



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 November 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:15 P.M., 11 November 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

Questions marked thus **[R]** indicate that a relevant interest has been declared.
 Questions with identification numbers of **900000 or greater** indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Sentencing

Sir John Hayes:

[\[111426\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the extension to the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

Michael Ellis:

The unduly lenient sentence scheme allows for sentences passed for the most serious criminal offences to be reviewed by the Court of Appeal, if referred by the Law Officers. The extension of the scheme added further serious offences to the list of those which can be referred.

In the course of this year, under the extended scheme, I have successfully referred sentences for offences of controlling and coercive behaviour, distributing indecent images of children and, most recently, stalking involving serious alarm or distress, one in which the sentence of the offender was more than doubled.

■ Sexual Offences: Prosecutions

Nadia Whittome:

[\[112144\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking improve the CPS handling of sexual assault cases.

Michael Ellis:

We, and the CPS, are working tirelessly with criminal justice partners to improve the handling of these sensitive cases. Over the last four quarters, we have seen the charging rates in rape cases continue to increase. This year, the CPS has also published its own five-year rape strategy, updated rape legal guidance and training, and continued work to drive forward a joint action plan with the police to improve the handling of these sensitive cases.

The AGO and the CPS are closely and actively engaged in the cross-Government end-to-end rape review, which will be published later this year. The CPS will address any issues identified in this review openly and honestly.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Car Washes: Coronavirus

Julian Sturdy:

[\[110803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether unmanned automated car washes are required to close alongside hand car washes under the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Paul Scully:

Under The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 laid by the Department for Health and Social Care, car washes must be closed during England's new national restrictions.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Mr Marcus Fysh:**[\[110861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of whether any of the covid-19 vaccine candidates for which the Government has provided funding are on track to produce a vaccine that provides immunity that prevents the vaccinated from (a) contracting and (b) spreading that virus.

Amanda Solloway:

Progress is being made at an extraordinary pace to secure a safe and effective vaccine. We monitor trial results on a continuous basis and the trials look to establish different things depending on how they are designed and what they specifically look at. The outcomes of the clinical trials will not be fully known until phase 3 trials have concluded.

■ Counterfeit Manufacturing: Electronic Equipment**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[91905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the merits of a public information campaign aimed at raising awareness about the risks posed by counterfeit electrical products.

Amanda Solloway:

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is developing plans to run a pilot public awareness campaign focussing on counterfeit goods in the beauty and hygiene sector in 2021. If successful, the IPO will consider further campaigns for other product sectors such as counterfeit electrical products.

■ Electronic Equipment: Sales**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[91906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the number of people buying unsafe electrical products online of introducing regulations to require online sales platforms to (a) immediately remove goods deemed unsafe, (b) notify the buyer when they become aware that an unsafe item has been purchased and (c) take other steps to accept responsibility for the goods bought and sold on their websites.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to ensuring that only safe products can be sold in the UK. Distributors, including those selling online, have legal responsibilities under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 to ensure that equipment has the required labelling and that they do not make equipment available on the market

where they know or suspect it to be unsafe. Manufacturers and importers must ensure that only safe electrical products are placed on the market, monitor the safety of their products in use and keep distributors informed of the monitoring.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) are conducting a review of the Product Safety framework to ensure it remains one of the best in the world in both protecting consumers and enabling businesses to innovate and grow. The review will consider the impact on product safety of new technologies and new business models, including e-commerce.

■ Erasmus+ Programme and Horizon Europe

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[110848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Government and (b) other devolved Administrations on potential alternatives to the (i) Erasmus Plus and (i) Horizon Europe programmes.

Amanda Solloway:

I have regular conversations with our counterparts in the Scottish Government and other Devolved Administrations across a wide range of R&D issues.

These discussions include the UK's approach to EU research programmes, where the Government is seeking to negotiate with the EU a fair and balanced deal for the UK's participation including in Horizon Europe. Alongside this, BEIS is working with the Devolved Administrations and other stakeholders to develop credible options should alternative schemes be required. We will continue to engage the Devolved Administrations actively in policy development.

On Erasmus+, the Government remains open to considering participation in some elements of the next programme. This will be subject to our ongoing negotiations with the EU. We will, in parallel with the negotiations, continue to develop a domestic alternative to Erasmus+. My Hon. Friend the Minister of State for Universities regularly engages with her counterparts in the Devolved Administrations on matters relating to education and EU exit, including Erasmus+ and the potential domestic alternative. The Devolved Administrations are also part of the governance and development process for the domestic alternative scheme, and we will continue to co-operate closely with them.

■ Fireworks: Noise

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[\[110935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of lowering the legal noise limit for fireworks to below 120 decibels.

Paul Scully:

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) published its Fireworks Evidence Base on 29 October 2020. This included reviewing existing data and

producing a research paper on fireworks noise levels and impacts on health and the environment. This is intended to provide a baseline of current scientific knowledge.

The Fireworks Evidence Base, including noise data, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fireworks-evidence-base>.

■ Future Fund

Darren Jones: [\[109572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of whether the Future Fund is (a) a form of state aid under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and (b) subject to section 34 of the State Aid Temporary Framework, dated 19 March 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Future Fund provides government loans to UK-based companies ranging from £125,000 to £5 million, subject to at least equal match funding from private investors. These convertible loans may be an option for businesses that rely on equity investment and are unable to access other government business support programmes because they are either pre-revenue or pre-profit.

The scheme is not subject to State Aid rules as it is provided under the Market Economy Operator Principle and does not involve providing aid to eligible companies.

■ Government Assistance: Coronavirus

Darren Jones: [\[109570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the (a) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, (b) Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, (c) Bounce Back Loan Scheme and (d) Future Fund were each (i) notified to the European Commission under the State Aid Temporary Framework of 19 March 2020 and (ii) designed under the General Block Exemption Regulation.

Paul Scully:

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme was approved on 25 March 2020 by the European Commission under the EU State aid Temporary Framework. The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme fall under the UK's 'umbrella' Covid-19 Temporary Framework for UK authorities which was approved by the Commission on 6 April 2020 under the EU State aid Temporary Framework.

They are not designed under the General Block Exemption Regulation.

The Future Fund is provided under the Market Economy Operator Principle and does not involve providing state aid to eligible companies.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Thangam Debonnaire:

[\[110855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Green Heat Grant Installers needed to meet the Government's implementation target for the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is working closely with industry to ensure there are enough installers to meet demand. More than 1,100 companies are registered with TrustMark and are able to carry out measures aligned to the Green Homes Grant Scheme, with more registering every day.

BEIS officials are working actively with TrustMark scheme providers and certification bodies to support installers to get certified as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, the Department launched a £6.9m skills competition to provide training opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains to deliver works and scale up to meet additional consumer demand. Funding will be provided to support training individuals with existing skills and those new to the sector in energy efficiency and clean heat measures, along with support for installation companies to gain required PAS 2030 or MCS accreditation.

The competition recently closed and the bids are currently being assessed. Training will commence once successful applicants have been informed.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan:

[\[110900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling hospitality venues to offer takeaway alcohol during the November 2020 national lockdown to ensure their commercial survival.

Paul Scully:

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

Adam Afriyie:

[\[91861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) cafes and (b) restaurants open for takeaways can also sell non-essential items during the second covid-19 lockdown.

Paul Scully:

In England, cafes and restaurants can remain open for takeaway and deliveries. This means that customers can enter the premises to place and collect their order.

COVID-secure businesses can continue to sell goods online or via click-and-collect. If a business is able to trade goods in a COVID-secure manner while following the [new](#)

[national restrictions](#), and all of the other trade requirements behind selling another good, they can. For example, a cafe could sell ceramic mugs to customers.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[112067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the hospitality sector in Coventry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 10 November 2020]: We are providing an unprecedented package of support for hospitality businesses including an extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until 31 March 2021, extension to the Self Employment Income Support Scheme, loans, VAT cuts and additional financial support through local authorities. In order to support SMEs in some of our most affected sectors of hospitality, retail and leisure, 961,959 Local Authority Grants totalling £11.01 billion have been paid out (as of 30 August). Also, no pub, hotel, or high street shop will pay business rates for financial year 2020/21 – totalling almost £10 billion in rates relief. Grants of up to £3,000 are available for all businesses required to close. We have also enabled restaurants and pubs to keep serving their customers through takeaway and alcohol deliveries through click and collect.

■ Renewable Energy: Government Assistance

Alun Cairns:

[\[110812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much Government support has been provided in subsidies to the (a) marine, (b) wind, (c) biomass and (d) solar energy sectors in each of the last 10 years.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Support for the generation of renewable electricity is paid under three schemes: The Renewables Obligation (RO), the Feed-in Tariffs (FIT), and Contracts for Difference (CfD) schemes.

The Renewables Obligation does not pay a direct subsidy but instead support is provided through tradeable certificates.

Support for renewable heat is provided through the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which is funded through general taxation.

The table below gives a breakdown of support for electricity generation and renewable heat from marine, wind, biomass and solar technologies in Great Britain. The CfD, FITs & GB RHI schemes are not available in Northern Ireland.

	YEAR		SCHEME+			SUPPORT FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND RENEWABLE HEAT (IN £M)	
	Offshore wind		Onshore wind	Biomass	Solar Thermal	Solar PV	
2010/11	RO	0.01	258.0		360.1	248.1	- 0.03
	CfD	-	-		-	-	--
	RHI	-	-		-	-	--
2011/12	RO	0.02	371.3		450.9	255.2	- 0.1
	CfD	-	-		-	-	--
	RHI	-	-		-	1	--
2012/13	RO	0.03	696.3		494.7	385.4	- 0.8
	CfD	-	-		-	-	--
	RHI	-	-		-	15	-
2013/14	RO	0.2	1,022.6		731.5	484.3	- 36.3
	CfD	-	-		-	-	--
	RHI	-	-		-	49	-
2014/15	RO	0.2	1,107.7		704.9	737.5	- 134. 9
	CfD	-	-		-	-	--
	RHI	-	-		-	138	1-
2015/16	RO	-	1,496.8		805.5	932.0	- 304. 0
	CfD	-	-		-	-	--
	RHI	-	-		-	239	2-
2016/17	RO	0.1	1,533.7		892.8	953.6	- 416. 4
	CfD	-	-		-	91.8	- 0.4

	YEAR		SCHEME+		SUPPORT FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND RENEWABLE HEAT (IN £M)	
	RHI	-	-	-	289	2-
2017/18	RO	1.8	2,008.6	1,256.2	864.7	- 471.1
	CfD	-	295.8	-	247.3	- 0.8
	RHI	-	-	-	368	3-
2018/19	RO	2.6	2,220.5	1,334.9	1,079.9	- 548.5
	CfD	-	587.6	11.3	380.2	- 0.8
	RHI	-	-	-	394	3-
2019/20	RO*	3.4	2,212.2	1,270.9	981.1	- 459.9
	CfD	-	1,276.1	88.7	442.0	- 1.4
	RHI	-	-	-	428	3-

Notes

*The RO figures are based on Ofgem's certificate report as of 4 August 2020 from their Renewables and CHP Register.

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

* The figures for FITs are not available as they cannot be broken down by technology.

*RHI payments are made to scheme participants using eligible renewable heating technologies. The RHI figures above relate to both the Domestic and Non-Domestic RHI schemes.

■ Shops: Publications

Stephen Morgan:

[\[110901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional support and guidance to independent book shops during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown period.

Paul Scully:

Independent retailers, including book shops, play a valuable role in our communities, acting as hubs for local people and having a positive impact on the communities they serve.

Book shops are able to benefit from additional financial measures announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, including the extension to the Coronavirus Job retention Scheme, extension to the existing Loan Schemes to January 2021 with the ability to top-up Bounce Back Loans, and cash grants of up to £3,000 per month for businesses which are closed.

All shops can continue to offer home delivery and click and collect services to customers during the November lockdown.

The Government have previously published COVID-Secure guidance for retailers and have published guidance on the New National Restrictions. All shops can continue to offer home delivery and click and collect services to customers during the national restrictions in place in November.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Bingo: Coronavirus****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[110086\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing covid-secure bingo halls to open in areas under Tier 3 local covid alert level restrictions once the national covid-19 lockdown ends.

Penny Mordaunt:

For areas which move in future to a Tier 3 Level, we will work with local leaders to agree measures specific to that area's situation.

■ **Equality: Politics and Government****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[102117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of inequality in political participation.

Chloe Smith:

The Government is working to identify and resolve challenges involved in delivering the local and mayoral elections in England and the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales in May 2021. Voters will be able participate in the May 2021 elections safely, and in a way of their choice, whether in-person, by proxy or by post.

■ Licensed Premises: Coronavirus**Daisy Cooper:**[\[110253\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing pubs and licensed premises to deliver alcohol sales to customers during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Penny Mordaunt:

Pubs and bars are permitted to sell alcohol through delivery or via click and collect where remote ordering has been utilised.

■ Young People: Coronavirus**Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[110270\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on setting and monitoring cross-Government objectives on supporting young people during the current economic situation.

Julia Lopez:

It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

Nonetheless, the Government has outlined a range of measures to support young people.

In July, the Chancellor announced a £500m package of support to ensure young people access the training and develop the skills they will need to go on to high-quality, secure and fulfilling employment. T Levels will play a key part in rebuilding the economy after the coronavirus outbreak, boosting access to high-quality technical education for young people

The first three courses launched in 44 colleges and other providers this September.

Further T Levels will be introduced in a phased rollout over the next four years.

Further Government support including the Job Retention Scheme and the Kickstart Scheme will support young people.

DEFENCE**■ Atomic Weapons Establishment****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[112001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reasons he has decided that the Atomic Weapons Establishment will become an arms-length body of his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) routinely evaluates and reviews all major contracts as they near their end dates. As such the MOD conducted a review of the governance model in place for the management of AWE plc in order to ascertain the best means of delivery of core MOD objectives. Following this review the MOD decided to terminate the contract with the consortium AWE ML (the M&O Agreement) under a Termination for Convenience clause

The decision was taken in order to simplify and strengthen the relationship between the MOD and AWE plc, enhancing the MOD's ability to invest in the development of the workforce, technology and infrastructure, and therefore in the future of AWE plc.

■ Barrow Port**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[112002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the maintenance dock at Barrow will be due for completion by May 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

Submarine maintenance is routinely carried out at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde and Devonport Royal Dockyard. There are no plans for a maintenance dock at BAE System's Shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness.

■ Trident Missiles**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[112003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to de-risk the UK's position within the Common Missile Compartment.

Jeremy Quin:

The first components of the Common Missile Compartment from the United States have been received at BAE Systems' shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness. We are working closely with our US counterparts to ensure future deliveries continue in a timely manner to support the Dreadnought Submarine programme.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Broadband: Housing****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[91851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of gigabit fibre broadband connections in new builds in the last twelve months were installed (a) at any cost to the developers and (b) at a cost of more than £1,800 per connection.

Matt Warman:

My department does not currently hold this information for the last 12 months as it is part of commercial arrangements between telecoms operators and housing developers.

The Government is bringing forward a policy that will deliver gigabit broadband to the vast majority of new homes at minimal costs to developers. We will do this by bringing forward amendments to the Building Regulations 2010 to require housing developers to provide gigabit broadband unless the costs to the developer exceeds £2,000.

To support developers, and to ensure as many new homes as possible receive gigabit broadband, the Secretary of State has received commitments from Openreach, Virgin and Gigaclear on the costs of connecting new homes, these include:

- Virgin will contribute at least £500 per premise and up to £1,000 for larger developments;
- Gigaclear will contribute up to £1,000 per premise; and
- Openreach will contribute up to £1,400 per premise.

