



Daily Report

Monday, 23 November 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 November 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:23 P.M., 23 November 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Location

Sir Charles Walker:

[116415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department is providing to businesses considering relocating overseas on domestic support that businesses might be able to access which could make remaining in the UK a more attractive option; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The UK is one of the best places in the world to start and grow a business as is shown by our position as a leading destination for foreign direct investment. For example, commenting on the publication of the EY 2020 UK Attractiveness Survey, EY's UK Chief Economist, Mark Gregory, said "The UK's performance in attracting FDI in the digital economy in 2019 was impressive. The UK is the stand out digital economy in Europe, while UK R&D projects leapt to a decade-high". Officials in the Department and across the Government stand ready to assist UK businesses keen to grow and make the most of their investments in the UK. Businesses wishing to do so should contact the Department's enquiry line on 020 7215 5000 where they will receive assistance in contacting the relevant sector team that leads on their sector - in BEIS or in the correct alternative other government department.

■ Consumers: Protection

Sir Christopher Chope:

[116379]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2020 to Question 20380 on Consumers: Protection, what the outcome was of the meeting of the CPP Intelligence Gathering Group on 23 April 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

At the 23rd April 2020 meeting of the Consumer Protection Partnership (CPP), members' comments on consumer related issues that had been identified in the park home sector and detail of any action undertaken were collated and forwarded to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who were reviewing what could be done to mitigate some of the detriment faced by park home owners. The Government's response to MHCLG's consultation on the fit and proper test for site owners and managers was published in July 2020. The response, Mobile Homes: a fit and proper person test for park home sites, can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/mobile-homes-a-fit-and-proper-person-test-for-park-home-sites#history>.

■ COP26 Youth and Civil Society Advisory Council

Caroline Lucas:

[\[117230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will (a) publish the full list of names of members of the COP26 Presidency's Youth and Civil Society Advisory Council and (b) place a copy of the minutes from the first meeting of that Council in the Library.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The first meeting of the COP26 Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council took place on 16 October and a copy of the minutes, which contain details of the members, will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ Coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund

Nickie Aiken:

[\[116654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer to Question 113639, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the grant of (a) £194,420 to the City of London on the basis of 24,020 businesses listed resulting in approximately £8 per business to distribute and (b) £4,849,340 to Islington on the basis of 21,175 businesses listed resulting in approximately £229 per business to distribute with his Department's policy to achieve a fairly equal distribution of Additional Restrictions Grant.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Additional Restrictions Grant is a discretionary scheme and is one of many business support schemes put in place during local and national Covid-19 restrictions. Local authorities have the flexibility to provide grants of any size to businesses and/or to fund wider business support.

Whichever formula is used to calculate grant allocations will result in a range of results with some areas receiving more than others. The method used provides a fairly equal distribution overall.

Both the City of London and the City of Westminster also receive a Local Restrictions Support grant for businesses that are required to close (£4.8 million and £21.8 million respectively), as well as discretionary grant funding related to the period that they were in Local Coronavirus Alert Level High ('Tier 2') (£907,000 and £3.8 million respectively).

■ Coronavirus: East Riding

Emma Hardy:

[\[117354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the letter of 13 November 2020 from the Leader of Kingston upon Hull City Council, Stephen Brady OBE, on the levels of covid-19 infection in the city, what plans he has to make discretionary support available to businesses in Hull and the East Riding once the November 2020 covid-19 restrictions end on 2 December 2020.

Paul Scully:

Hull City Council has received £5,195,560 and East Riding of Yorkshire Council has received £6,823,460 in Additional Restrictions Grant funding. This is a discretionary grant which is being provided to local authorities in order to provide support to their business communities over and above the up to £3,000 per four week period grant available to all businesses that are required to close due to national or local restrictions. The Additional Restrictions Grant can be spent at any point up until the end of financial year 2021/22.

In addition, areas reverting to either Tier 2 or Tier 3 following the national lockdown would be eligible for both Local Restrictions Grant Support (Closed) for businesses that are required to close and Local Restrictions Grant Support (Open) that provides Local Authorities with a discretionary fund to support businesses that are not required to close but are severely impacted.

