transition period.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Safeguarding the free flow of goods within the UK internal market is a priority for this Government. The application of the Northern Ireland Protocol will involve some changes for goods movements into Northern Ireland.

Our unfettered access policy will ensure that businesses and individuals will be able to move goods from Northern Ireland into the rest of the UK on the same basis as now.

The end of the transition period will, however, mean some new arrangements for goods movements into Northern Ireland from Great Britain. Changes will be kept to an absolute minimum - with a new Trader Support Service, available to all traders at no cost, to be established to provide wraparound support, alongside guidance on the processes for food and agricultural products designed to uphold the longstanding status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit.

**■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Northern Ireland****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[111433]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has held with Cabinet colleagues on Northern Ireland's allocation under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in the last four weeks.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2020]:* The UK Government is committed to creating a UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will bind together the whole United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations. It will, at a minimum, match the size of the EU structural funds in each nation.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland continues to engage regularly with colleagues from across the Government and will ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund works for the people and businesses of Northern Ireland, drives growth and promotes innovation. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will be used to boost the links between our family of nations, Strengthening the Union and levelling up the entire country creating a more successful and resilient economy.

**PRIME MINISTER**■ **Members: Correspondence****Bill Wiggin:**[\[111999\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for North Herefordshire of 21 October 2020 on vaccine and therapeutics trials.

**Boris Johnson:**

My office will ensure my Hon Friend receives a reply to his letter, sent to me and my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, shortly.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Teachers: Scotland****Jamie Stone:**[\[112100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of effect of the UK Internal Market Bill on teaching standards in Scotland in the event that the provisions of that Bill demand that the General Teaching Council for Scotland give full registration to teachers irrespective of their qualification status.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

Teaching standards across the UK are very important to the Government and under the provisions of the UK Internal Market Bill, relevant authorities in each of the devolved administrations will still be able to set standards and control who can teach in them as they do now. The Bill provides that if a relevant authority decides that recognising teaching qualifications from other parts of the UK automatically is not appropriate, it can put in place an alternative recognition process in accordance with clause 24 to check qualifications and experience.

**TRANSPORT****■ Aviation: Restart, Recovery and Engagement Unit****Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[110282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made in establishing the Restart, Recovery and Engagement unit; and what plans he has for the (a) work objectives of that unit and (b) engagement of that unit with the aviation industry.

**Robert Courts:**

In response to Covid-19, the Department for Transport established its Aviation Restart, Recovery, and Engagement Unit at the beginning of the pandemic. The objectives of the unit are to support the restart of the sector, enable its safe recovery post Covid-19, and the Unit has engaged with industry throughout this process.

As part of the Aviation Restart, Recovery, and Engagement Unit, the Department established the Expert Steering Group to engage and consult with the sector regularly. This Group has supported work done to date including the development of the aviation sector health measures guidance and implementation of the International Travel Corridors. In addition, Ministers and officials continue to meet with Airlines, Airports, Ground Handling companies and industry bodies frequently throughout the crisis.

The Government has now also launched the Global Travel Taskforce, which is considering:

- How a domestic testing regime for international arrivals could be implemented to boost safe travel to and from the UK and allow UK residents to travel with confidence;
- What steps we can take to facilitate global business and tourist travel, including through bilateral agreements and multilateral forums by exploring with key international partners issues such as global common standards, testing models, “bubbles”, measures around enforcement, exemptions and other border management measures;
- What steps we can take to increase consumer confidence, ensure existing measures are being properly adhered to and restart international travel safely.

The Global Travel Taskforce is also engaging with the sector on these points.

**■ Bus Service Operators Grant: Hydrogen****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[112031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the eligibility conditions of the Bus Service Operator's Grant to include hydrogen fuelled buses.



**Rachel Maclean:**

As announced in the 'Better Deal for Bus Users' package, the Government remains committed to the reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) in order to support the environment and improve passenger journeys.

**Buses: Electric Vehicles****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[112032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to announce the local authority selected to become England's first All Electric Bus Town.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has progressed two bids to Phase 2 of the All-Electric Bus Town competition: Coventry, submitted by Transport for West Midlands; and Oxford, submitted by Oxfordshire County Council. During Phase 2, bidders are required to develop a business case for their scheme that demonstrates appropriate value for money before any funding is awarded. Further details will be available in due course.

**Buses: Exhaust Emissions****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[112030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Prime Minister on the Government's commitment of 4,000 UK-made zero emission buses by 2024.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Secretary of State has not had any specific discussions with the Prime Minister regarding the timeline for the 4,000 zero emission buses.

Details of how the 4,000 zero emission buses commitment will be delivered will be announced after the Spending Review.

**Driving Instruction: Coronavirus****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[112102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on driving instructors of the November 2020 covid-19 restrictions.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency does not employ driving instructors; it licences approved driving instructors (ADI) to provide paid tuition. It is therefore not possible to assess what financial effect the November 2020 covid-19 restrictions has, or will have, on them.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[112104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the November 2020 covid-19 restrictions on learner drivers.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has been working hard to resume driving tests in a COVID-secure way for staff and candidates. Its priority is to help stop the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

The DVSA will contact candidates whose tests are affected by covid-19 restrictions and tell them what they need to do.

The DVSA has made an additional 55,000 practical car driving tests available up to 18 April 2021 to accommodate new and re-scheduled tests. This is in addition to the 150,000 practical car tests already available in the booking system.

**■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus****Fleur Anderson:**[\[112122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to enable those who were unable to take their practical driving test during the first covid-19 lockdown and whose theory driving test has since expired to take their practical test.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The two-year validity period of the theory test certificate is set in legislation and the Government has taken the decision not to lay further legislation to extend it. The primary reason is that the two-year validity is in place to ensure that a candidate's theoretical knowledge and hazard perception skills are up to date at the critical point they drive on their own for the first time. Extending the validity would provide less reassurance that this is the case. Those whose certificate previously expired and have since passed the theory test will now have a further two years in which to pass the practical test.

**■ Electric Scooters: Visual Impairment****Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[110265\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure the safety of visually impaired individuals from e-scooters.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Following our consultation earlier in the year, and feedback from subsequent stakeholder activities, we have required all e-scooters used in trials to have a horn or bell so that users can make others aware of their presence. Additionally, we have instructed all local authorities participating in trials to engage throughout the trial period with disability groups in their areas to ensure their concerns are being heard. We have also made additional commitments such as allowing vulnerable road user groups to take part in the evaluation process.

The trials have created a platform for innovation, and we are seeing very encouraging use of – for example – sound emitting devices on e-scooters in York. This is precisely the sort of initiative we want to monitor and evaluate and to help inform future policy.