We have worked with Openreach to extend their free offer of gigabit broadband for new builds and also reduce costs for smaller developments. Openreach reduced their costs of connecting developments consisting of 2 to 4 premises to £2,000, from £3,100, ensuring they all fall within the proposed cost cap.

Based on discussions with industry, we estimate that these commitments ensure that, taken with the amended Building Regulations, gigabit broadband will be deployed to 99% of new build premises.

■ **Broadband: Voucher Schemes**

Jamie Stone:

[110890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether Caithness, Sutherland, and Easter Ross constituency will be included in the UK and Scottish Government Broadband Voucher Scheme.

Matt Warman:

Eligibility for the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (GBVS), including where the Scottish Government provides additional funding, is assessed at an individual premises level. Premises in Caithness, Sutherland, and Easter Ross are eligible for gigabit vouchers. Eligibility can be checked at: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>.

In addition, where premises are not eligible for the GBVS, the Scottish Government's Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme may provide support to help deliver a permanent broadband connection to properties where there is no roll-out of superfast broadband planned. Information on the Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme, including eligibility, can be found at: <https://www.scotlandsuperfast.com/how-can-i-get-it/voucher-scheme/>.

■ Cultural Heritage

Sir John Hayes:

[\[111428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to protect the integrity of (a) contested heritage and (b) other aspects of the historic environment.

Nigel Huddleston:

Government is committed to upholding the integrity of the historic environment, including through the statutory heritage protection and planning systems, and through the stewardship of its historic estate.

It does not propose to remove contested public statues or other similar objects on its property and does not support the removal of those owned by others. It believes that it is always legitimate to examine and debate Britain's history, but removing contested elements of the historic environment is not the right approach.

Government has been clear that rather than erasing these objects, we should seek to contextualise or reinterpret them in a way that enables the public to learn about them in their entirety, however challenging this may be. Our aim should be to use them to educate people about all aspects of Britain's complex past, both good and bad.

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Mark Menzies:

[\[109301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department took to ensure that the distribution of the £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund was as wide and as fair as possible.

Caroline Dinenge:

Each Arms Length Body, Arts Council England, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and the British Film Institute, is responsible for delivering the Fund. They were chosen due to their long established grant delivery role, their expertise and understanding of the sectors in which they operate.

They are overseen by the independent Culture Recovery Board, chaired by Sir Damon Buffini. The board has an advisory role in the delivery of the larger grants, makes final decisions on the repayable finance applications, and provides assurance that the criteria is being used consistently across each part of the Fund.

As well as financial and cultural significance criteria, applications are also considered against balancing criteria, including ensuring a geographical spread of successful applicants

■ Football

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[111609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on its fan-led review of football.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many also have a great history. It is vital they are protected and I continue to engage in regular discussions with stakeholders across football, as they tackle the most immediate challenges of the pandemic.

The Government is committed to undertaking a fan-led review of football governance and is currently considering the scope and structure of the review.

■ Golf: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[110077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the risk of covid-19 spreading on golf courses where hygiene and social distancing measures are followed.

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.

■ Gyms: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[110076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the risk of covid-19 spreading in gyms where hygiene and social distancing measures are followed.

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.

■ Housing: Broadband

Andrew Rosindell:

[113012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of installation offers made for gigabit fibre broadband connections to new builds involved (a) a cost to the developers and (b) a cost of more than £1,800 per connection in the last 12 months.

Matt Warman:

My department does not currently hold this information for the last 12 months as it is part of commercial arrangements between telecoms operators and housing developers.

The Government is bringing forward a policy that will deliver gigabit broadband to the vast majority of new homes at minimal costs to developers. We will do this by bringing forward amendments to the Building Regulations 2010 to require housing developers to provide gigabit broadband unless the costs to the developer exceeds £2,000.

To support developers, and to ensure as many new homes as possible receive gigabit broadband, the Secretary of State has received commitments from Openreach, Virgin and Gigaclear on the costs of connecting new homes, these include:

- Virgin will contribute at least £500 per premise and up to £1,000 for larger developments;
- Gigaclear will contribute up to £1,000 per premise; and
- Openreach will contribute up to £1,400 per premise.

We have worked with Openreach to extend their free offer of gigabit broadband for new builds and also reduce costs for smaller developments. Openreach reduced their costs of connecting developments consisting of 2 to 4 premises to £2,000, from £3,100, ensuring they all fall within the proposed cost cap.

Based on discussions with industry, we estimate that these commitments ensure that, taken with the amended Building Regulations, gigabit broadband will be deployed to 99% of new build premises.

■ National Archives**Dr Julian Lewis:**[\[91842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect on research by historians of the reduction in (a) opening hours, (b) visit appointments and (c) numbers of documents which can be accessed per visit at the National Archives; and whether such reductions are planned to be reversed in entirety after the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The National Archives suspended its reading room service as of 5 November 2020, in line with the new national restrictions in England and in alignment with other national cultural institutions, however access to its collections and services remains available online.

The pandemic has impacted The National Archives' ability to meet demand from researchers and throughout the pandemic I have received regular updates from officials at The National Archives on the provision and expansion of its public services and the measures adopted to ensure a COVID safe environment.

With the benefit of user feedback, The National Archives continues to review all elements of its public service offer and will restore and then seek to increase services when it is safe to do so and in line with national regulations and guidance.

I and The National Archives remain committed to the provision of public services that maximise access to the public record for users of all kinds, whilst ensuring the safety both of users and staff.

■ Self-harm: Young People**Liz Twist:**[\[109569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of his Department working with the Department for Health and Social Care to improve voluntary sector provision for young people who self-harm, as recommended by the Samaritans in their October 2020 report entitled Pushed from pillar to post: Improving the availability and quality of support after self-harm in England.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has overall policy responsibility for children and young people's mental health.

While DCMS has made no assessment on this specific issue, we are aware of the detrimental impact Covid-19 has had on young people's mental health.

Officials and Ministers regularly engage with young people, including through our Youth Steering Group and events hosted by the youth sector. In recent conversations young people have highlighted the impact Covid-19 has had on mental wellbeing and loneliness.

A total of £4.7 million from the Government's £750 million Charities package went to support mental health charities, including support for young people's mental health.

In addition to this, the Department for Health and Social Care provided £6 million to the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund, which has supported over 130 charities to date.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[110081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an assessment on the effect of a potential ban on youth sports in response to the covid-19 outbreak on young people's physical and mental wellbeing.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports 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.

People are still allowed to leave their homes for exercise and recreation outdoors, with their household or on their own, or with one person from another household or support bubble. We will continue to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our young people, which is why schools will remain open. Children can continue to take part in sport at school, which includes swimming lessons where schools are providing them.

Bill Esterson:

[\[112033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the risk of infection from covid-19 in outdoor (a) school sport and (b) children's club sports.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus. That's why we made sure that people could exercise at least once a day even during the height of lockdown - and why we opened up grassroots sport and leisure facilities as soon as it was safe to do so.

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.

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. We will continue to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our young people, which is why schools will remain open. Children can continue to take part in sport at school, which includes swimming lessons where schools are providing them.

The Government is happy to provide the scientific data on which the decision for a national lockdown has been made. The difficulty is that, when you unpick one thing, the effectiveness of the whole package is compromised.

■ Tennis: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[110915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of permitting socially-distanced outdoor singles tennis games to be played during the period of new national covid-19 lockdown from 5 November 2020.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[110916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of permitting socially-distanced outdoor archery as a form of exercise during the period of new national covid-19 lockdown from 5 November 2020.

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 including tennis courts 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 gravity of the situation has meant that we have been forced to

take some tough choices. That meant having to deny extremely worthy candidates exemptions to the rules, including grassroots sport.

■ Theatre: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[91929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to Regulations 16(1), 16(3), 17(6) and Schedule 2 Part 2 of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020, if he will revise the Government's performing arts guidance of 5 November 2020 so that theatres that (a) are businesses and (b) operate within a designated theatre can continue to hold covid-secure rehearsals regardless of the professional status of the performers.

Caroline Dinenage:

Since Thursday 5 November, new national restrictions have been in force in England to control the spread of coronavirus and to limit contacts between households.

The [Health Protection Regulation](#) 5(1) states that no person may leave or be outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse. The exceptions to the restrictions enables people to leave their homes for the purposes of work where it is not possible for them to work from home.

This exception extends to professionals within the performing arts who are unable to train, rehearse or take part in performances for broadcasting or recording purposes at home. Other than for this purpose, theatres, concert halls and entertainment venues must close. This exemption does not apply to non professional activity within the performing arts in accordance with the wider restrictions.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Quarantine

Rachael Maskell:

[\[107050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government plans to provide financial assistance for low income families of children sent home from school to self-isolate during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

As schools and their kitchens are now open, they should provide healthy, nutritious meal options for all children who are in school, and meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals (FSM) eligibility criteria. If children are eligible for benefit-related FSM but are self-isolating, we expect catering providers to be in a strong position to support any eligible pupils through food parcels, be those daily or weekly. We have put guidance in place for schools on how they can support children these circumstances, which is complemented by advice from the schools food trade organisation LACA and Public Health England on what a good food parcel should comprise. Our latest guidance for

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

We believe that, through the hard work of teachers and staff, pupils will continue to receive the education they deserve, whatever the circumstances. The department has 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. The department is adding to this support by making over 340,000 additional laptops and tablets available to support disadvantaged children that might face disruption to their education. Since September, over 100,000 of these have been delivered to schools.

■ **Coronavirus Catch-up Premium**

Kate Green: [\[91883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much of the £650 million universal catch-up premium funding has (a) been given to schools so far and (b) projected to be spent this academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The universal catch-up premium funding, worth £650 million, will be delivered in three payments across the 2020/21 academic year. The first payment (25% of total) has already been made to schools, totalling £159 million. The final allocations will be re-calculated once the October 2020 school census data is available. The second payment of catch-up premium funding will be made in the early new year, and the third payment in the summer term. The Department's expectation is that all catch-up premium funding received will be spent during the 2020/21 academic year on the additional activities required to support children and young people to catch up.

■ **Erasmus+ Programme and Horizon Europe**

Kirsten Oswald: [\[110846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Government and (b) other devolved Administrations on potential alternatives to the (i) Erasmus Plus and (i) Horizon Europe programmes.

Michelle Donelan:

I have regular conversations with our counterparts in the Scottish government and other devolved administrations across a wide range of research and development issues.

These discussions include the UK's approach to EU research programmes, where the government is seeking to negotiate with the EU a fair and balanced deal for the UK's participation, including in Horizon Europe. Alongside this, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is working with the devolved administrations and other stakeholders to develop credible options, should alternative schemes be required. We will continue to actively engage with the devolved administrations in policy development.

On Erasmus+, the government remains open to considering participation in some elements of the next programme. This will be subject to our ongoing negotiations with the EU. We will, in parallel with the negotiations, continue to develop a domestic alternative to Erasmus+. I regularly engage with my counterparts in the devolved administrations on matters relating to education and the EU exit, including Erasmus+ and the potential domestic alternative. The devolved administrations are also part of the governance and development process for the domestic alternative scheme, and we will continue to co-operate closely with them.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Kate Green: [\[91879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have received tutoring under the National Tutoring Programme to date.

Kate Green: [\[91880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what date the National Tutoring Programme is planned to be fully operational.

Kate Green: [\[91881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much of the £350m allocated for the National Tutoring Programme (a) has been spent to date and (b) is projected to be spent this academic year.

Kate Green: [\[91882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students are planned to receive tuition through the National Tutoring Programme this academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is an ambitious scheme that will provide additional, targeted support to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who need the most help to catch up.

The programme for 5-16 year olds comprises of two pillars to support schools. Tuition Partners offer high quality, subsidised tuition to disadvantaged pupils in schools across the regions, whilst schools in the most disadvantaged areas are being supported to employ in-house Academic Mentors to provide tuition to their pupils.

The programme went live on 2 November 2020 with provision to schools increasing over the winter and into the spring term. 32 approved Tuition Partners are ready to offer tuition to schools. The full list of approved Tuition Partners is available here: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/revealed-the-32-providers-selected-to-deliver-the-national-tutoring-programme/>.

It is expected that they will support around 250,000 pupils over the academic year. The Department also placed its first 188 mentors with schools to work with pupils that need additional support. We expect to place around 1,000 Academic Mentors, with

the remaining mentors starting in schools over the 2021 spring term. Further information about the NTP is available here: <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/faqs>.

As part of the Department's £1 billion catch-up support to schools, it will spend up to £350 million on the NTP. To date, the NTP comprises of three elements. Further details about the 5-16 programme are available through the following link: <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/news/national-tutoring-programme-launches-in-schools>.

Details about small group tutoring via the 16-19 Tuition Fund can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-16-to-19-tuition-fund>.

Finally, details regarding the oral language support programme for Reception-aged children can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-support-package-to-help-close-covid-language-gap>.

Further information on programmes within the NTP will be set out following the Spending Review.

■ Overseas Students: EU Nationals

Paul Blomfield:

[110795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether EEA nationals aged 16 to 19 will be eligible to apply for funding from his Department for (a) higher education and (b) apprenticeships after August 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

We have agreed with the EU that current EU principles of equal treatment will continue to apply for those covered by the citizens' rights provisions in the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the EEA EFTA Separation Agreement. This means that EU nationals resident in the UK (and UK nationals resident in the EU), before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, will be eligible for support on a similar basis to domestic students in the relevant host state.

EU and other EEA nationals not in the scope of the citizens' rights protections will not be eligible for home fee status, undergraduate, postgraduate and advanced learner financial support from Student Finance England for courses starting in the academic year 2021/22. This change will also apply to further education funding for those aged 19 and above. It will not affect students starting courses in the academic year 2020/21. This will not apply to students from Ireland whose right to study and to access benefits and services will be preserved on a reciprocal basis under the Common Travel Area arrangement.

From August 2021, EU and other EEA citizens, and their family members, as well as non-EEA citizens, will be eligible for apprenticeship funding in England if they have permission to live and work in the UK and meet the residency eligibility criteria in place at the time, which will be set out in the funding rules for the academic year 2021/22.

EEA students, staff and researchers make an important contribution to our universities. The government wants that contribution to continue and is confident – given the world-leading quality of our higher education sector – that it will.

■ Private Tutors: Coronavirus

Adam Holloway:

[91855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown academic tutors are permitted to teach their pupils in the pupil's home on a one to one basis, where the (a) age, (b) special educational needs of the child or (c) other factors mean that online lessons are not possible.

Nick Gibb:

As outlined in the guidance for education and childcare settings on New National Restrictions from 5 November 2020, out-of-school activities such as private tuition may continue to operate during the period of national restrictions. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020#ooss>. Providers of these activities, regardless of the age of the children they are caring for, should ensure they are only being accessed for face-to-face provision by parents if their primary purpose is registered childcare, or where they are providing other activities for children, where it is reasonably necessary to enable parents to work or search for work, or to undertake training or education.

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, academic tutors) may also continue to operate face-to-face for the duration of the national restrictions.

Where a child has special educational needs or disabilities or there are other factors which mean that online lessons are not reasonably possible, providers are permitted to offer face-to-face provision in pupils' homes, where it is necessary for them to continue to work.

Tutors that continue to operate face-to-face during this period should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in the guidance regarding protective measures for holiday clubs and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school clubs for children during the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>. Providers operating out of other people's homes should also implement the guidance on working safely in other people's homes, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>.

All other out of school activities, not being primarily used by parents for these purposes and that can offer remote education, should close for face-to-face provision

for the duration of the national restrictions. This will minimise the amount of mixing between different groups of people and therefore reduce the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19.

■ Respite Care: Children

Catherine McKinnell: [\[91884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the economic benefits of short breaks for respite for children who need palliative care.