We are working closely with local authorities to roll out business support grant schemes as quickly as practicable and we are keeping levels of support under close review.

■ Coronavirus: Retail Trade**Emma Hardy:**[\[116631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take steps against retailers that do not limit the number of customers in accordance with Government guidance on Working safely during coronavirus, last updated on 9 November 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Government guidance on working safely during coronavirus states that it is for each business to carry out its own risk assessment, in consultation with their workers, to inform the actions they should take to reduce the risks of COVID-19. All companies have the same obligations to protect the health and safety of their workers and other people who may be affected by their business.

Employers will need to consider how best to maintain social distancing at their workplace. This may include restricting the number of customers in a shop at any one time and making this clear to customers and other visitors.

If anyone has concerns that employers are not taking all reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risks of COVID-19, they should get in touch with their employee representative or union, or with the Health and Safety Executive.

If the enforcing authority finds that an employer is not taking action to properly manage workplace risk, a range of actions is open to them including specific advice or issuing enforcement notices.

The vast majority of employers are responsible and will join with the UK's fight against COVID-19 by working with the government and their sector bodies to protect

their workers and the public. However, inspectors are carrying out compliance checks nationwide to ensure that employers are taking the necessary steps.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Claire Hanna:

[\[116696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many vaccines under development from sources other than Pfizer and Moderna the Government has on order; and how many of those on order he plans to distribute to the devolved nations.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK government has secured early access to 355 million vaccines doses through agreements with seven separate vaccine developers, which have been purchased for the whole of the UK. This includes agreements with:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 40 million doses.
- Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses.
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur for 60 million doses.
- Novavax for 60 million doses.
- Janssen for 30 million doses.
- Valneva for 60 million doses.
- Moderna for 5 million doses.

■ Educational Institutions: Research

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[116506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much Government research funding has been allocated to each higher education institution in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last five years.

Amanda Solloway:

Research income from UK public sources reported by Higher Education Providers in the most recent 5 years, as set out in Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), indicates the following. This includes Research Council grants, Quality related Research Funding/Research England funding, and funding from UK Central Government/Public Bodies.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£/million	£/million	£/million	£/million	£/million
England	4172	3967	3964	4126	4335
Coventry	105	123	125	127	140

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Coventry University	6	8	14	8	9
The University of Warwick	99	115	112	119	131
West Midlands	256	284	273	280	307
Aston University	11	13	11	11	12
Birmingham City University	3	3	3	4	4
Coventry University	6	8	14	8	9
Harper Adams University	2	2	2	2	2
Keele University	0	18	19	19	18
Newman University	0	0	0	0	0
Staffordshire University	1	1	1	1	2
The University of Birmingham	112	120	107	111	125
The University of Keele	19	0	0	0	0
The University of Warwick	99	115	112	119	131
The University of Wolverhampton	2	2	2	2	3
University College Birmingham	0	0	0	0	0
University of	1	2	2	1	1

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Worcester					

■ Electricity Interconnectors

James Cartlidge: [\[117322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the proposed completion date is of the Eastern HVDC link project.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The three main transmission companies in Great Britain, National Grid, Scottish Power and SSE announced on 16th November that they are together taking forward work on the Eastern HDVC link, which will connect Peterhead, Aberdeenshire and Drax, North Yorkshire. Investment in network projects like the Eastern HVDC link project is key to supporting the Government's 10-point plan to drive a Green Industrial Revolution in the UK, as part of the energy system transformation needed to integrate clean technologies such as offshore wind, electric vehicles and electric heat pumps.

Delivery of the Easter link is a matter for the companies concerned, who are now proceeding with the planning and consultation phases of the project. I understand from National Grid that the link is scheduled for completion in 2027.