## ■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[112006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been allocated for electric vehicle charging infrastructure to each local authority in England in each year for which figures are available.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Local authorities in England have received funding in excess of £95m from the Government for chargepoint infrastructure. The funding that has been allocated to each local authority in each year, for which figures are available, is detailed in the attached Excel spreadsheet.

In addition, there has also been £9.5m of funding allocated to Derby and Nottingham as part of their Future of Transport Zone plans. This funding will be used for seven e-mobility hubs, which will include charging infrastructure. These are based in neighbourhoods, depots and campuses across the two cities. The first tranche of this funding was delivered in 2019-20, with a further tranche in 2021-22.

## ■ Heathrow Airport: Industrial Disputes

**Beth Winter:**

[\[908548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effect on the economy of potential industrial action at Heathrow Airport.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government does not comment or speculate on future industrial action.

Employers should always treat employees fairly and in a spirit of partnership. When considering workforce restructures as a result of the on-going impacts of COVID-19 we encourage employers across the sector to continue to approach this issue with a sensitivity and professionalism that reflects the hard work and dedication of their employees, openly engaging with their workforce and unions in a transparent and consultative way.

The Government recognises that, despite the measures we have put in place to protect the economy, there remain serious challenges for the aviation sector and for the communities that serve them. We are focused on restarting the sector, and companies have access to a range of unprecedented government financial support.

## ■ Official Cars

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[112105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to replace the road vehicles used to transport (a) MPs and (b) civil servants on Government business with electric vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government wants to see all cars and vans move to zero emission as soon as possible. We have consulted on ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans by 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible.

We want to lead the way in this transition, which is why the Government has committed that 100% of the central Government car fleet will be ultra low emission vehicles by 2030, with an interim target of 25% by 2022.

The Government Car Service is already electrifying its vehicles, with nearly 50% of their fleet either full battery electric or plug-in hybrid.

**Railway Stations: Disability****Colleen Fletcher:**[\[112069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of railway stations have step-free access.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Around a fifth of our stations have step free access to all platforms; accounting for around 75% of journeys. We are determined to improve this and our Access for All programme is providing accessible routes at over 100 more stations in the next three years. This is in addition to accessibility improvements provided by the industry whenever they install, replace or renew station infrastructure. Information on the facilities available at railway stations is collected and held by the Rail Delivery Group and published on their website.

**Railways: Coronavirus****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[112101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that railway season ticket holders are not financially disadvantaged as a result of the November 2020 covid-19 restrictions.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Season ticket holders who no longer need their tickets as a result of the new restrictions are entitled to request a refund for the time remaining on their ticket, as stated in the National Rail Conditions of Travel.

**Shipping: Energy****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[110071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support the development of the maritime energy efficiency sector.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government is committed to decarbonising the maritime sector both domestically, to meet our Net Zero target, and internationally to meet International Maritime Organisation targets.

In 2019, Government published the Clean Maritime Plan, which noted that by 2025 we expect that 'all vessels operating in UK waters [should be] maximising the use of energy efficiency options', to reduce emissions in the short-term before practical zero emission technologies are made deployable. Following publication of the Clean Maritime Plan, Government provided £1.5m for clean maritime projects including maritime energy efficiency projects, through the MarRI-UK Clean Maritime Call. The Department will soon publish the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which will set out further details of the Government's maritime decarbonisation measures.

Internationally, the UK was crucial to securing both the efficiency target in the IMO's Initial Greenhouse Gas Strategy, and to the IMO's adoption of the Energy Efficiency Design Index. The UK will continue to push for ambition on efficiency and decarbonisation measures at the IMO.

### ■ **Veterans: Railways**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[111604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many veterans have purchased the Veterans' railcard.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As of the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 6,303 Veterans' railcards have been sold in total. Of these, 2,911 were 1-year railcards and 3,392 were 3-year railcards.

## TREASURY

### ■ **Bowling: VAT**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[110080\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether bowling centres, once they are allowed to reopen, will be afforded the same substantive reduction of VAT on ticket sales that was put in place for cinemas, theme parks and other competitor businesses during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism was introduced on 15 July to support the cash flow and viability of businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Hospitality for the purposes of this relief includes the supply of food and non-alcoholic beverages from restaurants, cafes and pubs for consumption on these premises. It also includes the supply of hot food and non-alcoholic hot beverages to takeaway. Where a bowling alley provides such hospitality, it will benefit from the reduced rate, although admission to a bowling alley itself is not eligible.

Admission charges that entitle a person to participate in events where the primary focus is a sporting activity will not generally be eligible for the reduced rate. However,

if businesses are in any doubt about whether they are supplying sporting facilities they should consult the consult VAT Notice 701/45 on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

## ■ Buildings: VAT

**Stephen McPartland:** [112052]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to amend the VAT liability on garages let to non-council tenants in order to remove the discrepancy between council and non-council tenants in respect of garage rental charges.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under the current VAT rules, the supply of a garage or parking is exempt from VAT if supplied at the outset at the same time as the residential accommodation. This VAT treatment is consistent for both council and non-council tenants.

## ■ Child Benefit

**Justin Madders:** [110157]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people subject to the High Income Child Benefit charge have been subject to penalty charges.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government introduced the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) from January 2013 to ensure that support is targeted at those who need it most. It applies to anyone with an individual income over £50,000, who gets Child Benefit or whose partner gets it. The charge increases gradually for taxpayers with incomes between £50,000 and £60,000.

HM Revenue and Customs may charge penalties for each year an individual fails to notify them of their liability to HICBC or send an inaccurate tax return which results in HICBC being unpaid.

Since HICBC was introduced almost 170,000 penalties have been charged for HICBC. A further breakdown of this information is published at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-income-child-benefit-charge-data/high-income-child-benefit-charge](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-income-child-benefit-charge-data/high-income-child-benefit-charge)

## ■ Community Development Finance Institutions

**Jane Stevenson:** [112110]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to allow community development finance institutions to access funding from the Bank of England.

**John Glen:**

The Bank of England provides funding to a range of financial institutions through the Sterling Monetary Framework (SMF) to support its monetary policy and financial stability objectives.

Access to the SMF and its lending facilities is a matter for the Bank of England, which publishes clear eligibility criteria on its website. A broad range of counterparties have

access to SMF lending facilities which provide funding against eligible collateral across various maturities.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Justin Madders:**

[110159]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have been made redundant since August 2020 who had been furloughed via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

An estimate of how many people who had been furloughed via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) who have been made redundant since August 2020 is not available.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) publishes monthly statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-october-2020>

HMRC publishes experimental monthly estimates of payrolled employees and their pay from Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data (jointly with the ONS).