Vicky Ford:

Palliative care can help children with life limiting or life ending conditions to have a good quality of life where they get treatment, care and support. Regular palliative care can enable parents to work and also can prevent escalation of needs later on.

While the government has not done any recent assessment of the economic benefits of short breaks for respite for children who need palliative care, local authorities have a statutory duty to assess the social care needs of disabled children and young people, and to provide respite care where necessary. Where it is appropriate, local authorities can fund respite care provided by hospices, either as a short-term stay or as a service provided to the child or young person in the family home by the hospice team. Local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups regularly liaise to plan and commission the most appropriate package of respite care for the children and young people with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition in their area.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Steve McCabe: [\[91848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many staff have been recruited to date through the Wellbeing in Schools Return Fund.

Vicky Ford:

Wellbeing for Education Return is a new £8 million package of training and support for schools and colleges, to help education staff to promote and support children and young people's wellbeing and mental health recovery, responding to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

It includes:

- A new, nationally developed training package for education staff.
- Grant funding for local authorities to appoint local experts to deliver the training into schools and further education providers during this autumn term, and to provide ongoing advice and support until March 2021.

147 of England's 151 upper tier local authorities (97%) have taken up the offer of training. This will help them to support local schools and colleges, having received funding and materials from the government in September.

Local areas can decide how to engage with the programme and are taking a range of approaches to deliver training and support into schools and colleges in a way that is most appropriate for them and the demands on their time. It is too early to assess how many education settings have received support through the programme. Plans are in place to monitor delivery of this training and support with local authorities, up to 31 March 2021.

Sarah Olney:

[\[91911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling parents to remove their children from school without prosecution during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

It is vital that pupils continue to attend school for their education, wellbeing and long-term development. Time spent out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children.

Parents have a duty to ensure that any of their children who are of compulsory school age receive a full-time education, either through regular attendance at school or through alternative arrangements, such as home schooling. Where a child is registered at a school, they must attend unless a statutory reason applies (for example, due to sickness, or where a leave of absence has been granted). Where children are not able to attend school as they are following clinical or public health advice related to the COVID-19 outbreak, the absence will not be penalised.

The usual powers to secure high levels of attendance continue to be available to schools and local authorities during the COVID-19 outbreak. These include schools' and local authorities' ability to use parental responsibility measures, such as fixed penalty notices, and local authorities' ability to prosecute as a last resort. Schools should consider concerns from pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about attending school, and put the right support in place to address this.

Parents may choose to educate their child at home (elective home education) rather than at a school. If they do so, they must provide a suitable full-time education if the child is of compulsory school age. Where a pupil is withdrawn from school for elective home education, there is no obligation for the school to keep that place open.

■ Special Educational Needs

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[110748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure SEND specialists are available to schools to support pupils who require additional help through (a) the national tutoring programme and (b) other programmes.

Vicky Ford:

The COVID-19 outbreak, and consequent disruptions, will have both long and short-term impacts on the education and wellbeing of children and young people. However, for some groups, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

(SEND), we recognise that this impact is likely to be greater, and that additional support may be required.

We introduced a COVID-19 'Catch Up Premium' worth £650 million to support mainstream and special schools in making up for lost teaching time. There is additional weighting for specialist settings, in recognition of the significantly higher per pupil costs they face. Headteachers will decide how this premium is spent. For example, this might be on educational psychologists, speech and language therapy or other activities required to support children in catching up. All schools should use the catch-up premium funding available to them as a total from which to prioritise support for particular pupils, including children with SEND or education, health and care plans (EHCPs), according to their needs. The Education Endowment Fund has published the National Tutoring Programme Guidance on effective interventions to support schools, which is available at:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/index.php?/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/>.

Additionally, since 2018, the department has funded the National Association for Special Educational Needs on behalf of the Whole School SEND Consortium, for a programme of work to embed SEND into school practice. During the COVID-19 outbreak specifically, the Whole School SEND Consortium have run training sessions and developed resources for teachers and professionals supporting pupils with SEND to enable them to successfully return to and engage in school, and to support their wellbeing. Further information on the Whole School SEND Consortium can be found here: www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send.

More widely, where a pupil has provision specified within their EHCP, it remains the duty of the local authority and relevant health bodies to secure or arrange the delivery of this provision in the setting that the plan names. The department has been closely monitoring the provision of services and support for children with SEND during the COVID-19 outbreak and engaging with local authorities where there appear to be issues.

■ Teachers: Training

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[91895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much his Department has spent on advertising for new recruits for teacher training courses in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The estimated amount spent on advertising for new recruits for teacher training courses in each of the last five years is:

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total spend (Financial Year)	£5,540,000	£11,370,000	£10,800,000	£12,770,000	£12,780,000

Conor McGinn:

[91899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what resources his Department has made available to secondary schools in (a) St Helens North constituency, (b) the North West and (c) England to enable more trainee teachers to be accommodated on work placement positions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has been working to support schools throughout England to host trainee teachers on placements during the COVID-19 outbreak. We have relaxed the criteria for the delivery of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in the 2020/21 academic year to support schools to host trainees in the current operating environment, for example, by suspending the expectation that trainees train to teach in at least two schools. The criteria is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt>.

We have also suggested roles that trainee teachers can undertake in schools in 2020/21 in the Department's guidance on the full opening of schools, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#school-workforce>.

For the 2019/20 cohort, we have made funding available for course extensions to enable schools to host trainees for an additional period of time as they work towards qualification.

These measures are intended to support schools throughout England, including secondary schools in St Helens North constituency and the North West, and are set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt#trainees-not-recommended-for-qts-in-2019-to-2020>.

Conor McGinn:

[91900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to (a) support PGCE candidates and others on teacher training programmes in the event that they cannot secure work placement positions due to the ongoing covid-19 outbreak and (b) promote alternative arrangements for those trainee teachers.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has been working closely with initial teacher training (ITT) institutions to support trainees, including postgraduates, to secure training placements in schools this academic year. We have encouraged schools to host trainees, confirmed that trainees are critical workers, and relaxed the criteria for the delivery of ITT in the 2020/21 academic year. The Department has supported the ITT sector to share innovative approaches to delivering school placements. Further information about the relaxations of the ITT criteria this academic year can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-initial-teacher-training-itt>

The Department is continuing to work with the sector to identify what further support may be needed to secure and deliver ITT school placements this academic year, including alternative arrangements for trainees whose placements are disrupted for a reason relating to the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Theatre: Education

Kerry McCarthy: [\[91853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) Saturday theatre schools and (b) out of school theatre classes are permitted to continue throughout the November 2020 lockdown restrictions.

Nick Gibb:

On Saturday 31 October, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced New National Restrictions from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December to control the spread of COVID-19. On Wednesday 4 November, the Department published guidance for education and childcare settings on the impact of these restrictions. The guidance can be found here: www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020.

Where educational provision is taking place outside of school, this should only operate where it is reasonably necessary to enable parents to work, search for work, attend education or training, or where the provision is used for the purposes of respite care, including for vulnerable children. This includes provision by supplementary schools offering music or performing arts activities for children on a part-time basis.

Out-of-school activities that are primarily used by home educating parents as part of their arrangements for their child to receive a full-time education (which can include supplementary schools, tuition centres, or private tutors) 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 New National Restrictions.

■ Young People: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan: [\[110898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) vulnerable young people and (b) young people with additional needs receive the care and support they require during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown period.

Vicky Ford:

The government recognises the significant challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak has presented for children and young people, and their families, and that the impact is likely to be greater for some groups, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Supporting children and young people with SEND 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 children and young people during the lockdown period, which commenced on 5 November 2020. Schools and colleges should continue to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive the education, therapeutic or specialist support required to enable them to successfully engage with school or college, and to support their wellbeing, during this period.

Where a child or young person with SEND has provision specified within their Education, Health and Care plan, it remains the duty of the local authority and relevant health bodies to secure or arrange the delivery of this provision. The department will continue to closely monitor the provision of services and support for those with SEND during the COVID-19 outbreak and engage with local authorities where there appear to be issues. For children and young people with SEND who require health services, the new regulations in effect from 5 November 2020 specifically allow access to medical services, whether they are delivered at home, in an educational setting or in the community. Furthermore, we recognise the importance of respite care for disabled children and young people, and their families. That is why parents and carers may continue to access respite care, to support them in caring for their disabled children while the new national restrictions are in force.

Local authorities have also been allocated a further £4.6 billion to help their communities through the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding is un-ringfenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major COVID-19 outbreak service pressures in their local area, including children's services. This year, we have also committed £37.3 million (including £10 million in response to the COVID-19 outbreak) to the Family Fund, which provides grants to low-income families caring for disabled children or seriously ill children.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Brazil: Rainforests**

Alex Sobel:

[91925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure the protection of the Amazon rainforest from increased illegal deforestation; and what plans he has to prevent UK businesses from using products sourced from illegally deforested land.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK has worked in partnership with Brazil for many years to combat deforestation. Through the UK's International Climate Finance we have funded £259 million of programmes (2012 – 2020) to support sustainable agriculture, and increase the value of standing forests, and restore degraded lands, working with multiple stakeholders in the country. As part of this, the UK recently announced an extension of £16 million to the Partnerships for Forests programme, which supports environmentally-friendly

farming and replanting projects in the Amazon, taking its total investment in protecting tropical forests in Latin America to £80 million this financial year.

We are also taking action at home. In 2019 the Government established the Global Resource Initiative taskforce to recommend actions to reduce the climate and environment impacts of key UK supply chains. Today we published our response to their recommendations by setting out a package of measures that we will take forward. One of the key measures announced is that the Government will proceed with a world-leading new 'due diligence' law to tackle illegal deforestation, and tabled an amendment to the Environment Bill yesterday. This new law will prohibit larger businesses from using forest risk commodities that were not produced in accordance with relevant local laws. These companies would need to undertake due diligence, and publish information about this exercise, to ensure this is the case. Businesses that do not comply with the new requirements would be subject to fines.

■ **Inland Waterways: West Yorkshire**

Hilary Benn:

[110735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on support for the bid by the Canal and River Trust for capital funding to enable the development of the Leeds Inland Port and the upgrading of eight locks on the Aire and Calder Navigation.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Leeds North West on 22 October 2020, PQ UIN 105528.

[\[questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/105528 \]](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-19/105528)

■ **Pets: Animal Housing**

Andrew Rosindell:

[110745]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on pets boarding in kennels of recently announced covid-19 lockdown restrictions in the event that their owners are unable to travel to collect them as a result of those covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

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.

Travelling to a boarding kennel or cattery to collect your pet meets these conditions. 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 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.

This advice is available here: <https://www.cfsg.org.uk/repository/360/>

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **British Nationals Abroad: EU Countries**

Sarah Olney:

[\[91909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to progress the discussions between the UK Government and the EU on the expansion of visa-free travel between the UK and the EU.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has discussed arrangements with the EU for UK nationals travelling to the Schengen Area. Regrettably, the EU has consistently maintained that UK nationals will be treated as Third Country Nationals under the Schengen Borders Code from 1 January 2021. UK nationals will only be able to travel visa-free for short stays for up to 90 days in a rolling 180-day period. This is the standard length of stay that the EU offers to nationals of eligible third countries that offer visa-free travel for EU citizens, in line with existing EU legislation.

UK nationals planning to stay longer will need permission from the relevant Member State. This may require applying for a visa and/or permit. Information about travel to Europe after the transition period is available on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021>

■ **China: Labour Camps**

Jim Shannon:

[\[110834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Chinese Government on the reported detention of half a million Tibetans in forced labour camps.

Nigel Adams:

We have raised our concerns about reports of forced labour in Tibet with the Chinese Embassy in London and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing. More broadly, as I set out to parliament on 7 October, we have consistently urged China to respect all fundamental rights in line with both its own constitution and the international frameworks to which it is a party.

On 6 October, the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York expressing deep concern at the situation in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

■ China: Religious Freedom**Jim Shannon:**[\[110830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his UN counterparts on freedom of religion or belief in China.

Nigel Adams:

We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. The freedom to practise, change or share ones faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy. We regularly discuss Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) with our international partners and raise concerns through multilateral fora, including the UN. For example, on 6 October, the UK and 38 other countries joined a statement at the UN Third Committee in New York calling on China to respect human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet. The Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, has also discussed FoRB in China with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the FoRB Special Envoy on a number of occasions, most recently in September.

■ China: Uighurs**Chris Evans:**[\[110793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on potential sanctions on the people responsible for human rights abuses against Uyghurs in China.

Nigel Adams:

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights sanctions regime. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[112020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights in the Canadian Parliament to designate actions by the Government of China against its Uyghur population to be a genocide.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 10 November 2020]: The UK has repeatedly taken a leading international role in holding China to account for its egregious human rights abuses against Uyghurs and other minorities. This has included leading joint statements at the UN Human Rights Council in June and the UN Third Committee last October. HMG's long-standing policy is that the determination of genocide should only be made by a competent court, rather than by governments or non-judicial bodies.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Chris Law:

[\[111561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether there will be sufficient stocks of covid-19 vaccine doses available for the Covax facility to distribute to low and middle income countries after the UK and other high income countries have secured their own bilateral deals for potential covid-19 vaccines.

Wendy Morton:

The COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) aims to provide 1 billion doses for high-risk populations in up to 92 developing countries in 2021, at the same pace as for richer countries. The UK has committed up to £548 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the COVAX AMC. Through this investment, the UK is supporting the fair and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for up to 500 million people in low and middle-income countries during 2021. We have made our financial commitment early precisely to ensure that there will be supplies for AMC countries once safe and effective vaccines are available.

The COVAX AMC is the only ODA mechanism investing in expanding the supply of a portfolio of vaccines explicitly for use in developing countries. It provides the highest chance of successfully securing access for these countries during 2021, regardless of any country's bilateral deals.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[91913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Government's response to the Fifth Report of the International Development Committee, HC246 of Session 2014-15 on Strengthening Health Systems in Developing Countries, when his Department plans to publish its position paper on health systems strengthening.

Wendy Morton:

National authorities in Central America mobilised swiftly to respond to the emergency, but they have struggled to deal with the scale of the impacts, mainly due to challenges in accessing remote areas. Only Honduras has so far made a formal appeal for support to the international community, and Nicaragua and Guatemala are expected to follow suit shortly. FCDO Humanitarian Response Group are leading on the UK humanitarian response.

Beyond the assistance above, MOD will deploy Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel "Argus" to the coast of Honduras to provide assistance to US relief efforts. The ship will arrive on 13 November and provide refuelling for US helicopters delivering supplies to Honduras. UK helicopters on the ship will be made available for the same task. We are not in a position to message publically about this until we receive permissions from Honduras.

■ Developing Countries: Overseas Aid**Dr Dan Poulter:****[110776]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his new Department plans to allocate the majority of its Official Development Assistance spending to programmes in the Least Developed Countries.

James Cleverly:

Prioritising the least developed countries and the bottom billion will remain at the very centre of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. We have made sure that our Official Development Assistance in 2020 remains prioritised on poverty reduction for the 'bottom billion', as well as tackling climate change and reversing biodiversity loss, championing girls' education, UK leadership in the global response to COVID-19, and campaigning on issues such as media freedom and freedom of religious belief, thereby ensuring that the UK is a global force for good.

■ Diplomatic Service: Overseas Aid**Mrs Pauline Latham:****[110785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 October to Question 106974, on which page of the material to which he provided links the figure is given for the (a) proportion of his Department's Official Development Assistance budget spent on frontline diplomatic activity in 2019, (b) total amount of Official Development Assistance spent by the FCO on frontline diplomatic activity in 2019 and (c) total amount of Official Development Assistance spent by the FCO in 2019.