■ Fossil Fuels: Finance

Caroline Lucas: [\[117227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy for the Government to end the public financing of fossil fuels projects overseas by COP26.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

At the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January we announced an end to Government support for thermal coal mining and coal power plants overseas, and we continue to keep our approach to other fossil fuel investments and financing overseas under review.

■ Green Deal Scheme

Anne McLaughlin: [\[116561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total value is of all Green Deal loans taken out by consumers (a) without fees and interest and (b) including fees and interest.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Department does not hold data on the total value of Green Deal loans, whether taken out with Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) or any other Green Deal Provider.

The then Secretary of State Greg Clark delegated initial reviews of complaints about mis-selling to the Financial Ombudsman Service under section 32 of the Energy Act 2011 on 24th October 2018. Their consideration is part of the wider review process. Responsibility for deciding whether a breach has occurred and, if so, whether a sanction should be imposed rests with the Secretary of State, in line with the requirements of the Framework Regulations.

Under this delegation the Financial Ombudsman Service has made recommendations regarding 143 complaints about HELMS. Recommendations may cover whether to cancel or reduce loans, or cover other matters, such as whether to conclude that there have been breaches of the Green Deal Framework regulations. For 69 of these complaints, the Financial Ombudsman Service recommended cancellation.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme**Helen Hayes:**[\[116586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) uptake of the green home grant scheme by installers and (b) availability of those installers in (i) London and (ii) England.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As of 16 November, there were 1,196 businesses in England that are TrustMark registered and certified to install measures under the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme, with more registering every day. We do not have data on the total number of installers who cover Greater London, however across the region, there are between 50 and 66 TrustMark registered installers available in Local Authorities to carry out home retrofits.

Helen Hayes:[\[116587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the accreditation process for installers on the uptake of the green home grant scheme by small building firms; and what steps he is taking to promote that scheme among small building firms.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In order to qualify as a Green Homes Grant installer, tradespeople must be Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certified for clean heat measures and certified to the appropriate PAS standards for energy efficiency measures. This ensures improvements are completed to the high standards and consumers are protected.

BEIS officials have taken a number of steps to engage with the building sector and promote the green home grant scheme among small building firms, including working with Trade Associations to engage with and promote interest in the scheme among a wide range of installer groups including small building firms. In particular we wrote to the construction industry to ensure that they are aware of the scheme and the opportunities it presents.

Ben Everitt: [\[117391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homes have been retrofitted since the Government announced its Green Homes Grant scheme on 28 August 2020.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Green Homes Grant Scheme launched for applications on 30 September and as announced on 18 November will run until 31 March 2022.

As of 20:00 on 19 November 2020, 43,126 grant applications have been received for the Green Homes Grant scheme. Vouchers become redeemable once scheduled works are completed and as yet, no vouchers have been redeemed.

BEIS will continue to monitor application data as the scheme progresses.

■ Hospitality Industry and Leisure: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel: [\[116644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to issue additional guidance on the student travel window to students who intend to return to hospitality and leisure roles after the national covid-19 restrictions end on 2 December 2020.

Paul Scully:

We have produced [guidance](#) for employers and employees to ensure workplaces are COVID-secure. All guidance and measures are kept under review and updated accordingly.

The Department for Education's guidance for students and others regarding the student travel window is located [here](#).

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions and Environment Protection

Ben Everitt: [\[117392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of jobs which could be created for the purpose of undertaking (a) environmentally efficient retrofitting of homes and (b) the construction of low-carbon homes in the next five years.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

It is estimated that the UK low-carbon economy could grow more than four times faster than the rest of the economy between 2015 and 2030 and support up to 2

million jobs. As set out in the 10 point plan for a green industrial revolution, the Government is investing £1 billion to make our homes, schools and hospitals greener, warmer and more energy efficient, whilst creating 50,000 jobs by 2030.

■ Postgraduate Education: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[117377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance he is providing to universities on allowing PhD students whose projects have been affected by the covid-19 lockdown to apply for extensions to their funding.

Amanda Solloway:

PhD students are funded from a variety of sources, whether that is a research funder, their host institution, or if they are self-funded. Government funds PhD students through UKRI, which funds around 25% of the total PhD population in the UK.