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationuk/previousReleases>

On the 22th October HMRC published secondary analysis which matched CJRS and PAYE Real RTI data. This showed that 90% of employees who left the CJRS furlough scheme between April and July were still on their original payroll in August, suggesting they remained working for their original employer. This analysis does not distinguish between employees who have chosen to leave their jobs and those who have been made redundant. For example, it is likely many leave to take other employment, retirement, or to enter full time education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-secondary-analysis/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-secondary-analysis-of-ended-furloughs>

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[110263]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether workers who were furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme but were made redundant on 31 October 2020 are eligible to apply for assistance under that scheme following its extension.

**Stephen Farry:**

[110281]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to employees that were made redundant before the anticipated end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.



**Jesse Norman:**

On 31 October 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been extended, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500. This will ensure that there is no gap in support. If employees were employed as of 23 September 2020 and were made redundant or stopped working for their employer prior to 30 October 2020, they can qualify for the scheme if their employer re-employs them.

This scheme is just one element of a comprehensive package of support. Where firms make the decision that they cannot retain all of their staff, the Government is ensuring that those looking for work are supported through a package of measures in the Plan for Jobs. This will help people find work by significantly increasing the help offered through Jobcentres and providing individualised advice through the National Careers Service. The Government has also launched the Kickstart Scheme, a £2bn fund to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people. The temporary welfare measures announced in March also remain available and will benefit new and existing claimants.

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Bill Esterson:**[\[112035\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish an economic assessment of the effect of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**John Glen:**

As the Chancellor said in his letter to the Treasury Committee on 4 November, HM Treasury does not prepare formal forecasts for the UK economy, which are the responsibility of the independent OBR. They will publish their next forecast on 25 November.

In addition, within their statutory mandates, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) produce analysis which reflect their independent judgements regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the likely path of the economy. They updated their projections in their Monetary Policy Report published on 5 November. This reflected UK restrictions announced up to 31 October, including "heightened England-wide measures for the period 5 November to 2 December". In this scenario, GDP was revised downwards and is now expected to contract by 2% in Q4 reflecting the impact of stricter measures to control Covid-19.

**■ Employment: Coronavirus****Mick Whitley:**[\[112112\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his oral statement of 5 November 2020, on Economy Update, what steps he is taking to ensure that people not eligible to access the (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (b) Self-Employment

Income Support Scheme will have access to financial support in the period leading up to March 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

Throughout the pandemic, the Government's priority has been to protect lives and livelihoods. Since the start of the pandemic the Government has provided support for people, businesses and public services totalling an estimated £200 billion.

Beyond the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, to support individuals further the Government has implemented a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element until the end of March 2021. This means that for a single Universal Credit claimant (25 or over), the standard allowance will increase from £317.82 to £409.89 per month.

The £20 per week uplift is one part of a package of temporary welfare measures, which also includes the suspension of the Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor in order to support self-employed people on low incomes, and increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, which mean over 1 million households who rent privately will gain an average of £600 per year.

The Government has also given local authorities an additional £500 million to support the most vulnerable people in society, who may struggle to meet their council tax payments this year. The Government has requested that local authorities use the Hardship Fund grant to provide all recipients of working age local council tax support (LCTS) during the financial year 2020-21 with a further reduction in their annual council tax bill of £150. This funding is in addition to the £3.4bn which Local Authorities already spend on LCTS schemes each year, benefiting about 3.8 million people.

The Government is committed to supporting individuals financially through this difficult time and has put in place a comprehensive package of support for those told to self-isolate, extending Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) so that employees can claim it if they are asked to self-isolate, and changing the rules so that SSP is payable from day one rather than day four. In addition, people who are instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and are on low incomes, unable to work from home and will lose income as a result, may be entitled to a payment of £500 from their local authority.

The Government continues to keep policies under review, and it will continue to provide a comprehensive economic support package as public health measures change.

■ **Loans: Coronavirus**

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[112123]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of the regulation of loan companies during the second covid-19 lockdown.

**John Glen:**

The Government has fundamentally reformed regulation of the consumer credit market, giving control of this area to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in 2014.

This more robust regulatory system is helping to deliver the Government's vision for a well-functioning and sustainable consumer credit market which is able to meet consumers' needs.

The Government has given the FCA strong powers to protect consumers. The FCA assesses every lender's fitness to trade as part of the authorisation process, and it has put in place binding standards on these firms. It proactively monitors the market, focusing on the areas most likely to cause consumer harm, and it has various methods to punish breaches of its rules – there is no limit on the fines it can levy and, crucially, it can force lenders to compensate consumers.

The FCA have also asked Christopher Woolard, former Interim Chief Executive of the FCA, to conduct a review into change and innovation in the unsecured credit market. He will report his findings in early 2021. The review will concentrate on how regulation can better support a healthy unsecured lending market. It will take into account the impact of COVID-19 on employment security and credit scores, changes in business models and new developments in unsecured lending, including the growth of unregulated products in retail and the workplace.

We continue to work closely with the FCA to monitor the consumer credit market through the ongoing restrictions to ensure that any emerging risks are identified, and we will take action where necessary.

**Loans: Fraud****Nadia Whittome:**[\[112134\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle (a) payday loan scams and (b) other fraud by fake loan companies.

**John Glen:**

The Government takes fraud very seriously. We continue to work closely with industry to close down the vulnerabilities that fraudsters exploit and ensure members of the public have the information they need to spot a scam and stand up to fraudsters. These actions include the Joint Fraud Taskforce which is helping to build a collaborative law enforcement, government and industry response to tackling fraud.

Illegal lenders, or 'loan sharks', can also prey on victims in various forms including by posing as fake loan companies. To tackle this crime, the Government funds the Illegal Money Lending Teams (IMLTs), via a levy on the financial services industry. The IMLTs have powers to deal with wider criminality associated with loan sharks, such as fraud, and can seize the assets of convicted loan sharks to fund support for victims and raise awareness of the dangers of illegal lending in affected communities.

The Government and IMLTs are alert to the particular challenges faced by vulnerable consumers as a result of COVID-19 and continue to work together to ensure that this dangerous and illegal activity is stopped.

#### ■ **Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus**

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[112076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend business rates relief for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in England for the 2021-22 financial year.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has taken the unprecedented step of providing almost £10 billion in business rates relief this year. All business rates reliefs in England will be considered through the business rates review. Business rates are devolved in Scotland and are a matter for the Scottish Government.

#### ■ **Self-employed: Coronavirus**

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[110046\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will increase the level of financial support available to self-employed people to 70 per cent of their annual profits.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the impact that the changing path of the virus has had on self-employed individuals and has taken action to increase the level of assistance available through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension.