James Cleverly:

The full breakdown of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) 2019 Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend is detailed at this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921034/Data_Underlying_SID_2019.ods. By filtering by year, the FCO and sector code 91010, you can calculate that the FCO spent £306 million on frontline diplomatic activity in 2019.

The FCO's total ODA spend in 2019 was £679 million (page 14 of https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/927135/Statistics_on_International_Development_Final_UK_Aid_Spend_2019.pdf). Spend on frontline diplomatic activity was 45 per cent of the FCO's total 2019 ODA spend.

Mrs Pauline Latham:**[110786]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will (a) calculate and (b) publish the amount of Official Development Assistance spent by his Department on aid-related frontline diplomacy in support of aid flows in each (i) region and (ii) country in each of the last 10 years.

James Cleverly:

Data in the Statistics on International Development (SID) is captured and defined in line with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee reporting directives. Aid-related frontline diplomacy is captured under the OECD administrative sector code 91010, and broken down by country in the SID from 2012. From 2016 to 2018, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office published this data by region, before reverting to publication by country again in 2019. Over the course of this period, the Government has both improved the way it records its ODA eligible administrative spend and made changes to the way we present and publish the SID data to improve transparency and compliance with national statistic publication requirements. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is unable to collate the aid-related frontline diplomacy costs by country before 2012 or from 2016 to 2018 within the timescale provided without incurring disproportionate cost. The regional costs for 2012 to 2015 and for 2019 can be calculated using the published SID data.

■ Eritrea: Religious Freedom**Jim Shannon:**[\[110833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his UN counterparts on freedom of religion or belief in Eritrea.

James Duddridge:

The UK most recently raised Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) with the UN in our Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea on 26 October at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. We welcomed the recent release from detention of Muslim and Pentecostal worshippers and called for the release of all those still subject to detention. We also encouraged Eritrea to make progress on their commitment to the Universal Periodic Review process including the promotion of FoRB.

The UK is committed to defending FoRB for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. We remain deeply concerned about violations and abuses of FoRB in many parts of the world. Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with governments, including at Ministerial level. We also regularly discuss FoRB with our international partners and through multilateral fora, including the UN, where we call out human rights violations. Defending FoRB was a core pledge in our successful campaign to be re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council, and we will continue to use our position to stand up for individuals who are persecuted for their faith, belief, or because they have no religious belief.

■ Falkland Islands: Land Mines**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[111437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to commemorate the Falkland Islands mine-free declaration on November 14 2020.

Wendy Morton:

The UK will declare the Falkland Islands landmine free on 14 November. On 17 November, the UK will be hosting an event at Government House in Port Stanley to congratulate the demining programme team on the successful accomplishment of this extensive project. The UK will also host an event in Harare, to celebrate the significant contribution that the Zimbabwean demining teams have made to the programme since 2009. The UK will announce that it has now complied with its international obligation to clear all anti-personnel mines within its jurisdiction and territory at the Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Geneva later this month.

■ India: Religious Freedom**Jim Shannon:**[\[110832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his UN counterparts on freedom of religion or belief in India.

Nigel Adams:

We engage India on the full range of human rights issues, working with Union and State Governments, and NGOs, to promote human rights for all. Where we have concerns, we find it most effective to raise our concerns directly with the Government of India. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon speaks regularly to his opposite number in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi and the Indian High Commissioner in the UK to raise our concerns where we have them.

■ Nigeria: Religious Freedom**Jim Shannon:**[\[110831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his UN counterparts about freedom of religion or belief in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

In North East Nigeria, terrorist groups including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) seek to undermine the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief by indiscriminately attacking those of all faiths who do not subscribe to their extremist views. The UK has led international condemnation of these groups at the UN, including drafting a UN Security Council press statement that was released on 16 June following terrorist attacks in Felo, Monguno and Nganzai, Borno State. We are also concerned by intercommunal violence across multiple states in Nigeria, which is

having a devastating impact on communities of all faiths, although we do not assess religion to be a principal driver of the violence. We have engaged closely with the UN, federal government, state governments, the National Economic Council and other international partners to help address the drivers of violence in Nigeria and push for solutions.

The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. We remain deeply concerned about violations and abuses of Freedom of Religion or Belief in many parts of the world. Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with governments, including at Ministerial level. We also regularly discuss Freedom of Religion or Belief with our international partners and through multilateral fora, including the UN, where we call out human rights violations. Defending Freedom of Religion or Belief was a core pledge in our successful campaign to be re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council, and we will continue to use our position to stand up for individuals who are persecuted for their faith, belief, or because they have no religious belief.

■ **Pakistan: Religious Freedom**

Jim Shannon:

[\[110829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his UN counterparts on freedom of religion or belief in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. We remain deeply concerned about violations and abuses of FoRB in many parts of the world, including in Pakistan. We regularly discuss FoRB with our international partners and through multilateral fora, including the UN, where we call out human rights violations. Defending FoRB was a core pledge in our successful campaign to be re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council, and we will continue to use our position to stand up for individuals who are persecuted for their faith, belief, or because they have no religious belief.

We regularly raise our concerns about FoRB with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our FoRB concerns with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 19 October. On 1 October Lord Ahmad met with Pakistan's Minister for Education, Mr Shafqat Mahmood, and on 8 September with the Governor of Punjab, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, to discuss inclusive and tolerant education.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[111642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to review foreign travel advice policy in line with developments in national and international rates of covid-19 infection.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO travel advice aims to enable British nationals to take informed decisions about travelling abroad. FCDO travel advice is clear that anyone intending to travel must first follow the domestic rules that apply where they are resident, including those which could restrict international travel. FCDO travel advice sets out the risks in specific states or territories. All FCDO travel advice pages remain under constant review to ensure they reflect the FCDO's latest assessment of risks to British nationals and include up-to-date information and advice. FCDO travel advice related to COVID-19 is based on Public Health England's (PHE) assessment of risks. PHE assessments consider a range of indicators including, but not limited to: virus incidence rates, trends in incidence and deaths, transmission status, international epidemic intelligence, testing capacity and test positivity rates.

■ West Bank: Demolition**Sarah Olney:**[\[91910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the demolition of the Ras At-Tin school in the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

The UK is seriously concerned by the possible demolition of a Palestinian school in Ras Al-Tin by Israeli authorities. I raised UK concern about the planned demolition of humanitarian structures, as well as the wider demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concern with the Government of Israel on 13 October, alongside European partners. Officials also visited the school on 16 October. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We recognise that Palestinians face severe difficulty in securing building permissions for homes and infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Area C. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Addictions: Health Services****Sarah Olney:****[96147]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) mental and (b) physical health of those unable to attend addiction recovery groups as a result of 14 September 2020 covid-19 restrictions on meeting in groups of more than six people.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 1 October 2020]: From 14 September 2020, social gatherings both indoors and outdoors must be limited to six people. However, there are several exemptions to the legal gatherings limit, including for support groups which meet the qualifying conditions.

Support groups can take place in groups of up to 15 people in a COVID-19 secure setting, if the support group is organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support to its members or those who attend its meetings. This includes, but is not limited to, providing support to those with, or recovering from, addictions including alcohol, narcotics or other substance addictions or addictive patterns of behaviour. Further guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#can-i-go-to-my-support-group><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#can-i-go-to-my-support-group>

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse**Munira Wilson:****[109696]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he will introduce a new cross-government alcohol strategy which takes account of the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

Munira Wilson:**[109697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to prevent an increase in harmful drinking during the covid-19 outbreak.

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. There are no current plans for a standalone alcohol strategy.

Public Health England (PHE) published advice and information for the public on looking after their mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak, which recommends people avoid using alcohol. The guidance can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

PHE continues to maintain the FRANK website and helpline, which provides a service for people who are concerned about their own or others alcohol consumption at the following link:

<https://www.talktofrank.com/>

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak alcohol treatment providers are continuing to support and treat people misusing alcohol.

■ **Breast Cancer: Health Services**

Marsha De Cordova:

[99112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to allocate funding for a national secondary breast cancer audit covering diagnosis, treatment and access to support.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans in place for a dedicated audit into national secondary breast cancer.

The Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership commissions, develops and manages the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme, on behalf of NHS England, Wales and other devolved administrations. The programme currently consists of over 30 national clinical audits, six clinical outcome review programmes and the National Joint Registry.

The existing audit of breast cancer in older women does include some sections on women with metastatic breast cancer. The latest audit is available at the following link:

https://www.hqip.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/REF212_NABCOP-2020-Annual-Report-V1_high-res_20200702.pdf

■ **Cancer: Coronavirus**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[104762]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that children diagnosed with cancer in (a) Slough and (b) England are able to access treatment throughout the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 21 October 2020]: To ensure essential and urgent treatment for all cancer patients, including children, continued throughout the response to the pandemic, COVID-19-protected surgical hubs have been established for cancer surgery across the country to keep often vulnerable cancer patients safe. This particularly protects cancer patients from immunocompromised infection. All 21 Cancer Alliances across England now have arrangements in place for cancer hubs.

The Cancer Recovery Taskforce is overseeing the development of the cancer recovery plan and reviewing progress against objectives including considering any impact of a second wave of COVID-19. The plan will be published shortly.

Abena Oppong-Asare:[\[106513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the mental health effect on patients of delayed cancer treatment due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Personalised care interventions, including holistic needs assessment, health and wellbeing information and support, and end of treatment summaries, will help to identify and address more psychological and emotional needs from diagnosis onwards, while ensuring that general practitioners are informed of patients' ongoing needs. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, these interventions will be implemented where appropriate for every person diagnosed with cancer 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.

■ Cancer: Cost of Living**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[104054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average additional financial costs of living with cancer.

Jo Churchill:

No estimate has been made.

■ Cancer: Dental Services**Justin Madders:**[\[97605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 March 2020 to Question 27030, what steps he has taken to consider how NHS England can ensure better access to dentistry for cancer patients.

Jo Churchill:

National Health Service dentistry is a universal NHS service. This should be available to all including those diagnosed with cancer or any other disease. Where a patient has difficulty in finding an NHS dentist with availability they should contact NHS

England and NHS Improvement who commission dentistry and have a duty to help patients who are having difficulty in finding a practice.

■ **Cancer: Diagnosis**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[104062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it remains his policy increase diagnosis of the 10 most common cancers at stages 1 and 2 to 75 percent by 2028.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 October 2020]: The NHS Long Term Plan commitments remain in place despite the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the commitment of staging 75% of all cancers at stage 1 or 2.

■ **Cancer: Health Services**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[102744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the continuation of services for cancer patients during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Cancer Recovery Taskforce is overseeing the development of the cancer recovery plan and reviewing progress against objectives including considering any impact of a second wave of COVID-19. The plan will be published shortly. The Taskforce met for the first time in September and will continue to do so on a monthly basis. Membership of the Taskforce is drawn from across the cancer community to coordinate and share expertise and ultimately enable progress towards the successful recovery of cancer services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's priorities for recovering cancer services are increasing urgent cancer referrals, reducing the number of patients waiting longer than 62 and 104 days for treatments or diagnostics, and ensuring capacity is in place for patients returning to the system in winter.

■ **Cancer: Medical Treatments**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[102001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients are waiting to be seen for cancer treatment in (a) Hull, (b) East Yorkshire and (c) England.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not available in the format requested.

■ Cancer: Young People

Jim Shannon:

[\[101014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with representatives of the Teenage Cancer Trust to discuss steps on improving diagnosis rates for cancer in young patients.

Jo Churchill:

No meetings are currently scheduled.

The NHS Long Term Plan includes a number of commitments for improving the outcomes and experience of children, teenagers and young adults with cancer.

The revised service specifications outline how NHS England plan to deliver these commitments which includes implementing networked care, simplifying pathways and transitions between services, ensuring that every patient has access to specialist care and by increasing participation in clinical research.

It is expected that each network will agree the configuration of services within the first 12 months of publication.

■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing

Dan Jarvis:

[\[109358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make the wearing of personal protective equipment mandatory in care homes for (a) staff and (b) visitors.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: The Government has published guidance on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for care workers during the current period of sustained COVID-19 transmission which they are expected to follow. Providers should ensure that the appropriate PPE is always worn and used correctly. For visitors this is an appropriate form of protective face covering, which may include a surgical face mask where specific care needs align to close contact care. The Government is providing free PPE for adult social care providers for COVID-19 needs until March 2021.

Where care homes do not follow PPE guidance, or do something equally effective, the Health and Safety Executive and local authority Environmental Health Officers have a range of enforcement powers to ensure employers comply and workers have adequate PPE for their work activities.

■ Coronavirus: Death

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[109377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued to the medical profession on whether covid-19 is recorded as (a) the primary cause and (b) a contributory factor when registering a death.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: In response to the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in relation to death certification, the General Register Office/Home Office and the Office for National Statistics published revised guidance to medical practitioners completing medical certificates of cause of death (MCCD) for a period of emergency. This guidance confirms that COVID-19 is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the MCCD.

The cause of death is certified by a medical practitioner. The medical profession is not responsible for registering a death – this is the role of the registrar.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Julian Sturdy:**[\[108222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether households in tier 2 local covid-19 alert areas can host bereaved relatives from a household outside that area.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Until 3 December, tiers requirements will not apply because of the new national restrictions. As part of the national restrictions, however, we continue to recognise providing informal social care to relatives and vulnerable people is of the highest importance.

If the relatives are being hosted for a gathering for the purposes of a commemorative event to celebrate the life of a person who has died, such as a wake, the gathering cannot consist of more than 15 persons, it must take place at premises other than a private dwelling, and the gathering organiser must adhere to the precautions in relation to the gathering as laid down in the local COVID-19 alert level restrictions.

■ Coronavirus: Educational Institutions**Ian Byrne:**[\[110273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment the Government has undertaken on the effect of keeping schools and colleges open during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England on the transmission of covid-19 in the community.

Ian Byrne:[\[110274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what scientific advice the Government received from SAGE on keeping schools and colleges open during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England and the potential effect of that decision on the transmission of covid-19 in communities.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: The Department of Health and Social Care has worked closely with the Department for Education and Public Health England to ensure that we are appropriately assessing the impact of keeping schools and

colleges open during the November 2020 COVID-19 lockdown and to develop specific guidance for school and college settings.

The Government is mindful that being at school is important for children's education and for their wellbeing and that there can be detrimental cognitive and academic impacts of being out of school, particularly for disadvantaged children. Where schools and colleges implement the system of controls outlined in our guidance, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, we are confident that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. As a result, on current evidence, the Government's advice is that schools and colleges are not currently considered high risk settings when compared to other workplace environments.

■ **Coronavirus: Fraud**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[102842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) prevent, (b) protect people from and (c) warn people about health scams related to the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for the regulatory body for the safety of medicines and medical devices.

The MHRA reports that products that have fallen into their regulatory remit during the covid-19 outbreak have included unlicensed anti-viral medication, non-compliant surgical face masks and self-testing kits. These products have not undergone the appropriate regulatory checks and or they have not been manufactured in accordance with the regulations meaning their safety and performance cannot be verified. Consequently, they do not meet United Kingdom regulatory standards. Working in close collaboration with the Border Force, the MHRA have made over 70 seizures at the ports alone.

■ **Coronavirus: Funerals**

Bill Esterson:

[\[110125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether travel to a funeral within the UK will be an exception to the ban on overnight stays during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: The public will be advised to avoid travelling outside of their local area, and to reduce the number of journeys they make. Overnight stays away from primary residences will not be allowed, except for specific exceptions such as to stay in a hotel to attend a nearby family funeral.