UKRI have already taken steps to support PhD extensions working to ensure that all the students it funds would continue to receive their maintenance stipend during the lockdown and would not have to suspend their studies. UKRI-funded students in receipt of a costed extension will continue to receive this stipend during their extension period. UKRI announced on 11 November £19m of further support, making a total of over £60m of financial support available to students most impacted by the pandemic.

We encourage all PhD students to discuss with their supervisors how projects can be adjusted to complete their doctoral education to a satisfactory standard. Decisions on extensions are the responsibility of individual funders, and we expect research institutions to act flexibly based on what funding is available. We will continue to monitor how the pandemic is affecting PhD students and the wider research system.

■ Redundancy

Andy McDonald:

[\[116491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure companies comply with legislation on redundancy consultancy procedures.

Paul Scully:

The Government's role in these situations is to set the legislative framework and requirements for collective redundancy consultation.

Disputes about the compliance are generally questions of fact and the Employment Tribunal is best placed to determine whether a breach of the requirements has taken place and whether there should be an award for the breach.

The Government has powers to act where there has been a failure to notify the Secretary of State of proposed collective redundancies prior to the start of statutory consultation.

The Government has a robust package of measures to address non-compliance including:

- potential disciplinary action for officeholders who fail to consult following appointment on insolvency,
- a financial penalty on employers who fail to engage with employees and;
- potential prosecution for failure to notify the relevant competent authority when proposing redundancies.

Government recognises the importance of ensuring that where redundancies are necessary, employers get the process right. Acas has been running webinars focusing on handling redundancies in both collective and non-collective situations. The range of digital events outline the legal processes around redundancy. The events have been updated to consider the specific challenges around Coronavirus as well as alternatives to redundancy, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

In addition, Acas, CBI and TUC have published a joint statement on handling redundancies. Their message encourages employers to exhaust all possible alternatives before making redundancies and to consult with their workforce on what these alternatives might be. The organisations have called on all employers considering redundancies to work with their trade unions and employees and get the process right by following 5 principles:

1. Do it openly – whatever the scale of the redundancies, the sooner people understand the situation, the better for everyone;
2. Do it thoroughly - by providing information and guidance;
3. Do it genuinely – consultation means hearing people's views before you make a decision and being open to alternatives based on feedback;
4. Do it fairly - all aspects of your redundancy procedure should be conducted fairly and without any form of discrimination.
5. Do it with dignity - losing your job has a human as well as a business cost. The way you let people go says a lot about your organisation's values. Think about how you will handle the conversation – whether it is face-to-face or remote.

■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Mary Glendon:

[116478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to allow small independent retailers to sell homeware and clothes during future covid-19 lockdown periods, in line with the rules for supermarkets.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises this will be a challenging time for any business which has been asked to close.

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

The current restrictions will expire on 2 December, and our intention is to return to a system of local and regional restrictions. We will set out what this means for retailers and other businesses as soon as possible.

■ Sunday Trading: Coronavirus

Fleur Anderson:

[\[117384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will suspend Sunday trading hours and extend them in December 2020 to allow for social distancing during the Christmas shopping rush on the limited number of Sundays between the end of lockdown and Christmas.

Paul Scully:

The Government has regular conversations with the retail sector and other key stakeholders, and many have advocated a temporary change to Sunday trading rules to help manage social distancing. We currently have no plans to change the legislation, but we will keep measures like this under review.

■ UK Research and Innovation: Finance

Claire Hanna:

[\[117390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the statement of 11 November 2020 from UK Research and Innovation entitled, Doctoral students advised to adjust projects for covid-19, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating additional funding to UKRI to ensure people on low incomes or without financial support can access extensions to their funded period when required.

Amanda Solloway:

UKRI have already acted this year to support PhD students during the pandemic. In March, UKRI worked to ensure that all the students it funds would continue to receive their maintenance stipend during the lockdown and would not have to suspend their studies; UKRI-funded students in receipt of a costed extension will continue to receive this stipend during their extension period.