The overall level of the third SEISS grant has been increased to 80 per cent of average trading profits, meaning that the maximum grant available has now increased to £7,500. This provides equivalent support to the self-employed as is provided to employees through the Government contribution in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The Government will also be paying out this grant more quickly by bringing forward the SEISS 3 claims window from 14 December to 30 November.

This will provide an estimated £7.3bn of support to the self-employed through November to January alone, with a further grant to follow covering February to April. This places the SEISS among the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of financial support for the self-employed. The Government has temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor for the duration of the pandemic meaning that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly fallen, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, the self-employed may also have

access to other elements of the package, including tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[110047\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the monthly cost of providing self-employed people seeking financial support with 70 per cent of their annual profits.

**Jesse Norman:**

The second SEISS grant was given at 70 per cent of three months of profits. Claims for this up to 30 September 2020 amounted to £5.7 billion in total, which is £1.9 billion per month.

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[110280\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing support for self-employed people comparable to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme during the November covid-19 lockdown.

**Jesse Norman:**

In reaction to the resurgence of COVID-19 and following the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the Government has increased the level of support available to the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

The overall level of the third SEISS grant has been increased to 80 per cent of average trading profits, meaning that the maximum grant available has now increased to £7,500. This provides equivalent support to the self-employed as is being provided to employees through the Government contribution in the CJRS.

The Government will also be paying out the grant more quickly by bringing forward the SEISS 3 claims window from 14 December to 30 November.

This will provide an estimated £7.3bn of support to the self-employed through November to January alone, with a further grant to follow covering February to April. This places the SEISS among the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

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.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

**Liam Byrne:**

[\[110062\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications to the Self Employment Income Support Scheme from self-employed workers have been refused.

**Jesse Norman:**

The SEISS continues to be one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world.

HMRC do not refuse applications for the scheme. People are either eligible to apply for SEISS and, based on the information held by HMRC given access to the service, or they are ineligible and not given access. Eligibility is based strictly on the criteria set by the Chancellor.

In addition, HMRC actively monitor claims for evidence of risk/fraudulent behaviour. Where HMRC sees this type of compliance risk, HMRC rejects the claim.

The Winter Economy Plan set out a package of targeted measures in response to the current economic context, which will enable businesses to protect jobs, and manage their finances in the face of reduced or uncertain demand. This includes the extension of the temporary VAT reduced rate for hospitality and tourism, extending the application window of the access to finance schemes, and further support for employees and the self-employed, through a Job Support Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Grant Extension.

The SEISS is one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants. On 8 July, the Government also introduced the new Plan for Jobs which will make available up to £30 billion to assist in creating, supporting and protecting jobs.

More information about the full range of business support measures is available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19).

**Helen Hayes:****[110193]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the £50,000 cap on earnings under the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme on the financial resilience of those affected by the cap during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has provided, and will continue to provide, generous support to the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). The first SEISS grant supported 2.6 million individuals with claims totalling £7.8 billion. A further £5.9 billion has so far been provided by the second SEISS grant.

The design of the SEISS, including the £50,000 threshold for average trading profits, means it is targeted at those who need it the most, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

The self-employed are very diverse and have a wide mix of turnover and profits, with monthly and annual variations even in normal times, and in some cases with substantial alternative forms of income too: for example, those who had more than £50,000 from trading profits in 2018-19 had an average total income of more than

£200,000. Around 95 per cent of those with more than half their income from self-employment in 2018-19 could be eligible for this scheme.

Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support available. The Government has temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor for the duration of the crisis meaning that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly reduced, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this they may also be able to access other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

### ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Directors

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[112007\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the reason is for not including UK tax paying limited company directors in the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension.

**Jesse Norman:**

The practical issues that prevented the Government from being able to include company owner-managers in the original Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), namely not being able to verify the source of their dividend income without introducing unacceptable fraud risks, still remain.

Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages. As with the previous SEISS grants, 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 the SEISS grants that 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.

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

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[112039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the stamp duty holiday for six to 12 months.



**Jesse Norman:**

The temporary increase in the Stamp Duty Land Tax nil rate band was designed to create immediate momentum within the property market, where property transactions fell by as much as 50 per cent during the COVID-19 lockdown. The downturn in the market meant that the future was uncertain for many people whose jobs relied on custom from the property industry. There are already early signs that demand and transactions have increased, and are continuing to rise, since the increase to the SDLT nil rate band was announced in July.

As the relief was designed to provide an immediate stimulus to the property market, the Government does not plan to extend this relief and will continue to monitor the property market.

**Stamp Duty Land Tax: Coronavirus****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[112042\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of moving the trigger point for the Stamp Duty holiday from the date of completion to the date of sale.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Stamp Duty Land Tax temporary rates apply to transactions completed or substantially performed between 8 July 2020 and 31 March 2021. A transaction is substantially performed where the buyer has paid 90% of the purchase price, or where they have possession of the whole or substantially the whole of the property.

Completion and substantial performance are recognised legal concepts and using them as trigger points for Stamp Duty Land Tax provides certainty to consumers and to HMRC. There is no standard definition of a point of sale in a housing transaction and so moving the trigger point for a transaction to the date of sale would lead to uncertainty and confusion among home buyers. This lack of certainty would also mean that such a trigger point would be open to abuse.

As with all tax policy, the Government continues to monitor the impact of the SDLT temporary rates.

**Treasury: Artificial Intelligence****Chris Stephens:**[\[112085\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) artificial intelligence and (b) machine learning projects are being (i) undertaken and (ii) considered for his Department.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

No Artificial Learning (AI) or Machine Learning (ML) projects are currently being undertaken or considered for the department.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Justin Madders:**

[\[112074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to implement changes in response to the court ruling (Case No: C1/2019/0593 22 June 2020) in respect of two wages being received in one assessment period for universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

On 20<sup>th</sup> October I laid secondary legislation in response to the Court of Appeal Judgment made on 22 June in the case of Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart, which concerned claimants who receive two calendar monthly payments of earnings in one Universal Credit assessment period. This will allow us to reallocate a payment of earnings reported via the Real Time Information service to a different Universal Credit assessment period, either because it was reported in the wrong assessment period or (in the case of calendar monthly paid employees) it is necessary to maintain a regular payment cycle. This legislation will come into force on 16 November and will mean that in future, claimants who are paid calendar monthly will have one salary payment taken into account in each assessment period. It also means that certain claimants will also benefit from any applicable work allowance.

### ■ Children: Maintenance

**Simon Jupp:**

[\[109754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Maintenance Service cases have been (a) received and (b) overturned by the HM Courts and Tribunal Service, in each of the last five years.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Child Maintenance Service is unable to provide figures relating to how many cases HMCTS have received. However, Table 15 of experimental data refers to cases which have been actioned by HMCTS for each quarter and were upheld. Upheld is defined as where Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service overturns the decision made by the Child Maintenance Service and supports the parent's appeal. This includes appeals where the appellant provides additional evidence to the court not previously made available to the Child Maintenance Service.