■ Coronavirus: Golf**Andrew Rosindell:** [110074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the closure of golf courses during the national covid-19 lockdown on the (a) the mental health and (b) physical wellbeing of people who regularly play golf.

Andrew Rosindell: [110075]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the closure of gyms during the national covid-19 lockdown on the (a) mental health and b) physical wellbeing of people who regularly use gyms to exercise.

Andrew Rosindell: [110083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the closure of (a) outdoor and (b) indoor swimming pools during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England on the (i) mental health and (ii) physical wellbeing of people who regularly use gyms to exercise.

Jo Churchill:

The Chief Medical Officer is clear that being physically active is important to long-term health and crucial for keeping people healthy during the ongoing pandemic. Evidence suggests that regular physical activity can promote good physical health and help manage stress and anxiety.

The national restrictions are designed to get the 'R' rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions. People are still allowed to leave their homes for exercise and recreation outdoors, with their household or on their own, or with one person from another household or support bubble.

■ Coronavirus: Greater Manchester**Justin Madders:** [107028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the reproduction rate for covid-19 was in the Greater Manchester area on (a) 6 September 2020, (b) 20 September 2020, (c) 4 October 2020 and (d) 20 October 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: The published growth rate, or 'R' number, for England and the North West regions is available on GOV.UK at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk#other-key-statistics>

Estimates of growth rate for geographies smaller than regional level are less reliable and it is more appropriate to identify local hotspots through, for example, monitoring numbers of cases, hospitalisations, and deaths.

Kate Green:

[\[110296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will introduce a bereavement support bubble policy in Greater Manchester to enable grieving households to form a support bubble with one other household whilst the Tier 3 local covid-19 alert level restrictions are in place.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: Until 3 December, people must not mix with any other households indoors apart from under certain exemptions, including being able to form a support bubble. If one household is a single adult household, they can form a support bubble between with another household.

We understand these rules are difficult, but reducing social contact is paramount to protecting the National Health Service and saving lives. The Government will keep this under constant review and has published guidance on mental health and wellbeing, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19#what-can-help-your-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

■ **Coronavirus: Gyms**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[110180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for the decision of 31 October 2020 to close covid-19 secure gyms and sports facilities.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[110271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis was for the decision to close gyms during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: The Government's response to the pandemic is guided by the science. Data and scientific advice informing the fight against COVID-19 are published on GOV.UK and specific relevant findings are shared in presentations accompanying significant policy announcements.

Unfortunately, we know that the virus spreads readily in indoor environments where members of different households and/or support bubbles spend time together. These restrictions do not single out restaurants, pubs or gyms but apply to a wide range of settings where the risk of transmission is high.

■ **Coronavirus: Hospitality Industry**

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[105373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 97582, on Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus, if he will publish

the data that suggests that a significant proportion of exposure to the virus is seen in the hospitality sector.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 October 2020]: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has provided expert strategic scientific advice to the Government throughout the COVID-19 response.

SAGE's advice has highlighted that alcohol consumption may increase risk of non-compliance with social distancing and that gatherings in hospitality are higher risk of transmission. SAGE continues to release minutes from its meetings and the supporting scientific papers on GOV.UK, as has been the case since the start of the pandemic.

Public Health England's Weekly Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report highlighted that from 21-27 September, 13% of those testing positive for COVID-19 reported eating out in the time before symptom onset, when there is a high risk of asymptomatic transmission.

■ **Dental Health: Children**

Judith Cummins:

[\[107018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress is being made on restarting children's oral health programmes during the Autumn 2020 school term.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance published by Public Health England (PHE) updating the infection prevention advice for supervised toothbrushing programmes has enabled these programmes to restart when schools reopened in the autumn term. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-supervised-toothbrushing-programmes>

PHE does not have a complete picture of how many supervised toothbrushing or other oral health improvement schemes have restarted as these programmes are commissioned locally.

■ **Dental Services**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[96905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of dental practices are offering routine NHS dental services.

Jo Churchill:

Routine face-to-face National Health Service dental services resumed from 8 June with the aim of increasing levels of service in line with infection control procedures and personal protective equipment requirements. All dental practices are able to offer routine face to face treatment that is clinically necessary. Over 600 Urgent Dental Care Centres set up at the height of the pandemic also remain open to ensure that

dental treatment needed urgently can be accessed while practices expand their services as safely as possible.

Justin Madders:

[\[96944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the availability of dentist appointments for NHS patients in (a) England and (b) Ellesmere Port and Neston in August (i) 2019 and (ii) 2020.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for commissioning primary National Health Service dental services to meet the needs of the local population. A health needs assessment for West Cheshire, including Ellesmere Port and Neston was undertaken for the period 2018/2019 which was subsequently updated in January 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way NHS dental services are delivered and, unfortunately, the particular risks of infection COVID-19 presents for some dental procedures means that service activity is still reduced due to the impact of infection prevention and control requirements. NHS England and NHS Improvement and dental practices themselves remain focused on restoring as much service as possible.

Jon Trickett:

[\[98875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 August 2020 to Question 69437 on Dental Services, how many urgent dental care centres remain fully operational as at 6 September 2020.

Jo Churchill:

Over 600 urgent dental centres remain open across England to support dental patients with their urgent dental care needs through face to face treatment.

All dental practices with an NHS dental contract have been able to open for face to face National Health Service care, including routine care, from 8 June. There are over 6,000 dental practices holding an NHS contract in England. The guidance from NHS England and NHS Improvement to NHS dental contract holders states that the reopening of dental practices must take place in a safe manner and follow the Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement infection prevention and control guidance.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[99727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has a timeline for when all routine NHS dental treatments will be available across England.

Jo Churchill:

All dental practices with a National Health Service dental contract have been able to open for face-to-face NHS care, including routine care, from 8 June. The guidance from NHS England and NHS Improvement to NHS dental contract holders states that the reopening of dental practices must take place in a safe manner and follow the

Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement infection prevention and control guidance.

Over 600 urgent dental centres remain open across England to support dental patients with their urgent dental care needs through face to face treatment.

■ **Dental Services: Coronavirus**

Judith Cummins: [\[107016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of children whose planned dental (a) general anaesthetic and (b) other admission to hospital has been suspended or cancelled since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Data is not available in the format requested.

Derek Twigg: [\[99527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of annual or six monthly dental check-up appointments that have been cancelled as a result of the covid-19 outbreak since 1 March 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 October 2020]: This information is not held in the format requested.

■ **Dental Services: Mothers**

Owen Thompson: [\[92838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will extend the maternity exemption certificate for dental care to new mothers who have not been able to access dental care during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans to extend the existing charges exemption for pregnant women and those who have given birth in the last 12 months due to the pandemic.

Urgent face to face dental care was available through the peak pandemic period via over 600 urgent dental centres. All dental practices providing NHS services were able to restart face to face care from 8 June with the aim of increasing levels of service in line with recommendations around infection control procedures and personal protective equipment. Urgent Dental Care Centres remain open to support the provision of urgent face to face care.

■ Dental Services: Protective Clothing

Alberto Costa:

[\[87578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the cost of personal protective equipment incurred by dental surgeries are not being passed on to patients.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for commissioning National Health Service dental services to meet local needs.

Dental practices may not levy any charge in respect of a NHS course of treatment except one of the three fixed patient charges. There is no ability to charge for personal protective equipment (PPE) for NHS treatment and NHS England and NHS Improvement will investigate any claims of fraudulent behaviour as a result of a patient having paid for PPE for any NHS treatment.

For private treatment charges are a matter between dentist and patient.

■ Hospitals: Discharges

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[94511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS Mental Health Trusts can access the £588 million fund, announced on 21 August 2020 to support the NHS in discharging patients from hospitals from 1 September 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 29 September 2020]: The £588 million discharge fund does not include funding for National Health Service mental health trusts.

NHS financial arrangements for the remainder of 2020/21 include amounts for local systems to respond to COVID-19 and support for mental health discharges can be funded through monies available to local systems.

Separate discharge guidance for NHS mental health trusts is being developed in collaboration with NHS England and we will seek to publish this shortly.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[110224\]](#)

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 uptake of the flu vaccination.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: So far, vaccine uptake across all priority groups is higher than this time last season. However, it is still too early in the flu season to provide an assessment on overall uptake.

Public Health England collect provisional weekly data on flu vaccine uptake levels. The weekly report published on 29 October 2020 is available at the following link:

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

The first monthly data will be published on 26 November on the number of people who have been vaccinated up to 31 October 2020 from all cohorts.

More flu vaccine stock is being made available via general practitioners and pharmacies to ensure all eligible groups receive a vaccine.

■ Mental Health Services

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[109538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the condition of the NHS mental health estate.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: The latest available data on the condition of the National Health Service mental health estate was published in October 2019. According to this data, the cost to eradicate backlog maintenance across mental health and learning disability trusts was £342 million. The publication of data for 2019-20 was delayed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and is due to be published in January 2021.

In October 2020, the Government announced more than £400 million to eradicate dormitory accommodation from mental health facilities, as part of the Government's record investment in NHS infrastructure. This investment will improve the safety, privacy and dignity of patients suffering with mental illness.

The Government has also recently announced that 40 hospitals are to be built by 2030 and this includes new mental health hospitals in Northgate and in Poole. A competition will be announced in due course for eight further hospital schemes.

■ Mental Health Services: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson:

[103460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional well-being and mental health support his Department will be providing to NHS staff as the UK enters a second wave of covid-19 in the winter period.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 October 2020]: Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of National Health Service staff is a top priority for this Government. The national health and wellbeing offer, which includes a helpline and text service for counselling and support and access to free wellbeing apps, remains available for all NHS staff. This will be strengthened during winter in response to staff needs and in line with the commitments we made in July in the NHS People Plan. This includes setting up mental health hubs to provide proactive outreach and co-ordinate referrals to treatment, enhanced occupational health support and the introduction of Wellbeing Guardians on all boards. Support can be accessed via the following link:

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

■ Obesity

Philip Davies: [\[109238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether specialist chocolate confectionary shops will fall under the scope of the proposed location restrictions set out in the Tackling Obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives strategy.

Philip Davies: [\[109239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential economic effect on specialist confectionery shops of the proposed location restrictions set out in the Tackling Obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives strategy.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 15 September 2020 to Question [83713](#).

■ Ovarian Cancer: Menopause

Jim Shannon: [\[98968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has with (a) the Royal College of Nursing and (b) other relevant bodies on potential links between ovarian cancer and the start of menopause.

Jo Churchill:

No discussions with the Royal College of Nursing, or other organisations, have taken place regarding the link between ovarian cancer and the start of the menopause.

Research suggests women with ovarian cancer may experience early menopause due to disease infiltration of the ovaries or because of the surgery or adjuvant therapy that they need to have to remove the cancer.

Women are advised to contact their general practice if they have any symptoms or concerns.

■ Podiatry

Emma Hardy: [\[109785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the role podiatrists play maintaining public health; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) is working with the College of Podiatry and the other 13 allied health professions (AHPs) to define and increase the contribution of podiatrists make in maintaining public health.

Podiatrists maintain and improve public health through, for example, conversations about lifestyle improvements as part of their day to day practice, for example, smoking cessation, increasing physical activity and falls prevention work. Podiatrists also play a role in stroke and heart attack prevention through early atrial fibrillation detection and management of peripheral arterial disease.

■ Protective Clothing: VAT

Anneliese Dodds: [\[109599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on extending the zero VAT rate for personal protective equipment beyond 31 October 2020.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[109600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the 31 October 2020 expiry date for the zero VAT rate for the supply of personal protective equipment on public health in England.

Anneliese Dodds: [\[109601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the 31 October 2020 expiry date for the zero VAT rate for the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) on the projected level of compliance of the public with Government guidelines on PPE.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: The introduction of temporary VAT relief was an extraordinary measure designed to relieve the burden of VAT on the price of purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) used for protection from COVID-19 by frontline workers and has particularly aided sectors that cannot recover VAT on such goods due to their VAT exempt status, such as care homes. This was needed during the initial period of the COVID-19 crisis when the global supply of PPE did not meet demand, resulting in inflated prices.

Since then, the Department has stabilised the United Kingdom PPE supply chain to meet current demand and this month, we will have a four-month stockpile of all COVID-19-critical PPE in place, with a tremendous contribution from UK manufacturers.

The Department has committed in the Winter Plan to provide free PPE for COVID-19 needs to Care Quality Commission-registered care homes and domiciliary care providers via the PPE portal until the end of March 2021. Now that supply has increased and prices have stabilised, the temporary zero-rate of VAT on PPE is therefore no longer required and ended on 31 October 2020 as planned.

■ Rehabilitation

Liz Twist: [\[103601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to update the Commissioning Guidance for Rehabilitation.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 October 2020]: As part of the Government's continued commitment to ensure high-quality, accessible rehabilitation services for patients, NHS England has commenced work on refreshing this guidance. This has included engagement with professional bodies' clinicians, alongside many other stakeholders, societies and third sector organisations who represent the patient voice.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Applications

Justin Madders: [\[110158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the processing time is for asylum applications as of 2 November 2020.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is unable to state what the processing time is for asylum applications as of 2 November 2020 as the Home Office does not publish this information.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics:

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

The Home Office are committed to ensuring asylum claims are considered without unnecessary delay, individuals who need protection are granted asylum as soon as possible and can start to integrate and rebuild their lives, including those granted at appeal.

■ Consumers: Coronavirus

Philip Davies: [\[110755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of abuse experienced by customer service staff during the covid-19 outbreak.

Philip Davies: [\[110756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure customer service staff are protected from abuse during the covid-19 lockdown.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is clear that any such abuse is unacceptable, and the Government is working closely with the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) to deliver a programme of work which aims to provide better support to victims, improve reporting, increase data sharing and raise awareness of this despicable crime.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of flexible tools and powers that can be used to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour.

No specific assessment has been made of the trends in the level of abuse experienced by customer service staff during the pandemic. However, the Government continues to work with different agencies to ensure anti-social behaviour is tackled. This includes marshals, stewards and ambassadors being deployed to engage members of the public and businesses to explain COVID-19 Secure guidelines and restrictions, and the police who continue to enforce where necessary.

Chris Evans:[\[110794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that customer service staff are protected from abuse during the covid-19 lockdown.

Kit Malthouse:

Any such abuse is unacceptable, and the Government is working closely with the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) to deliver a programme of work which aims to provide better support to victims, improve reporting, increase data sharing and raise awareness of this despicable crime.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of flexible tools and powers that can be used to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour.

The Government continues to work with these different agencies throughout the pandemic to ensure anti-social behaviour is tackled. This includes marshals, stewards and ambassadors being deployed to engage members of the public and businesses to explain COVID-19 Secure guidelines and restrictions, and the police who continue to enforce where necessary.

■ Immigrants: Finance**Neil Coyle:**[\[110142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to suspend No Recourse to Public Funds conditions for the duration of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Chris Philp:

The Government remains committed to protecting vulnerable people and has acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through this pandemic.

We have introduced a range of measures to ensure people can stay safe and many of these are available for those with a no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition.

The Coronavirus job retention scheme, self-employment income support and statutory sick pay are not classed as public funds for immigration purposes. Contribution-based benefits are also not classed as public funds for immigration purposes.

The Government has made in excess of £4.3 billion of funding to local authorities in England, and additional funding under the Barnett formula to the devolved administrations to enable them to respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including services helping the most vulnerable.

We have launched a new scheme in England, through which local authorities can make a £500 discretionary payment to individuals who have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for Covid-19 or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. This is available to those who are employed or self-employed who are unable to work from home and will, therefore, lose income as a result. Those with NRPF are eligible for this scheme.

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have the NRPF restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances. Applications are being dealt with swiftly and compassionately.