In April it was announced that UKRI-funded PhD students in the final year and whose studies have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic would be provided with additional support. Subsequently on the 11th November, UKRI provided a further £19.1 million of funding to support students in earlier years, including disabled students, those with long-term illness, those who are neurodivergent, or those with caring responsibilities.

Combined, these two interventions have meant that UKRI has made over £60 million of financial support available to students most impacted by the pandemic. It is estimated that this funding is available for up to 12,000 students (over half of the students that UKRI funds).

We are encouraging all PhD students to discuss with their supervisors how projects can be adjusted to complete their doctoral education to a satisfactory standard. We will continue to monitor how the pandemic is affecting PhD students and the wider research system.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Senior Civil Servants

Christian Matheson: [\[116528\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer of 12 November 2020 to Question 111564 on Cabinet Office: Senior Civil Servants, if he will specify how many expressions of interest were received for the vacant position of Cabinet Secretary.

Julia Lopez:

As with all competitions for Permanent Secretary roles, details, including the number and names of applicants, are not disclosed.

■ Civil Servants: EU Nationals

Stuart C McDonald: [\[117283\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether it is his policy that EU nationals currently employed in the civil service will be able to continue to work as civil servants after the transition period.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[117284\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to make changes to the Civil Service Nationality Rules before the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

The Government remains committed to protecting the rights of resident EU nationals, and their family members, to enable them to live and work here as they do now when free movement is ended. This includes the rights of those currently working in the Civil Service and we will be updating the Civil Service Nationality Rules before the end of the year.

■ Civil Servants: Pensions

Tulip Siddiq: [\[114983\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the financial effect on widowed people of the civil service pension rules on remarriage and cohabitation.

Julia Lopez:

The Government Actuary's Department completed the quadrennial actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2016 and showed that the average annual pension for surviving adult

dependants in the Civil Service pension arrangements was around £2,100 for male dependants and around £4,700 for female dependants. The pensions of widows, widowers and surviving civil partner pensions, under the Classic section of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme, cease if they remarry or cohabit. An average of around 120 pensions cease on remarriage or cohabitation per year for the period 2008 to 2019.

■ **Contracts: Coronavirus**

Patrick Grady:

[116549]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will establish a full public inquiry into the Government's awarding of contracts during the covid-19 outbreak.

Julia Lopez:

The National Audit Office, the public spending watchdog, has published its report on Government procurement activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in the [statement on gov.uk](#).

The Government has always been clear that there will be opportunities to look back, analyse and reflect on all aspects of COVID-19. This will include an independent inquiry at the appropriate time. For now the Government is focused entirely on responding to the pandemic and saving lives, particularly as the country is experiencing a second wave of the virus.

■ **Government Departments: Contracts**

Tulip Siddiq:

[108275]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what review he has made of (a) his Department's and (c) cross-Government audit arrangements for Government contracts in the last 12 months; and what changes he has made to those arrangements to ensure (i) their adequacy and (ii) manage risk in relation to the extraordinary procurements undertaken during the covid-19 outbreak.

Julia Lopez:

As has been the case under successive administrations, departments are responsible for their commercial decisions, including the award and monitoring of contracts.

Departmental Accounting Officers are responsible for managing risk and agreeing annual audit plans. The Cabinet Office has internal and external audits related to its contractual arrangements. Further audits are planned this financial year.

■ **Government Departments: Email**

Tulip Siddiq:

[116595]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 107705 on Government Departments: Email, what cross-government controls exist to ensure that Ministers' and

Special Advisors' emails or other communication records are retained in accordance with record keeping policy.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the [Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers](#) and the [Guidance to departments on use of private emails](#).

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Dan Carden:

[\[116637\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many covid-19 procurement contracts were awarded retrospectively after work had already been carried out.

Dan Carden:

[\[116638\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to (a) identify and (b) tackle potential (i) conflicts of interest and (ii) bias in the Government procurement process.