Quarter Ending	Upheld
Jun-15	15
Sep-15	30

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Dec-15	40
Total	<b>85</b>
Mar-16	30
Jun-16	35
Sep-16	45
Dec-16	60
Total	<b>170</b>
Mar-17	80
Jun-17	70
Sep-17	90
Dec-17	105
Total	<b>245</b>
Mar-18	140
Jun-18	165
Sep-18	160
Dec-18	180
Total	<b>645</b>
Mar-19	145
Jun-19	235
Sep-19	225
Dec-19	225
Total	<b>930</b>
Mar-20	225
	<b>2075</b>

**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Artificial Intelligence****Chris Stephens:****[112080]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) artificial intelligence and (b) machine learning projects are being (i) undertaken and (ii) considered for her Department.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department will make use of Artificial Intelligence or Machine Learning technologies where it is appropriate across many areas of work.

- Identity, Trust & Verification - Robust identity verification and authentication provides us with the confidence that people interacting with us are who they say they are. This is essential to our ambitions in enabling self-service and to safeguarding the public purse and to reduce verification demands where it is unnecessary.
- Process Automation – We incrementally utilise robotic automations on some existing processes to remove the need for routine administrative work and to speed up the processing of claims and changes to be timely, with less backlogs.
- Signposting & Support Offers for Citizen Outcomes– We are exploring how to provide a more relevant non-financial support offer for customers, more tailored signposting to provision, more preventative interventions for the individual and more effective place and sector-based interventions.
- Countering Fraud, Error and Debt – We are developing our counter fraud and error risk services to help prevent and reduce fraud and error losses. Our aim is to increasingly prevent fraud and error at the point of contact with customers and to reduce costs of interventions.
- Cyber Security – This means continuously evolving our cyber security and resilience to detect rapidly moving security threats as we increase our on-line presence.

In all cases our own data experts assure these results, learn at scale and iteratively improve.

**■ Employment and Support Allowance: Coronavirus****Debbie Abrahams:****[112059]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have (a) failed to attend or (b) failed to participate in a telephone assessment for employment and support allowance since March 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We have interpreted your question (a) as being failed to attend and the case returned to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). From the introduction of telephony Work Capability Assessments to 6 November 2020, 18 Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) cases have been returned to the DWP due to failure of the customer to attend their telephone assessment.

We are unable to provide a figure for how many people have failed to participate in a telephone assessment because the information requested is not available.

## ■ Food Poverty: Children

**Philip Davies:** [\[110095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of the number of parents who cannot afford to feed their children.

**Philip Davies:** [\[110096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the proportion of parents of children entitled to free school meals who cannot afford to feed their children during the school holidays.

**Philip Davies:** [\[110097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the factors resulting in parents being unable to afford to feed their children.

**Will Quince:**

Building on the significant support given to the most vulnerable during the pandemic, a new £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme has been created to support children, families and the most at risk over winter. The funding will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to help with food and bills, and will cover the period to the end of March 2021.

The Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, will also be expanded across England next year. It will cover Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021, and cost up to £220m. It will be available to children in every local authority in England, building on previous programmes – including this summers, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

In May, the Government provided £16m to charities to provide food for those struggling due to the immediate impacts of the pandemic. Earlier this month, a further £16m was announced to fund local charities through well-established networks and provide immediate support to front-line food aid charities who have a vital role to play in supporting people of all ages.

## ■ Funeral Payments

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[109497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims for funeral expenses payments were received in (a) 2019-20 and (b) the first six months of 2020-21.

**Guy Opperman:**

The number of Funeral Expenses Payment applications received, in Great Britain, is reported annually in Appendix 1 of the Social Fund Annual Report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-fund-annual-report-2017-to-2018>

The information requested for 2019/20 will be published in due course, and so cannot be released ahead of publication.

In the period April 2020 - September 2020, there were approximately 23,900 applications received for Funeral Expenses Payments in Great Britain.

This figure is drawn from the Social Fund Policy, Budget, and Management Information System. It is not quality assured to the same extent as Official / National statistics.

#### Notes

The figure is rounded to the nearest 100.

- The figure relates to applications received by DWP, not applications processed. Some applications may have been withdrawn before a decision was made.
- The number of applications made is not equal to the number of people who made applications, as individuals may make multiple applications in a given time period.
- Differences between any comparisons made of applications received, initial decisions, awards and initial refusals are due to applications being withdrawn; applicants rejecting or not responding to loan offers; and decisions outstanding at the time of the count.

**Carolyn Harris:**

**[109498]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many funeral expenses payment claims were accepted at initial decision in (a) 2019-20 and (b) the first six months of 2020-21.

**Guy Opperman:**

We do not publish the number of claims awarded, at initial decision, as requested. The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

However, a variant on the data requested is in the public domain. Applications that were initially unsuccessful may have resulted in an award after review, reconsideration or appeal. These cases are included in the final awards in the Social Fund Annual Report.

The number of Funeral Expenses Payment awards, in Great Britain, is reported annually in Appendix 1 of the Social Fund Annual Report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-fund-annual-report-2017-to-2018>

The number of awards for 2019/20 will be published in due course, and so cannot be released ahead of publication.

**Carolyn Harris:**

**[109499]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many funeral expenses payments claims were rejected at initial decision in (a) 2019-20 and (b) the first six months of 2020-21.

**Guy Opperman:**

The number of Funeral Expenses Payment applications refused at initial decision, in Great Britain, is reported annually in Appendix 1 of the Social Fund Annual Report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-fund-annual-report-2017-to-2018>

The information requested for 2019/20 will be published in due course, and so cannot be released ahead of publication.

In the period April 2020 - September 2020, there were approximately 8,500 applications refused, at initial decision, for Funeral Expenses Payments in Great Britain.

This figure is drawn from the Social Fund Policy, Budget, and Management Information System. It is not quality assured to the same extent as Official / National statistics.

Notes

The figure is rounded to the nearest 100.

- Due to the timing of application processing, figures on initial refusals may relate to applications received in the previous year.
- The number of initially unsuccessful applications is not equal to the number of people who unsuccessfully apply for a Funeral Expenses Payment, as individuals may make multiple applications in a given time period.
- The number of initial refusals gives the number of initially unsuccessful applications and not those that are unsuccessful after appeal. An application will only be unsuccessful if it does not meet the qualifying criteria. These include, amongst other criteria, being in receipt of relevant benefits and meeting rules regarding relationship with the deceased. The full qualifying criteria are outlined in section 7 of "The Social Fund: Technical Guidance" publication. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-social-fund-technical-guidance/the-social-fund-technical-guidance> )
- Differences between any comparisons made of applications received, initial decisions, awards and initial refusals are due to applications being withdrawn; applicants rejecting or not responding to loan offers; and decisions outstanding at the time of the count.