In light of the support that is available to those with NRPF, we do not believe it is necessary to suspend the NRPF condition.

■ Immigration

Daniel Zeichner:

[110146]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of non-urgent inquiries by MPs on immigration matters were dealt with within 20 working days in the period August-October 2020.

Chris Philp:

UK Visas and Immigration work to a target of responding to 95% of Ministerial correspondence within 20 working days.

Performance has been impacted by an increase in the volume of correspondence received, alongside the need for Ministers and officials to instigate a remote process for drafting and signing correspondence during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. An action plan is currently in place to clear backlogs and drive up performance.

The latest published data on UKVI performance against the service standard is held at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-august-2020> and this includes data up to and including the end of quarter 2-2020/21. We are proposing the release of data for quarter 3, in due course.

■ Organised Crime

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[91894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of gang-related crime in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in (i) each of the last five years and (ii) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kit Malthouse:

Crimes that are gang-related cannot be separately identified from the statistics that are held centrally but research evidence has identified the role that gangs play in serious violence and county-lines drug crime.

The Government is committed to tackling gang-related crime and the Home Office invested £119 million in 2020-21, including £20 million to tackle county lines drug dealing; £35m funding for Violence Reduction Units (VRUs); and £41.5m on extra police resources in the areas most affected by serious violence.

■ Retail Trade: Abuse and Violence

Tom Hunt:

[\[110917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to better protect shop workers from abuse and violence in the workplace as set out in the British Retail Consortium's Shopworkers' Protection Pledge, published in September 2020; and what steps her Department is taking to help reduce the number of incidences of abuse and violence towards shop workers in the workplace (a) at all times and (b) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kit Malthouse:

The existing Sentencing Assaults guidelines by the Sentencing Council already requires courts to treat the fact that an offence was committed against those working in the public sector or providing a service to the public as an aggravating factor, making the offence more serious. The Government does not consider that a change to the law is required

The Government is working closely with retailers through the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) co-chaired by the British Retail Consortium to deliver a programme of work which aims to provide better support to victims, improve reporting, increase data sharing and raise awareness of this despicable crime.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, the Sentencing Council published interim guidance in April that clarifies that, when sentencing assault offences relating to the transmission of Covid-19, the courts should treat this as meriting a more severe sentence.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Layla Moran:****[91921]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the answer of 5 November 2020 to Question 110236, how much additional funding his Department will provide for local authorities per clinically vulnerable person in their council area for the duration of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Christopher Pincher:

Council tax data on the number of empty properties and second homes for council tax purposes as at October 2020 have been published today (Wednesday 11 November). Figures for England can be found in the statistical release and for Coventry within the local authority level tables. The release and tables can be found at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/council-taxbase-statistics>. Regional data are not published but can be aggregated from the local authority level table published.

■ Empty Property and Second Homes: Council Tax**Colleen Fletcher:****[91891]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of houses in (i) Coventry, (ii) the West Midlands and (iii) England that are marked as (A) empty and (B) a second home for Council Tax purposes.

Christopher Pincher:

Council tax data on the number of empty properties and second homes for council tax purposes as at October 2020 have been published today (Wednesday 11 November). Figures for England can be found in the statistical release and for Coventry within the local authority level tables. The release and tables can be found at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/council-taxbase-statistics>. Regional data are not published but can be aggregated from the local authority level table published.

JUSTICE**■ Criminal Injuries Compensation****Peter Kyle:****[91902]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much financial compensation has been distributed to victims by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority since 23 March 2020 by (a) total money awarded, and (b) number of victims in receipt of compensation.

Alex Chalk:

The total compensation accepted under the schemes administered by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority between 24 March 2020 and 6 November 2020 was £100.9m, benefitting 9,598 victims of violent crime.

Judiciary: Equality**Alex Cunningham:**[\[112054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to encourage increased diversity among (a) judicial appointments to the Supreme Court during its current recruitment process and (b) all judicial appointments.

Chris Philp:

The selection process for a new Justice of the Supreme Court is laid down in the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. The Lord Chancellor convenes a selection commission, which is chaired by the President of the Supreme Court and includes another UK judge and three lay members.

Following consultation with the Lord Chancellor, the selection commission has issued materials which make clear that it welcomes applications from the widest range of applicants eligible to apply, including those who are not currently full-time judges, and particularly encourages applications from those who would increase the diversity of the Court. The selection commission has launched targeted digital adverts and promoted the vacancy to relevant committees and groups of the Law Society, Bar Council and the Society of Legal Scholars (an association of university teachers of law), the Government Legal Service and equivalent government legal departments in the devolved nations.

This activity is further supported by:

- A series of short podcasts, featuring interviews with serving Justices, which will launch on the Supreme Court's website later this week. Justices speak about their career path and why they applied to become a Justice, as well as sharing insights into what the process felt like and what advice they would give someone thinking of applying; and
- The offer of a confidential familiarisation telephone call, to discuss working at the Supreme Court with the Chief Executive or a Justice, for eligible candidates.
- Under changes introduced by the Crime and Courts Act 2013, where two candidates are deemed to be of equal merit, the commission can give preference to one candidate over the other for the purpose of increasing diversity within the Court.

The Lord Chancellor has a shared statutory responsibility for judicial diversity alongside the Lord Chief Justice and the Chair of the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). All three are members of the Judicial Diversity Forum, which brings together leaders from organisations across the legal sector to improve judicial diversity.

The Judicial Diversity Forum's first combined statistical report was published on 17 September 2020, bringing together data on the diversity of the judiciary, judicial appointments and from the relevant legal professions (solicitors, barristers and legal executives). Published alongside the statistical report is a summary of the wide range of actions that its members are undertaking – at different career stages, either collectively or individually to help increase judicial diversity. The statistical report and the Action Plan were published on the Judicial Appointments Commission website: <https://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/news/new-combined-statistical-report-gives-insight-diversity-judiciary>

■ Prisoners On Remand: Video Conferencing

Selaine Saxby:

[\[110932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when HM Courts and Tribunals Service plans to take on the operation of virtual remand hearings from court premises as police forces return to their usual duties.

Chris Philp:

HMCTS will continue to facilitate video remand hearings using the Cloud Video Platform (CVP). Steps have been taken to increase the capacity of our existing systems to enable other participants to appear remotely. We continue to engage with Policing across England and Wales on the use of video in the criminal justice system.

■ Youth Justice

Peter Kyle:

[\[91901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure best practice Contextual Safeguarding approaches within youth justice settings.

Lucy Frazer:

We believe that safeguarding children in the youth justice system is key and we continue to take steps to ensure children are properly protected.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) are currently revising their Case Management Guidance for Youth Offending Teams, which will include contextual safeguarding approaches. In addition, the YJB's AssetPlus assessment and planning interventions framework, encourages practitioners to consider peer as well as family relationships within the assessment and planning process.

In 2018 the Government updated statutory guidance '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*' to emphasise that children may also be at risk of harm from outside the home and that practitioners should be aware of environmental or contextual factors when undertaking assessments.

In addition, in 2019 the Ministry of Justice published '*County Lines Exploitation: Practice guidance for YOTs and frontline practitioners*' as a best practice template when responding to, and safeguarding children involved in county lines.

In youth custodial settings, we are aiming to develop more child focussed approaches to security management, which will include elements of contextual safeguarding, alongside our partners.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Abortion: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[110828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has received representations on the introduction of home use for both stages of early medical abortion by amending the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No.2) Regulations 2020.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 provide an approval power for the Northern Ireland Department of Health to be able to approve the provision of abortion services in places other than those listed in the regulations. This includes being able to approve the home use for both stages of early medical abortions.

We recognise that some groups have called for Government action on this matter, but this is a matter for the Department of Health to consider in commissioning services, consistent with the Regulations we made. We have not had any direct representations on this matter.

The Regulations deliver rights that are equivalent in practice to the rest of the UK so that women and girls in Northern Ireland can enjoy similar rights in accessing abortion services locally going forward. We stand ready to provide whatever support we can to the Northern Ireland Minister of Health and his department to ensure full services are commissioned as soon as possible.

SCOTLAND

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Henry Smith:

[\[908459\]](#)

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on increasing transport connections between Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Mr Alister Jack:

I regularly engage with Cabinet colleagues on this matter and fully support the Union Connectivity Review, which is being undertaken by Sir Peter Hendy.

The review will look at how best to improve road, rail, air, and sea links across the United Kingdom.

Simon Baynes:

[\[908461\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on co-ordinating a UK-wide response to the covid-19 outbreak.

David Duguid:

The Secretary of State for Scotland and I are in regular discussions with our ministerial colleagues on co-ordinating a UK-wide response to the covid-19 outbreak. A UK-wide response is integral to the Government's response to covid-19.

Rosie Cooper:[\[908470\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Scottish Government Ministers on care home deaths in Scotland.

David Duguid:

Public health and social care is a devolved matter for the Scottish Government. We are providing support to the Devolved Administrations where necessary including testing capacity for care home residents and staff. The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations regularly discuss all aspects of the covid response, including sharing lessons that we can learn from each other.

Mr Alistair Carmichael:[\[908478\]](#)

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues and Scottish Government Ministers on a four-nations approach to tackling the covid-19 outbreak over Christmas 2020.

David Duguid:

UK Government Ministers and officials are in close touch with their counterparts in all of the Devolved Administrations about the UK-wide approach to tackling the covid-19 outbreak over Christmas 2020.

TRANSPORT**■ Cycling: Accidents****Colleen Fletcher:**[\[91893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of cyclists who have died due to potholes on roads in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last five years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department does not collect data on the cause of road accidents, or on potholes in road accidents specifically.

Contributory factors assigned by police officers do not assign blame for the accident to any specific road user, however they do provide some insight into why and how road accidents occur. They give an indication of which factors the attending officer thought contributed to the accident. Officers do not need to carry out a full investigation of the incident before allocating contributory factors; they usually use professional judgement about what they can see at the scene.

The number of reported pedal cyclist fatalities in England where a contributory factor of 'poor or defective road surface' was reported in the personal injury road accident, for the last five years, is provided in the table.

Reported pedal cyclist fatalities in road accidents where 'Poor or defective road surface' was reported as a contributory factor, selected areas, 2015 to 2019

Year	England	West Midlands	Coventry
2015	1	0	0
2016	4	1	0
2017	0	0	0
2018	3	0	0
2019	2	0	0

Source: DfT STATS19

Road safety statistics are reported on a calendar year basis. The latest annual published statistics are for 2019. Data on reported personal injury road accidents in Great Britain for 2020 will be published in September 2021.

■ Driving Tests

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[91903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the suspension of driving tests on recruitment in the public transport sector.

Rachel Maclean:

We are closely monitoring the situation and engaging with operators to ensure that essential public transport services continue.

■ Electric Vehicles: Prices

Colleen Fletcher: [\[111547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the affordability of electric cars.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is investing £2.5bn, with grants available to reduce the upfront cost of plug in vehicles, as well as funding to support chargepoint infrastructure. The March Budget included £532m extra funding to keep plug in vehicle grants until 2022/3, and an additional £500m to support the roll out of charging infrastructure over the next five years. Additionally, all fully electric cars are exempt from Vehicle Excise

Duty, and will pay no Company Car Tax in 2020/21, just 1% in 2021/22 and 2% in 2022/23 through 2024/25. The Government is continuing to provide grants to encourage people to charge at home overnight with a grant of up to £350 towards the installation of domestic chargers. Research by Go Ultra Low indicates that charging at home can cost from as little as 1p per mile driven, compared to 8-12p per mile in a petrol or diesel car. As part of our consultation on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans, we are considering what further measures are required to support the uptake of zero emission vehicles.

■ **Merchant Shipping: Carbon Emissions**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[111511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it is his policy to require the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to produce recommendations for the merchant shipping industry.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is investing £2.5bn to support the transition to zero emission vehicles on our roads. There are no plans to require the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to produce recommendations for the merchant shipping industry. The Government's approach for decarbonising this sector is set out in the Clean Maritime Plan. Published in July 2019, the Plan outlines the UK's pathway to zero carbon emissions in domestic maritime. Further plans on the decarbonisation of the maritime sector will be included in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, to be published later this year.

■ **Public Transport: Carbon Emissions**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[111512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to require the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to consult trade unions on the employment implications of different low emission technologies under consideration for each mode of public transport.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department is developing a bold and ambitious plan to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport. Thousands of people and organisations, including trade unions, have responded to our call for engagement over the past six months and we are grateful for their contributions. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan will be published later this year.

■ **Railways: West Midlands**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[112109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for investment in the Birmingham-Black Country-Shrewsbury Line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Midlands Connect are developing proposals to improve journey times between Birmingham and Shrewsbury. We expect to receive a business case in due course.

Proposals are also being developed to improve the service using existing infrastructure, including adding an additional London to Shrewsbury via Birmingham service on a Sunday morning from May 21 and an extra Shrewsbury to London via Birmingham return service on Weekdays and Saturdays from December 2022. These proposals are subject to an assessment of COVID impacts.

Seafood: South West**Scott Mann:**[\[110873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of ensuring that seafood exporters in the South West have ready access to haulier export certificates.

Rachel Maclean:

I understand that the question relates to road haulage permits and market access.

The Government is committed to a Free Trade Agreement that would enable liberalised road haulage arrangements to continue.

In the event that the Transition Period ends without a Free Trade Agreement, it is not the Government's intention to rely solely on ECMT permits for market access.

However, ECMT permits would be used to supplement wider market access arrangements, either under an EU-wide agreement or a series of bilateral agreements with EU MS. An application window for ECMT permits opened on 2 November 2020 and will close on 20 November 2020.

Taxis: Coronavirus**John McDonnell:**[\[111405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will encourage the covid-secure provision of black cabs by issuing bespoke guidance to drivers of those vehicles on safer taxi travel during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will introduce a discount scheme for black cab passengers as restrictions ease and alert levels decline.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has published 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators' on the safe provision of transport services during the pandemic; this is applicable to the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) trade.

The Government has acted to support those that are self-employed and have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak across all sectors of the economy. The overwhelming majority of taxi and PHV drivers are self-employed and can therefore apply for grants through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme which has been extended to April 2021. Over the first three rounds of the scheme, up to £21,570 will have been made available. HMRC will provide details of the final grant,

to cover the period from February, in due course. The Department is in regular contact with sector representatives to discuss their concerns and will consider ways in which further appropriate support might be provided.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Stephen Flynn:

[\[110907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has made an economic assessment of the potential merits of the UK implementing covid-19 travel restrictions similar to those implemented by the New Zealand Government.

Robert Courts:

Our approach to tackling coronavirus is driven by the latest scientific and medical advice. This advice has not recommended a long-term border closure similar to other countries such as New Zealand.

The need for border measures is reviewed every 28 days, to ensure that they remain in line with the latest scientific evidence, and that they continue to be effective and necessary. An economic assessment is completed before measures are implemented and impacts captured through the review process.

■ **Travel: Funerals**

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[91904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether travelling overseas for the purposes of (a) arranging and (b) attending funerals are legally permitted reasons to travel during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Robert Courts:

You can leave home to attend a place of worship for individual prayer, a funeral or a related event for someone who has died, to visit a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a deathbed wedding. A list of what constitutes a 'reasonable excuse' for leaving home can be found in the [regulations](#).

You can travel internationally if travelling for a reason which would permit you to leave your home under the national lockdown rules, including those set out above.

Guidance for overseas travel is published in gov.uk, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>.

TREASURY

■ **Bank Services**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[111536\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people who do not have a bank account.

John Glen:

The Treasury does not make assessments of the number of people who do not have a bank account. However, in 2017, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published the results of the Financial Lives Survey which found that 1.3 million UK adults were unbanked, i.e. have no current account or alternative e-money account.