Julia Lopez:

Government departments are responsible for conducting their own procurements and must follow their own guidance and procedures on identifying, reporting and managing conflicts of interest in procurements.

■ National Space Council

Stephen Morgan:

[\[115798\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what date the National Space Council last met; when the council plans next to meet; and whether he plans to publish the agendas and minutes of those meetings.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ107708](#) on 03 November.

■ Public Sector: Internet

Marion Fellows:

[\[115717\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of enforcement by the relevant regulatory authorities of the accessibility requirements for public sector websites under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 99016](#) on 08 October 2020.

DEFENCE**■ Aircraft Carriers****Douglas Chapman:**[\[116526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) assessment he has made and (b) representations he has received on the potential constraints that would be placed on Carrier Strike in the event that the delivery of the full contingent of F-35B aircraft is delayed until 2025.

Jeremy Quin:

The current agreed F35-B Lightning procurement profile will see the UK reach 48 aircraft in Quarter four 2025. This delivery schedule has been developed to support the F35-B Lightning force generation build profile and the Carrier Enabled Power Projection (CEPP) milestone requirements. In December 2023, when Full Operational Capability (FOC) Carrier Strike is scheduled to be declared, the UK F35-B Lightning Force will have a total of 37 F35-B Lightning aircraft which will support two front line squadrons and the Operational Conversion Unit. The full complement, of 48 aircraft, will be available when the CEPP FOC milestone is reached in 2026. These figures include the three 17 Squadron UK F35-B Lightning aircraft base at Edwards Air Force Base in California, to conduct Test and Evaluation.

■ Armed Forces: Charities**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[116426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide additional financial support for armed forces charities during the (a) autumn 2020 and covid-19 lockdown and (b) regional covid-19 restrictions.

Jeremy Quin:

On current plans, the three 17 Squadron UK F35-B Lightning aircraft, based at Edwards Air Force Base in California, will remain in the USA to conduct Test and Evaluation (T&E) during the F35 Follow-on Modernisation (FoM) phase.

They continue to deliver the rapid design, integration and flight test of critical operational and safety technology modernisation.

As such, the 17 Squadron mission will continue to provide a critical contribution to the rapid development of Lightning capabilities, delivering significant operational benefits.

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus**John Healey:**[\[115474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel have been deployed in response to Military Aid to Civilian Authority (MACA) requests since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heappey:

As of 19 November 2020 Defence has deployed over 7,800 Armed Forces personnel since March 2020, to support the national response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

This is a cumulative figure, not the number of troops currently deployed. This number also does not account for multiple deployments of the same person.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**[\[115514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has received any military aid to the civil authorities requests on the rollout of a covid-19 vaccine.

James Heappey:

As of 19 November 2020, the Ministry of Defence has deployed 60 planners to both DHSC and BEIS to support them with the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Defence is yet to receive a request to support the operational rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, but it stands ready to fill such a role should it be required.

■ Inappropriate Behaviours in the Armed Forces Review**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[115528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 114088, when he plans to publish Danuta Gray's review into progress implementing the recommendations of the Wigston Review.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence intends to publish Danuta Gray's review and its response by the end of the year.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[116407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 113008 on Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft, what the timescale is for the delivery of that programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The rollout of the Autonomic Logistics Information System (ALIS) is almost complete, with installation on HMS Prince of Wales due to complete this year. As technology advances, F35 offboard systems need to continue to be developed through-life. The UK supports the Joint Program Office ("JPO's") Operational Data Integrated Network (ODIN) programme which will replace ALIS. The Partner Nations are fully engaged with the JPO over the development of ODIN. The JPO plans to trial various industrial solutions to ODIN over the coming year, with rollout to US Services in Q4 2021 and to Partner Nations in 2022.

Douglas Chapman:

[\[116527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the extent of the effect on operability of a delay in fitting the full suite of weaponry on the F-35B aircraft; and whether that delay is due to (a) technical or (b) budgetary matters.