**■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus****Debbie Abrahams:**[\[112057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there is an easement in place for people who fail to (a) attend and (b) participate in a telephone assessment for (i) employment and support allowance and (ii) universal credit.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Our priorities are people's safety and ensuring that they receive the support they are entitled to. We will contact anyone who has not engaged in a telephone Work Capability Assessment arranged since 2 November 2020 to establish if they have a good reason for not attending or participating. Claimants will be given the opportunity to explain why they did not, or could not attend or participate in the telephone assessment and where good cause is provided and accepted, support will continue

**Debbie Abrahams:**[\[112058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what changes her Department have made to its policies on easements related to telephone assessments since such assessments were introduced in March 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Our priorities are people's safety and ensuring that they receive the support they are entitled to. We will be contacting anyone who did not engage in a telephone appointment for a Work Capability Assessment arranged since 2 November 2020, to establish if they have a good reason for not attending or participating. Claimants will be given the opportunity to explain why they did not, or could not attend or participate in the telephone assessment and where good cause is provided and accepted, they will be given a further opportunity to take part in an assessment.

**■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus****Debbie Abrahams:**[\[112060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have (a) failed to attend or (b) failed to participate in a telephone assessment for the limited capability for work components within universal credit since March 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We have interpreted your question (a) as being failed to attend and the case returned to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). From the introduction of telephony Work Capability Assessments to 6 November 2020, 38 Universal Credit (UC) cases have been returned to the DWP due to failure of the customer to attend their telephone assessment.

We are unable to provide a figure for how many people have failed to participate in a telephone assessment because the information requested is not available.

## ■ Universal Credit: Students

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[110288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the money students receive through maintenance loans from Student Finance is being deducted from universal credit payments.

**Will Quince:**

Students cannot normally satisfy the entitlement conditions for Universal Credit (UC). Exceptions are made where students have additional needs that are not met through the student support system. Primary financial support for students comes from this student support system which is designed for their needs, unlike the social security system. It is important that UC does not duplicate this support and UC broadly mirrors the treatment of most of the legacy benefits it replaces. This safeguards fairness whilst also ensuring simplification of the benefit system. Eligible claimants receiving legacy benefits whose circumstances remain the same will be considered for transitional protection to protect entitlement at the point of transition to UC.

Where UC is paid to a student, any student loan or grant paid to meet living costs is subject to a £110 disregard in each Assessment Period where student income is taken into account, equivalent to that provided under Legacy Benefits. Any reduction is only for living costs as loans or grants for other things, such as tuition fees or books, are fully disregarded. Any Special Support loan/grant is also fully disregarded as this specifically covers the costs of the course.

Whilst it is acknowledged that maintenance loans are to be paid back, if they were not treated as income and were disregarded this would result in UC (and most legacy benefits) duplicating support already provided through the student finance system.

## ■ Welfare Tax Credits: Overpayments

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[111573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on tax credit claimants of the closure of the interface with HMRC on tax credit debt.

**Will Quince:**

As part of our initial response to the Covid-19 pandemic we suspended recovery of all overpayment deductions as well as pausing notification of any new overpayments. The transfer of Tax Credit debts from HMRC to DWP was temporarily suspended as part of this approach.

Recovery of existing Tax Credit overpayments from Universal Credit has now resumed, along with the transfer of new Tax Credit debt to DWP.

There have been several discussions with HMRC, who own the Tax Credit Debt, to ensure that both the action of stopping tax credit collection and restarting has taken into account the customer perspective.

We want to ensure that repayment of all debt owed to the Department is sustainable and takes into account the customer's ability to pay. Claimants are encouraged to contact DWP if they are unable to afford the rate of recovery. The recovery rate of Tax Credit overpayments can be reduced where a claimant is experiencing financial hardship.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Flood Control: Finance

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[110888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much and what proportion of flood defence funding has been allocated to (a) Yorkshire and Humber, (b) the South East, (c) London, (d) the North West, (e) the East of England, (f) the West Midlands, (g) the South West, (h) the East Midlands, (i) the North East and (j) England in each year since 2009.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Rebecca Pow:**

Capital flood defence grant-in-aid per Office of National Statistics region is shown in the table in the attached document. Actual expenditure for 2019/20 and 2020/21 **are is** not yet available and are allocations only, based on the Environment Agency's latest consented Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management investment programme.

**Attachments:**

1. **PQ 11088 - Data table.docx**

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Abortion: Disability

**Mary Glendon:**

[\[103511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data the Department holds on selective abortions on grounds of disability in England and Wales from January to June 2020.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Helen Whately:**

Under the Abortion Act 1967, a pregnancy may be lawfully terminated by a registered medical practitioner in approved premises, if two medical practitioners are of the opinion, formed in good faith, that the abortion is justified under one or more of grounds A to G. Ground E refers to cases where "there is substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped". There can be multiple reasons for an abortion for a fetal abnormality, therefore there can be more than one medical condition mentioned on a HSA4 form.

Selective abortions are abortions where the number of fetuses in the womb is reduced.

There were 55 mentions of medical conditions for selective abortions performed under ground E between January to June 2020, a breakdown of which is available in the attached table .

**Attachments:**

1. **PQ103511 Table of Data 2020-10 .xlsx**

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Police: West Yorkshire

**Tracy Brabin:**

**[109541]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers there were in West Yorkshire in (a) 2010 and (b) as at 30 October 2020.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kit Malthouse:**

We are committed to increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 over the next three years, and West Yorkshire Police has already recruited 308 additional officers as part of the Police Uplift Programme. I am extremely grateful to those brave men and women who have signed up to join the police and keep our communities safe.

In March 2010, West Yorkshire Police had 5,856 police officers (headcount). The most recent figures (up to September 2020) shows the force had 5,494 officers.

The latest "Police officer uplift" statistics published on 29 October can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-officer-uplift-quarterly-update-to-september-2020>

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## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Update on transparency of intergovernmental relations

**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove):** [\[HCWS564\]](#)

Today, the Government is announcing new measures to improve the transparency and accountability of relations between the UK Government and the devolved administrations.

We are taking these steps because the Government recognises that effective transparency, accountability and parliamentary scrutiny of the Government's participation in intergovernmental structures will support relationships between the Government and devolved administrations so that we work together effectively on behalf of citizens across the UK.