The Financial Lives Survey report contains further information on the characteristics of the unbanked. The report analyses survey results across the four nations of the UK, the nine regions of England, and by rural and urban areas. The FCA concluded the second Financial Lives Survey earlier this year and are now preparing the results for analysis.

The Government believes that individuals, regardless of their background or income, should have access to useful and affordable financial products and services, including a bank account.

Basic bank accounts are a key financial inclusion policy. They provide people with a way of receiving income, whether that be salary, pension, benefits or tax credits and enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis effectively, securely and confidently.

A basic bank account is fee-free for all everyday banking services and has no overdraft facility. The 9 largest personal current account providers in the UK are legally required to offer fee-free basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account in the UK or who are ineligible for a bank's standard current account.

The Treasury publishes data on basic bank accounts annually. The December 2019 publication shows that in total there are nearly 7.5 million basic bank accounts open in the UK.

■ Beer: Excise Duties**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[111625\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the financial effect of the changes to Small Brewers Relief on the smallest brewers in the UK.

Kemi Badenoch:

The smallest brewers in the UK produce less than 2,100 hectolitres and so will be unaffected by the Government's proposed reforms to the Small Brewers Relief taper.

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[110920\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he is having with representatives of the banking sector on potential further extensions of bounce back loans for businesses.

John Glen:

On the 2nd November, the Government announced that it would extend the application deadlines on the BBLs to the end of January 2021. This will give businesses two extra months to make loan applications, relative to the previous deadline of 30th November.

The Government will also adjust the BBLs rules to allow those businesses who have borrowed less than their maximum (i.e. less than 25% of their turnover) to top-up their existing loan. Businesses will be able to take-up this option from next week; where they can make use of this option once.

The Government understands that some businesses didn't anticipate the disruption to their business from the pandemic would go on for this long; this will ensure that they are able to benefit from the loan scheme as intended.

■ Cash Dispensing: Urban Areas**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[111553\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of cash machines on high streets in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each year since 2010.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that cash remains important to millions of people across the UK, which is why it has committed to legislate to protect access to cash and to ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable in the long term. To inform the development of this legislation, the Government published a Call for Evidence on 15 October.

LINK, the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network, publishes the annual total of free-to-use ATMs across the UK since 1998 online. In their monthly report, LINK stated that there are 42,248 free-to-use ATMs in the UK as of September 2020; although this is less than the peak number in 2017, this remains higher than a decade ago. LINK also publish information monthly on ATM numbers by Parliamentary constituency.

LINK has existing arrangements in place to protect free-to-use ATMs that do not have another free-to-use ATM or Post Office within 1 kilometre. LINK's members have also made £5 million available to fund ATMs at the request of communities with poor access to cash.

■ Childbirth: Scotland**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[110918\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has fiscal plans in place to tackle the low birthrate in Scotland.

Kenny MacAskill:[\[110919\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of using fiscal means to increase the birthrate.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury does not have a policy that pertains to increasing the birth rate in any part of the UK.

There is a range of support available for those who have children including Child Benefit, which can be claimed for any number of children. The UK has the longest maternity leave available among all the OECD countries and where pay is enhanced as part of the statutory maternity pay entitlement, the rate of pay provided is higher than the international standard. Alongside this, the government provides 15 hours of free childcare for all 3-4 year olds, alongside a further 15 hours free for eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, and 15 hours free for disadvantaged 2 year olds.

■ Debt Rescheduling: Coronavirus**Anna McMorris:**[\[111596\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the level of use of debt management plans as a result of financial difficulties due to the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government continues to engage closely with the debt advice sector, the Money and Pensions Service, the Financial Conduct Authority and other stakeholders to monitor and understand the ongoing and future impact of COVID19 on people's finances, including on the demand for debt advice and debt solutions, such as debt management plans.

The Government recognises that some people are struggling with their finances at this challenging time. To help people in problem debt get their finances back on track, an extra £37.8 million support package has been made available to debt advice providers this financial year, bringing this year's budget for free debt advice in England to over £100 million.

From May 2021 the Breathing Space scheme will offer people in problem debt a pause of up to 60 days on most enforcement action, interest, fees and charges, and will encourage them to seek professional debt advice.

■ Employment: Coronavirus**Mark Tami:**[\[110737\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support he plans to make available to (a) stem cell transplantation patients and (b) other clinically extremely vulnerable people who cannot work from home but have been advised by their doctor to not go into work during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the challenges presented by Covid-19 for stem cell transplantation patients and for all those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV). Individuals with underlying health conditions who cannot work from home can access the unprecedented package that the Government has introduced at this difficult time. This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which can both be claimed through the November 2020 lockdown. For clinically extremely vulnerable individuals who are on low incomes or who are out of work, the Government has injected a further £9.3bn into the welfare system according to OBR estimates.

To make a claim under the extended CJRS, employees must have been on their employers' PAYE payroll on or before 30 October 2020. Moreover, self-employed CEV individuals may be eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which has recently been extended and been made more generous. The Government is increasing the support to the self-employed under the SEISS from 40 per cent of trading profits to 80 per cent for the month of November. As SEISS grants are calculated over 3 months, this increases the total level of the grant from 40 per cent to 55 per cent of trading profits for November to January.

In addition, those who receive a notification that they need to shield will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from their employer, and New Style Employment and Support Allowance, subject to the wider eligibility criteria. Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support, for example where they are not eligible for SSP, they may be able to claim Universal Credit, depending on their personal circumstances.

The Government is also providing £32 million in additional funding to local authorities to support CEV people most at risk, including helping them to access food and meeting other support needs to enable them to stay at home as much as possible for the 28 day period that the restrictive advice is in force.

■ Exports: VAT**Nicola Richards:**[\[112167\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will take steps to ensure that an economic impact assessment is conducted before the VAT Retail Export Scheme ceases to be valid in the UK on 1st January 2021.

Mr William Wragg:[\[91898\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the removal of the Extra Statutory Concession on VAT on goods supplied at duty-free and tax-free shops on the economy.

Jesse Norman:

Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and

carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers). The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom (UK) will be able to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.
- Personal allowances will apply to passengers entering Great Britain from a destination outside of the UK, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- The VAT Retail Export Scheme (RES) in Great Britain will not be extended to EU residents and will be withdrawn for all passengers.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales for non-excise goods will be removed across the UK.

The Government published a consultation which ran from 11 March to 20 May. During this time the Government held a number of virtual meetings with stakeholders to hear their views and received 73 responses to the consultation. The Government is also continuing to meet and discuss with stakeholders following the announcement of these policies.

The detailed rationale for these changes are included in the written ministerial statement and summary of responses to the recent consultation: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-11/hcws448> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-duty-free-and-tax-free-goods-carried-by-passengers>. A technical note has also been issued to stakeholders to expand on this document and to respond to issues raised by stakeholders.

HMRC estimate that VAT RES refunds cost around £0.5 billion in VAT in 2019 for around 1.2 million non-EU visitors. In 2019 the ONS estimate there were substantially more EU visitors (24.8 million) than non-EU passengers (16.0 million) to the UK. This implies an extension to EU residents would significantly increase the cost by up to an estimated £0.9 billion. This would result in a large amount of deadweight loss by subsidising spending from EU visitors which already happens without a refund mechanism in place, potentially taking the total cost up to around £1.4 billion per annum.

The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales currently affects airports that fly to non-EU destinations. The extension of duty-free sales to EU bound passengers will be a significant boost to all airports in England, Scotland and Wales, including smaller regional airports which have not been able to offer duty-free to the EU before.

HMRC estimate that around £150 million of VAT is not charged as a result of tax-free airside sales. As with the VAT RES, extending the relief to the EU would significantly increase the cost of the scheme and result in a large amount of deadweight loss by subsidising spending from EU-bound passengers which already happens.

The final costings will be subject to scrutiny by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility and will be set out at the next forecast.

The Government also recognises the challenges the aviation sector is facing as it recovers from the impacts of Covid-19 and has supported the sector throughout the pandemic, and continues to do so, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

■ Free Zones: Infrastructure

Stephen Flynn:

[\[110904\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether funding has been allocated for any infrastructure costs associated with the roll out of free ports in the UK.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Government plans to establish Freeports across the UK as soon as possible. These will be national hubs for trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK. Freeports will spread jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country by unleashing the economic potential of our ports.

In the UK Government's recently published consultation response, we outlined that the Freeports model on offer will provide some seed capital from the UK Government to address infrastructure constraints relevant to Freeports and their surrounding area. This would apply in England only, or where decisions are not devolved. Further details will be included in the Bidding Prospectus, which will be published in due course.

Where policies are devolved, as in Scotland, the implementation and design of Freeports, including any infrastructure funding, will be a matter for each devolved administration to decide upon - although the UK Government will provide any assistance necessary if requested. The UK Government continues to work collaboratively and openly with the devolved administration in Scotland to deliver at least one Freeport in Scotland as soon as possible.

■ Free Zones: Non-domestic Rates

Stephen Flynn:

[\[110903\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of free ports on business rates receipts for local authorities.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Government plans to establish Freeports across the UK as soon as possible. These will be national hubs for trade, innovation and commerce, regenerating communities across the UK. Freeports will spread jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country by unleashing the economic potential of our ports.

In the UK Government's recently published consultation response, we outlined that that the UK government is evaluating options for local authorities to retain business rates as part of the Freeports programme. This would apply in England only, or where

decisions are not devolved. Further details will be included in the Bidding Prospectus, which will be published in due course.

Where policies are devolved, as in Scotland, the implementation and design of Freeports, including any infrastructure funding, will be a matter for each devolved administration to decide upon - although the UK Government will provide any assistance necessary if requested. The UK Government continues to work collaboratively and openly with the devolved administration in Scotland to deliver at least one Freeport in Scotland as soon as possible.

■ Insurance: Coronavirus

Nickie Aiken:

[\[110912\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with (a) campaigns for a government-backed insurance scheme for the UK live events industry and (b) the Let LIVE Thrive campaign.

John Glen:

The Government is working closely with the insurers, the trade bodies and regulators to understand what more the sector can do to support firms in response to the pandemic. We also continue to gather and monitor information on how different sectors are being affected by the current crisis and the availability of cover.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport is engaging with the live events sector to understand the issues they are currently facing. The Treasury will continue to engage with officials there to understand the latest position and assess proposals.

Event providers are eligible for assistance through the wider Government support package if they are in financial difficulty. We continue to keep the package under close review.

■ New Businesses: Coronavirus

John Stevenson:

[\[112024\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to support newly set up businesses during the second covid-19 lockdown.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government understands this is a challenging time for businesses. To reduce the risk of fraudulent claims, eligibility for many of the Covid-19 support schemes require businesses to have been trading before the end of March.

However, newly formed businesses may be able to access the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). Businesses are eligible for the CBILS if they are UK-based in their activity, with annual turnover of no more than £45m. For start-ups, or SMEs which have traded for less than 12 months, the lender should estimate turnover based upon the SME's forecasted turnover for the first 12 months of trading. On 2 November, the Chancellor announced that the application deadline for CBILS has been further extended to 31 January 2021.

Businesses established more recently may also be able to access funds through the Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes (LRSG) and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). To be eligible for the LRSG (Open) and LRSG (Closed) schemes at a local level, a business must have been trading on the date that local restrictions came into force. Local Authorities have been given discretion to use funds provided by the ARG as they see fit, but we encourage them to set up a discretionary grant scheme e.g. for those businesses who are affected by closures but are not legally required to close. Guidance was published on 3rd November 2020 and FAQs will shortly be issued to all Local Authorities.

Finally, newly established businesses will be able to furlough staff through the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Neither the employer nor the employee needs to have previously claimed or have been claimed for under CJRS to make a claim under the extended CJRS (if other eligibility criteria are met). The employer must have made a PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) submission to HMRC between 20 March 2020 and 30 October 2020, notifying a payment of earnings for that employee.

In addition to these measures, the Government continues to support entrepreneurs through its network of 38 Local Growth Hubs and the Start-Up Loans programme, for which almost 74,000 loans have been issued since 2012.

As we head into the Winter, the Government is continuing to engage with businesses and representative groups to ensure the support provided to businesses, including those established more recently, is appropriate.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Stephen Hammond:

[\[110758\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing people who have become self-employed since April 2019 to claim for support from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension.

Jesse Norman:

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

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

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax

deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Directors

Stephen Hammond:

[\[110759\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing self-employed limited company directors to claim for support from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension.

Jesse Norman:

The practical issues that prevented the inclusion of 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 risk, still remain.

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 holds, targeting additional support would require owner-managers to make a claim and submit information that HMRC could not efficiently verify to ensure payments were made to eligible companies for eligible activity. This is about managing and securing the SEISS Grant Extension against fraud risk and misuse.

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

Those ineligible for the SEISS Grant Extension may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support available. This includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Taxis

John McDonnell:

[\[110721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will increase the level of financial support provided through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension to taxi drivers; and if he will extend eligibility for that financial support to (a) taxi drivers who have recently purchased a new taxi and (b) those taxi drivers who have been ineligible for financial support under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has acted to support those that are self-employed and have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak across all sectors of the economy. The overwhelming majority of taxi and private hire vehicle drivers are self-employed and

can therefore apply for a grant 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 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.

Those ineligible for financial support under 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.

■ **Stamp Duty Land Tax: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[110743\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of granting an extension to the Stamp Duty Land Tax Relief to mitigate potential disruption in the housing market during the covid-19 lockdown.

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 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.

■ **Taxis: Coronavirus**

John McDonnell:

[\[110720\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide additional bespoke financial support for taxi drivers in response to the covid-19 outbreak similar to the Government support that has been provided to the hospitality sector to ensure that viable taxi drivers are able to continue to trade in the longer term.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government appreciates this is a challenging time for many sectors and individuals, including taxi and private hire drivers. With the resurgence of the virus and tightening of restrictions to protect people's health, we have taken further steps to protect jobs and businesses.

The Chancellor announced on 5 November the next income support grant which covers the period November to January, will now increase to 80% of average profits, up to £7,500. This will provide vital financial support to the roughly 80% of taxi and private hire drivers who are self-employed.

Drivers who are employed will benefit from an extension of the furlough scheme to the end of March. The government will continue to help pay people's wages, up to 80% of the normal amount.

Treasury: Correspondence**Richard Thomson:**[\[110924\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Chief Secretary to the Treasury plans to reply to the correspondence from Stewart Stevenson MSP of 3 July 2020, 8 September 2020 and 14 October 2020, Treasury correspondence reference MC2020/00724.

Steve Barclay:

I have responded to Mr Stevenson's letter and a copy has been sent by email on 9th Nov.

WALES**Coronavirus: Wales****Hywel Williams:**[\[91849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to Answer of 14 October to the Question 907297, if he will publish data on the Barnett consequential of each covid-19 funding announcement made for England.

Simon Hart:

The Government has provided the Welsh Government with a funding guarantee of at least a further £5 billion this year to respond to Covid-19. We published information on Barnett consequentials with the Main Estimates for 2020-21. We will provide further information with the 2020-21 Supplementary Estimates, which will be published later in the financial year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Social Security Benefits: Poverty

Colleen Fletcher:

[91892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the welfare system in helping to alleviate levels of (a) pensioner, (b) in-work, (c) food and (d) child poverty.

Will Quince:

Throughout the pandemic, this Government has put an unprecedented package of support in place to strengthen the welfare safety net for individuals, families and communities who need help at this critical time. A [distributional analysis](#) conducted by HMT shows that government interventions since March 2020 have:

- supported the poorest working households the most (as a proportion of February income)
- been worth around a fifth of incomes for working households (on average)
- reduced the scale of losses for working households by up to two-thirds

Additionally, through the COVID Winter Grant Scheme, announced on 9 November, we are extending that support with an additional £170m for local authorities in England so that they can support families with children and other vulnerable people with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter.