A new [dedicated GOV.UK page for intergovernmental relations](#) (IGR) has been created. On this website, all documents relating to IGR, including the Memorandum of Understanding on Devolution, relevant documents and reports related to intergovernmental fora will be published at timely intervals. This includes uploading communique after each formal intergovernmental meeting containing information on the date, location, chair, participants and discussion points of meetings. This collection will grow and evolve as we revise and strengthen our intergovernmental structures and conclude the review of intergovernmental relations. However, we are launching the website today as we recognise the benefits of implementing new behaviours and good practice immediately to support parliamentary and public scrutiny of UK Government's participation in existing intergovernmental fora.

Our long-term strategy for strengthening transparency of IGR will involve publishing a quarterly report on this GOV.UK page. This report will include a list of all engagements for each forum, any resolved disputes and their outcomes and associated third-party reports when relevant. The first report will be published in 2021.

On an annual basis, a report will be laid in both Houses of Parliament by Command Paper. This will collate the key information from the quarterly reports, as well as include any written or service-level agreements reached between administrations over the reporting period, background information, and a list of ministerial appearances before parliamentary committees. The Government also commits to making regular statements to Parliament on IGR, including appearances before relevant committees when requested.

The measures will not apply universally including where issues are commercially or market sensitive or matters of national security. They will not apply to the myriad of regular official meetings or to informal bilateral discussions.

These measures apply to the participation of Ministers of the Crown in formal, intergovernmental structures and are intended to support Parliament's capacity to

scrutinise intergovernmental relations. The measures do not place any obligations on other administrations to report to their legislatures, although they mirror the approaches taken by the Welsh and Scottish Governments.

In tandem, the joint review of intergovernmental relations continues to progress with the devolved administrations and the UK Government remains committed to finalising a product at pace. These measures will complement any future structures at the outcome of the review.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Public service broadcasting, and the Licence Fee Settlement

**Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Oliver Dowden):**

[\[HCWS566\]](#)

There is an increasing consensus that the UK's system of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) needs to evolve if it is to transition successfully to the internet era. That is why today the government is announcing a new Advisory Panel to provide independent expertise and advice on this important issue. The panel will bring together representatives from the worlds of broadcasting, production, journalism and technology; and, it will support the government in responding to Ofcom's forthcoming report into the future of public service broadcasting. The full terms of reference and membership of the panel are available from GOV.UK.

One vital issue that will proceed separately is the negotiation with the BBC and S4C, the Welsh-language broadcaster, regarding the next television licence fee settlement. We are now formally beginning this process to agree the level of the licence fee from 2022. To aid in our assessment of the appropriate level and to ensure we come to a settlement which offers the best value for money for licence fee payers, I have formally requested the BBC and S4C to provide the government with specific financial information, as required under the BBC's Royal Charter.

It is also the first settlement where S4C will receive full funding from the licence fee. S4C will be following the same process as the BBC.

As I have set out previously, the BBC is a world-class broadcaster, trusted and recognised across the globe. However, to ensure its long term sustainability in a rapidly changing digital world it must also continue to reform. The government's priority is a BBC that affordably delivers its Mission and Public Purposes; that truly reflects the whole nation in its activities and content; and that guards its impartiality in all of its output.

To reflect the government's priorities, I am asking the BBC to set out its financial information as far as possible in line with its Public Purposes. I have asked the BBC to consider in particular how they can maximise their commercial revenues and continue to make savings. I have also asked the BBC to include in their submission an assessment of the impact of the licence fee for those on the lowest income, including details of any further plans to support those in vulnerable groups, including the elderly.



In the interest of transparency, alongside this statement we are publishing on GOV.UK the formal commissioning letters to the BBC and S4C. We will also publish future correspondence where appropriate. I will ensure that Parliament is informed of the outcome of the discussions with the BBC and S4C, and expect to lay my determination before the House to allow time for parliamentary debate before the settlement takes effect in 2022.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ **The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's report on the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales**

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):** [\[HCWS565\]](#)

Today the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has published its latest report, which can be found at [www.iicsa.org.uk](http://www.iicsa.org.uk).

This report relates to its investigation into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. I pay tribute to the strength and courage of the victims and survivors who have shared their experiences to ensure the Inquiry can deliver its vital work.

Government will review this report and consider how to respond to its content in due course.

I would like to thank Professor Jay and her Panel for their continued work to uncover the truth, identify what went wrong in the past and to learn the lessons for the future.

## TREASURY

### ■ **Ministerial equivalence and exemption directions in financial services for the European Economic Area**

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):** [\[HCWS567\]](#)

*The Equivalence Determinations for Financial Services and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* (S.I. 2019/541) provides powers for the Treasury to make equivalence directions and exemption directions for the European Economic Area ('EEA') States, including the Member States of the European Union ('EU'), before the end of the transition period.

I have today laid before Parliament eight directions which exercise the powers across an extensive range of areas. The directions cover sixteen equivalence decisions in total, which serve to maintain the stability and openness of the UK financial services sector beyond the end of the transition period.

For the decisions below, it is both the legally binding requirements, and the effectiveness of the regulation and supervision of adherence to these requirements in the EEA States, which have been deemed equivalent on an outcomes basis.

*The European Market Infrastructure Regulation (Article 13) Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that, for the purposes of paragraphs 1 and 2(a) and (d), of Article 3 of the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (Intragroup transactions), the legal, supervisory and enforcement arrangements of EEA States are equivalent to Articles 4 and 11 of the European Market Infrastructure Regulation, as it will form part of UK law at the end of the transition period ('EMIR'). This decision paves the way for UK firms to seek or apply an exemption from the requirement to clear through a CCP or meet margin requirements for transactions with an EEA entity in the same group. The granting of this decision means these exposures can qualify as intragroup exposures in the credit valuation adjustment ('CVA') calculation, ensuring that UK firms will in many cases not have to capitalise CVA on over the counter ('OTC') exposures to EEA affiliates.

*The Capital Requirements Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that each EEA State (i) applies prudential, supervisory and regulatory requirements equivalent to those applied in the UK, for the purposes of Article 107(3) and 391 of the Capital Requirements Regulation as it will form part of UK law at the end of the transition period ('CRR'); and (ii) applies supervisory and regulatory arrangements equivalent to those applied in the UK, for the purposes of Articles 114(7), 115(4), 116(5), 132(3) and 142(2) of CRR. For UK firms, equivalence here ensures they will not be subject to increased capital requirements as a result of their EEA exposures.

*The Solvency 2 Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that for the purposes of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35 (supplementing the Solvency II Directive on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance): (i) the solvency regime of each EEA State that applies to certain reinsurance activities is equivalent to that laid down in the relevant UK law; (ii) the solo prudential regime of each EEA State is equivalent to that laid down in the relevant UK law; and (iii) the groups prudential regime of each EEA State is equivalent to that laid down in the relevant UK law. In doing so, *The Solvency 2 Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* cover all three Solvency II equivalence decisions, i.e. Articles 378, 379 and 380 of the Solvency II Regulation. Solvency II is an EU regime which will form part of retained EU law in the UK from 11pm on 31 December 2020 (in accordance with the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018) so that it continues to apply in the UK.

*The European Market Infrastructure Regulation (Article 2A) Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that, for the purposes of Article 2A of the EMIR, markets in each EEA State comply with legally binding requirements which are equivalent to the requirements laid down in UK law, and are subject to effective supervision and enforcement in each such EEA State. This will enable UK firms to continue to treat derivatives traded on EEA regulated markets as exchange-traded derivatives rather than OTC derivatives. Facilitating this continuity for firms minimises the disruption they will experience following the end of the transition period.

*The Central Securities Depositories Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that central securities depositories ('CSDs') in each EEA State comply with legal requirements which are equivalent to the Central Securities Depositories Regulation as it will form part of UK law at the end of the transition period ('CSDR') and are appropriately

supervised in the relevant EEA State. With equivalence granted, the Bank of England can then assess CSDs in the EEA for recognition (subject to establishing co-operation arrangements with the relevant EEA authorities), allowing those CSDs, once recognised, to continue to service UK securities and to exit the transitional regime contained in onshored Article 69 CSDR and Part 5 of *The Central Securities Depositories (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018*.

*The Benchmarks Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that benchmark administrators in each EEA State comply with legal requirements which are equivalent to the Benchmarks Regulation as it will apply in UK law at the end of the transition period ('BMR'), and are appropriately supervised in the relevant EEA State. This equivalence decision acts as a mechanism to enable such administrators to be added to the FCA's benchmarks register, and to enable them to provide benchmarks to supervised entities in the UK.

*The Credit Rating Agencies Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that, for the purposes of Article 5 of the Credit Rating Agencies Regulation as it will form part of UK law at the end of the transition period ('CRAR'), the legal and supervisory framework of each EEA State ensures that credit rating agencies ('CRAs') authorised or registered in each EEA State (i) comply with legally binding requirements which are equivalent to the requirements resulting from CRAR; and (ii) are subject to effective supervision and enforcement in each such EEA State. This means non-systemic credit rating agencies authorised or registered in the EEA can apply to be certified in the UK.

*The Short Selling Regulation Equivalence Directions 2020* determine that EU markets are subject to the appropriate law and supervision for the purposes of Article 17 the Short Selling Regulation as it will form part of UK law at the end of the transition period ('SSR'). This means that EEA market makers will be eligible to make use of the exemption in Article 17 of SSR (which disapplies certain short selling restrictions and reporting requirements) subject to complying with certain regulatory requirements.

Alongside the above Directions, today I am also laying before Parliament *The Central Counterparties (Equivalence) Regulations 2020* pursuant to regulation 14(1) of *The Central Counterparties (Amendment, etc., and Transitional Provision) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018* (S.I. 2018/1184). The former statutory instrument specifies that the regulatory framework for central counterparties in EEA States is equivalent to the UK's framework. After the end of the transition period, these regulations will have effect as if made under Article 25(6) of EMIR. Therefore, subject to entry into an appropriate cooperation arrangement between the Bank of England and the relevant national competent authority in that EEA State, and a CCP-specific recognition determination by the Bank of England, after the end of the transition period UK firms will be able to continue using EEA CCPs and to exit the transitional regime contained in Part 6 of *The Central Counterparties (Amendment, etc., and Transitional Provision) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018* (S.I. 2018/1184).

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will be laying *The Statutory Auditors and Third Country Auditors (Amendment) (EU Exit) (No. 2) Regulations 2020* to

grant audit equivalence to the EEA States and approve as adequate their audit competent authorities.

To provide clarity and stability to industry, we are announcing as many decisions as we can in favour of openness, and where it makes sense to do so. The granting of these equivalence decisions provides a broad range of benefits in terms of having open markets that are well regulated, facilitating firms' ability to pool and manage risks effectively, and supporting UK and EU clients' access to financial services and market liquidity.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ DWP Update

**Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work. (Justin Tomlinson):**  
[\[HCWS563\]](#)

Yesterday marked twenty-five years since the introduction of the landmark Disability Discrimination Act. The Disability Discrimination Act (and the subsequent Equality Act) has stood the test of time and provides a strong and straightforward legal framework that protects disabled people from unfair treatment. This vital protection supports disabled people in all aspects of their daily lives, whether they're at school, work or accessing services and has had a life-changing impact for many. This has focused minds and crucially has helped us support record numbers of disabled people into work, with growing confidence in businesses of all sizes to make what are often just small changes to unlock the potential of a diverse workforce.

I am therefore updating the House on how this Government is continuing to make progress in supporting and engaging disabled people. Through my role as the Minister for Disabled People, Health & Work – the Prime Minister has asked me to lead on the National Strategy for Disabled People. I am making sure disability policy is prioritised in all departments. This is vital work.

The National Strategy for Disabled People takes a cross government approach, focusing on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life, including housing, education and transport. This will be the most ambitious piece of disability policy in a generation. All departments are supporting cross-Government work to remove barriers and make this country more inclusive for disabled people, with a nominated Ministerial lead to identify policies and priorities. I chaired the first inter-ministerial taskforce of these Ministers recently and I am encouraged by the shared commitment for joint working with each Minister wanting to play their part.

As a Government, we continually strive to make improvements to the service we provide. For example we have extended Video Replay Service (VRS) for British Sign Language across 61 benefit-related helplines and have supported 8,029 VRS calls over a six-month period. But we recognise there is much more we can do improve. The DWP Health and Disability Green Paper will explore how the welfare system can better meet the needs of disabled people and those with health conditions.

Both the National Strategy and the Green Paper will be extensively consulted on in the coming months and shaped by disabled people, disability forums and disability stakeholders, ensuring that real lived experience at the very heart of our plans. We are engaging with disabled people's organisations including through the Regional Stakeholder Network and the recently established Disabled People's Organisations Forum. To inform the content of the Green Paper, we have hosted a series of workshops across the country where local disability organisations and disabled people have shared their experiences of DWP services and priorities for future changes. Despite Covid preventing us from doing physical face-to-face consultations, which has also caused us to decide to now publish in 2021, we have continued engagement with a series of virtual events with charities and disabled people. To date, the Department and I have heard from disabled people and those with health conditions, and their representatives at 17 events.

I am hugely excited by this work which represents a real opportunity to deliver a more inclusive society. Both the Health and Disability Green Paper and the National Strategy will deliver ambitious policy reforms to improve the lives of disabled people.