Our most recent published statistics on poverty rates are for a pre-COVID period (up to 2018/19), available in the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201819>

The link provides poverty rates for children, working age adults and pensioners, and also includes breakdowns of poverty rates by benefit types.

No assessment has been done by this Department on food poverty.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Noradrenaline

Paul Bristow: [\[105571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the use of noradrenaline throughout the NHS in England in each month of 2020.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 October 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement undertake regular monitoring of the demand and supply position for priority medicines including noradrenaline. A table showing this information is attached.

We cannot make accurate projections of demand going forward. However, we have used the information regarding first wave usage to inform mitigations for a second wave, such as stockpiling.

Attachments:

1. [2020 10 22 PQs 105571-72 Bristow attachment.xlsx](#)

Paul Bristow: [\[105572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an estimate of demand for noradrenaline during the remainder of 2020-21.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 October 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement undertake regular monitoring of the demand and supply position for priority medicines including noradrenaline. A table showing this information is attached.

We cannot make accurate projections of demand going forward. However, we have used the information regarding first wave usage to inform mitigations for a second wave, such as stockpiling.

Attachments:

1. [2020 10 22 PQs 105571-72 Bristow attachment.xlsx](#)

TRANSPORT**■ 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.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 10 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:

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.

Attachments:

1. **Electric vehicle charging infrastructure - local authorities.xlsx**

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ National Security and Investment Bill and response to the National Security and Investment White Paper

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma): [\[HCWS568\]](#)

I am today introducing the National Security and Investment Bill to update the Government's investment screening powers and strike the right balance between maintaining an open economy and giving us the tools we need to intervene in cases of serious concern. I am also publishing the Government's response to the public consultation on the "National Security and Investment" White Paper, an Impact Assessment for the Bill, and a revised draft Statement of Policy. In addition, I am launching a consultation on secondary legislation to define the sectors subject to mandatory notification.

This Government is a champion for free trade, recognising that inward investment is economically highly beneficial. Investment in UK plc boosts productivity by backing businesses to create good jobs and develop skills, and will help support our economic recovery from COVID-19. Since 2010/11, over 600,000 new jobs have been created in our economy thanks to over 16,000 FDI projects. During that decade, over \$750 billion has flowed into the UK as a result of FDI. Investors value our legal system, our highly competitive tax regime, and a stable regulatory approach that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world. The recently announced Office for Investment will build on the Government's proud record and ensure that the UK remains a premier investment destination as we take advantage of our new status outside the European Union as an independent country.

An open approach to international investment must, however, also include appropriate safeguards to protect our national security and the safety of our citizens. The UK and our allies face continued and broad-ranging hostile activity from foreign intelligence agencies and others, who seek to compromise our national security. When it comes to investment, we are seeing novel means to undermine the UK's national security that go beyond traditional mergers and acquisitions and also go beyond the reach of our current powers; such as structuring deals to obscure who is behind them. Such behaviour, left unchecked, can leave sensitive UK businesses vulnerable to disruption and espionage. It is crucial that the Government is able to fully combat these threats.

Our current powers to prevent hostile foreign investment in our businesses are set out in the Enterprise Act 2002. Technological, economic, and geopolitical changes across the globe over the last 20 years mean that reforms to the Government's powers to scrutinise transactions on national security grounds are required. Currently, subject to minor exceptions, target businesses must have a UK turnover of over £70 million or meet a combined share of supply test before Government can intervene on national security

grounds. This means that businesses below the £70 million threshold, including those at the very forefront of technological breakthroughs and national security-sensitive innovation, are too often beyond the scope of the present legislation. The Government is also unable to intervene in acquisitions of sensitive assets whose transfer might have national security implications.

The Government is therefore legislating to update its powers to respond to these changing threats and to bring our regime in line with that of our Five Eyes allies and other security partners.

More security for British businesses and people

The National Security and Investment Bill will require notification and clearance of investments in businesses in key sectors, such as defence and artificial intelligence, to our new Investment Security Unit. A full list is provided at the end of this statement and today we are publishing a consultation paper on the definition of these sectors. This consultation will be used to refine the definitions so that they are clear, allow parties to self-assess whether they need to notify, and are narrowly focussed on the specific parts of sectors where risks are most likely to arise. This approach will ensure that the regime is targeted and proportionate, and keeps Britain firmly open for business. The Bill will bring us into line with other countries, such as the USA, whose Committee on Foreign Investment also operates a mandatory notification model that investors will be familiar with.

Other investments can also be notified to the Investment Security Unit or proactively “called in” by the Government for national security assessments. This maintains the current flexibility under the Enterprise Act 2002 so that the Government can address national security risks wherever they arise in the economy. The Bill will cover acquisitions of assets, including intellectual property such as trade secrets and software, so that the risks of such transactions can also be fully scrutinised. This combined approach will provide a proportionate defence against hostile actors targeting sensitive sectors in ever more novel and complex ways.

Transactions subject to mandatory notification will not be allowed to proceed without Government approval and any deal that is completed without approval will be automatically void in law. This approach is in line with powers under the French and Italian regimes.

The regime will be underpinned by both civil and criminal sanctions, creating effective deterrents for non-compliance with statutory obligations, in line with many of our allies’ screening regimes, including France and Germany.

The new powers are not limited by turnover or share of supply thresholds, meaning acquisitions of companies of any size, in any sector, can be examined, providing the Secretary of State reasonably suspects that the transaction has given, or may give rise to, a national security risk.

We have increased the period for “calling in” non-notified transactions which the Secretary of State reasonably suspects may raise national security concerns, to up to five

years after they take place – and only those which take place from the point of Bill introduction onwards. Again, this is similar to the French, German and Italian regimes and will help to ensure that the risks posed by hostile actors seeking to complete deals in secret can be addressed. As outlined above, by notifying transactions (including after they take place) which are not covered by mandatory notification but may nonetheless be of potential national security interest, businesses and investors will be able to get a decision and achieve deal certainty.

Once a transaction has been called in and a full assessment process has been carried out, where the clear legal test is met, the Government will be able to impose remedies on transactions. This includes, in the small minority of cases where it is the only appropriate way to address the risks posed by the transaction, blocking or unwinding a deal. For the avoidance of doubt, the Government expects that the vast majority of transactions will be cleared outright, that only a small minority are likely to require conditions, and that only those transactions that present the most serious risks are likely to be blocked. Nonetheless, it is vital we have all the necessary tools available to keep this country safe and such remedies are consistent with the approach under our existing legislation.

The Business Secretary will be the single decision-maker for the new regime and will act with advice from the Investment Security Unit, policy experts in government and with full information from the interested parties, including the ability to hear evidence from the parties in person. This will ensure consistency of decisions across all sectors, that there is a single avenue of approach for business and investors through the Business Department, and that a pro-business outlook underpins the very heart of our investment screening process.

Slicker investment routes and more certainty for businesses

We will make any interactions with government simpler and quicker by providing clearance to most transactions within 30 working days, with notifiable investments submitted through a new digital portal. Timelines for assessments will be set out in law and not set by the Government on a case-by-case basis as at present under the Enterprise Act 2002, which can take many months to receive clearance.

The digital portal will be available upon commencement of the new regime. In the meantime, businesses and investors can contact the Government to discuss potential transactions of interest by email at: investment.screening@beis.gov.uk

The National Security and Investment Bill requires notified transactions to be either cleared or “called in” within 30 working days of the notification being given and accepted. If a transaction is cleared, then there is no further opportunity after this point for the Government to intervene (unless false or misleading information was provided), so businesses and investors can achieve maximum certainty.

Once a transaction has been “called in”, the Government will then have 30 working days, extendable – in cases where the specific legal test is met – by a further 45 working days, to carry out a full assessment of the transaction. That may include gathering further information about the deal, identifying the nature and extent of the risks it may pose, and working with the parties to explore potential remedies.

These statutory timescales will enable business and investors to plan their affairs with clarity about when they can expect decisions and give them the confidence they need to do business in the UK. Again, any transaction cleared following such an assessment cannot be re-examined by the Government at a later date (unless false or misleading information was provided) and the outcome of all cases requiring the imposition of final remedies must be published by the Business Secretary.

This, alongside the publication of an annual report as required by the Bill, reflects the Government's commitment to providing the greatest level of transparency possible within the confines of a national security regime. Businesses, investors, and their advisers will be able to use this information to attain greater certainty about their own activities and the types of prospective transactions which should be notified.

A regime in line with our allies

We are not acting in isolation. Many of our closest allies, including our Five Eyes partners and France, Germany, and Japan, have similarly reformed their powers in this area over the last few years.

Like us, the United States has also recently introduced mandatory notification requirements in specific parts of the economy to respond to the changing threats. In July, the Australian Government also released draft legislation requiring foreign investors to seek approval to acquire a direct interest in sensitive national security businesses. We will continue to work with like-minded countries to address the shared risks that we face, including through the vector of investment.

The UK's proportionate updates build on the best practice established around the world by like-minded countries and deliver a balanced regime that provides the Government with the flexible powers it needs while keeping our country firmly open to investment.

The Government has been clear for a number of years about its intention to introduce legislation in the area of national security and investment. As we re-build from COVID-19 where sensitive British businesses may be vulnerable, we must go further and ensure that the Government can intervene in any deal across the economy that raises risks.

In summary, the Government believes that the final package of reforms introduced to Parliament in the National Security and Investment Bill today strikes the right balance between maintaining the openness and attractiveness of the UK as a destination for inward investment, while also providing the Government with the appropriate powers it needs to protect the country.

I will lay both the Government Response to the White Paper consultation and the accompanying Bill before Parliament. I will place copies of the Impact Assessment, the draft Statement of Policy, and the consultation on secondary legislation to define the sectors subject to mandatory notification, in the libraries of the House.

List of sectors with activities to be covered by mandatory notification

1. Advanced Materials
2. Advanced Robotics

3. Artificial Intelligence
4. Civil Nuclear
5. Communications
6. Computing Hardware
7. Critical Suppliers to Government
8. Critical Suppliers to the Emergency Services
9. Cryptographic Authentication
10. Data Infrastructure
11. Defence
12. Energy
13. Engineering Biology
14. Military and Dual Use
15. Quantum Technologies
16. Satellite and Space Technologies
17. Transport

EDUCATION

■ Higher Education Update

The Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan):

[\[HCWS571\]](#)

As a Government we have made a commitment to ensure students living at university will be able to go home at the end of term, if they choose to do so. Today, I am announcing the measures that we are putting in place to enable students to return home as safely as possible.

The national restrictions are set in law to finish on 2 December and the government is committed to this date. In order to ensure that students can return home at the end of the autumn term but also reduce any transmission risk, the Government is asking that students return home once the national restrictions have been lifted, in a “student travel window” lasting from 3-9 December. This excludes students who have tested positive or been notified by the NHS test and trace system.

Universities should stagger departure dates across faculties and with other institutions in the region to manage pressure on transport infrastructure. In order to ensure that students can travel home during this window, higher education providers should cease in-person teaching no later than 9 December. Moving online learning by 9 December will allow students to start to return home, and any students who have tested positive to complete their period of self-isolation and return home before Christmas.

As the Prime Minister announced this week, we are also working closely with universities to roll out mass testing for students. We have made huge strides in our testing capability in recent weeks, and we will offer this to as many students as possible before they travel home, targeting this in areas of high prevalence. This will help to provide further confidence that students can leave safely if they test negative. If a student tests positive or they are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace before their departure, they will need to remain in self-isolation, following the relevant guidance. Moving all learning online by 9 December allows enough time for students to complete this isolation period, where required, before returning home for Christmas.

Under the current national restrictions students will have completed a 4-week period of national restriction by 2 December, limiting the risk of them contracting and transmitting Coronavirus (COVID-19). As this is a key measure to reduce the risk of transmission to their families and friends at home, it is very important that students comply with the measures for the duration of the period of national restrictions and manage social interactions safely between 3 December and the point of travel. I ask students to work with us to keep themselves and their families safe, while allowing them to return home at the end of term if they choose to do so.

We are working with the devolved administrations to ensure that all students, no matter where they live or study, are treated fairly and can travel home as safely as possible to keep all our communities safe.

English students at universities in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland should follow the guidance relevant to where they are living before returning home. When they return to England, they should follow their local guidance for their home area. Students returning to their home in England who have not completed the 4 weeks of national restrictions should undertake at least 14 days of restricted contact either before or after return home to minimise their risk of transmission.

We know that not all students will be able to go home, or may choose not to do so. It is vital that support continues for those who choose to stay at university over Christmas, including our international students, care leavers and those who may be estranged from their families. We have asked universities to ensure they have plans for those students who remain on campus and this includes ensuring that support continues over winter break.

Finally, I want to assure parents, students and staff that their welfare is our priority. The hard work of university staff has meant we are able to keep students and staff as safe as possible during term, and I am very grateful for their efforts to deliver an appropriate balance of online and in-person teaching, as agreed with public health teams. We are pleased we can now announce how students can travel home at the end of term, while keeping themselves, their families, and their communities, as safe as possible.

TREASURY**■ Action 19 of the Economic Crime Plan**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen): [\[HCWS570\]](#)

As part of the Government's July 2019 Economic Crime Plan[1], the Treasury undertook to consider the case for a Government power to block listings[2] on UK financial markets on the grounds of national security. This work has concluded and indicates that there are possible scenarios in which a proposed listing may potentially give rise to national security concerns. Therefore, alongside today's introduction of the National Security and Investment (NS&I) Bill, the Government is announcing its intention to bring forward a precautionary power to block listings on national security grounds.

In designing this power, the Government will take full account of the fact that companies from all over the world come to the UK, as a world-leading financial centre, in order to raise capital. They are attracted by the depth, breadth and openness of our markets as well as London's reputation for clean and transparent markets. This power will reinforce that reputation and help us maintain London's status as a world-class listings destination. The Treasury will publish a full consultation to inform the design of the power, which we expect to launch in early 2021. Further information will be set out in the consultation document.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/economic-crime-plan-2019-to-2022/economic-crime-plan-2019-to-2022-accessible-version>

[2] When a company wants to raise capital, it can do this through 'listing' its securities on a public market, such as the London Stock Exchange (LSE).

■ Notification of Contingent Liability

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak): [\[HCWS569\]](#)

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Bank of England decided at its meeting ending on 04 November to ask for an expansion in the maximum limit of purchases that may be undertaken by the Asset Purchase Facility (APF). This will encompass up to £150 billion of further purchases of gilts to support the economy.

In light of the recent economic conditions, the MPC judged further asset purchases financed by the issuance of central bank reserves should be undertaken to enable the MPC to meet its statutory objectives, and thereby support the economy. I have therefore authorised an increase in the total size of the APF of £150 billion. This will bring the maximum total size of the APF from £745 to £895 billion.

In line with the requirements in the MPC remit, the amendments to the APF that could affect the allocation of credit and pose risks to the Exchequer have been discussed with Treasury officials. The risk control framework previously agreed with the Treasury will remain in place, and HM Treasury will keep monitoring risks to public funds from the Facility through regular risk oversight meetings and enhanced information sharing with the Bank.

There will continue to be an opportunity for the Treasury to provide views to the MPC on the design of the schemes within the APF, as they affect the Government's broader economic objectives and may pose risks to the Exchequer.

The Government will continue to indemnify the Bank and the APF from any losses arising out of, or in connection with, the facility. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal supply procedure.

A full departmental Minute has been laid in the House of Commons providing more detail on this contingent liability.