Jeremy Quin:

The F35-B Lightning is already Operational with the full suite of weaponry comprising ASRAAM, AMRAAM and Paveway IV. The Lightning Programme Board continues to progress the spiral upgrade to further enhance the F35-B Lightning capability, including the integration of future weapon capabilities later in the decade.

■ **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[116598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what risk assessment his Department undertook on the decision to postpone the IMS trial until after the original release date of Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe; whether that assessment included the risk of new charges being brought against her to extend her sentence; and what mitigating steps his Department is taking to prevent that eventuality.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The adjournment of the November hearings came at the request of Iran's Ministry of Defence and Support for Armed Forces, not from Her Majesty's Government. It would be inappropriate to comment further on the ongoing legal proceedings.

■ **Saudi Arabia: Royal Artillery**

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[\[116502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) duration (b) cost to the public purse was of the deployment of 16th Regiment Royal Artillery to Saudi Arabia from February 2020.

James Heappey:

The deployment in question began in February 2020 and is ongoing. To date, it has cost £840,360.

■ **USA: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft**

Douglas Chapman:

[\[116525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether three of the UK's 48 F-35B Lightning aircraft will remain in the US as test or training aircraft and not be available for operational commitments.

Jeremy Quin:

On current plans, the three 17 Squadron UK F-35B Lightning aircraft, based at Edwards Air Force Base in California, will remain in the USA to conduct Test and Evaluation (T&E) during the F-35 Follow-on Modernisation (FoM) phase. They

continue to deliver the rapid design, integration and flight test of critical operational and safety technology modernisation.

As such, the 17 Squadron mission will continue to provide a critical contribution to the rapid development of Lightning capabilities, delivering significant operational benefits.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts and Publishing: Coronavirus

Tracy Brabin:

[\[116609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) SME publishing businesses and (b) other creative SMEs who were either not eligible for or did not receive funding from the Culture Recovery Fund.

Caroline Dinenage:

Through regular ministerial-led roundtables, working groups and contact with DCMS officials, we will continue to work with the publishing sector to assess and understand the difficulties businesses across the creative industries, including SME publishing businesses, face in these challenging times and through recovery.

Regarding other creative SMEs, the CRF complements wider measures to support businesses. Cultural organisations have benefited from, and should continue to explore, the wide variety of additional funding made available by Government beyond the CRF, including the Job Retention Scheme; a reduction in VAT from 20% to 5% for tourism and hospitality firms for six months; and the Bounce Back Loans scheme. The publishing sector has also benefited specifically from the government's introduction of a zero rate of VAT to e-publications, which will make it clear e-publications are entitled to the same VAT treatment as their physical counterparts.

The CRF has not been fully allocated and DCMS and the Culture Recovery Board will take decisions in the coming weeks on how best to allocate the remaining funds to best support the sector.

■ Arts Council England: Ethnic Groups

Helen Hayes:

[\[117320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the senior leadership of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is clear that it expects the cultural sectors to represent our diverse society in their artistic talent, workforce and audiences. As the national development agency for art and culture, Arts Council England has a responsibility to ensure that public money benefits all of the public.

They are keen to ensure the diversity of audiences, leaders, producers and creators of arts and culture reflect the diversity of contemporary England. They measure their progress and the progress of the organisations they fund by collecting, analysing and reporting on data relating to diversity, publishing this online annually in the 'Creative Case for Diversity' reports. The key figures for black, Asian and minority ethnic people in leadership roles in National Portfolio Organisations can be found in the Arts Council's most recent report for 2018-19 [here](#) (page 23)

The department has set the diversity of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations' board members as a key performance indicator measured on an annual basis and reported on in Arts Council England's Annual Report. The latest one can be viewed [here](#).

■ **Broadband: Coventry**

Colleen Fletcher:

[116507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the broadband speeds in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

Matt Warman:

According to Thinkbroadband (<http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E14000649>), currently 99.3% of premises in North East Coventry has access to Superfast broadband. More impressively, 94.9% have access to gigabit capable speeds, up from 2.8% in 2018. This is partially due to the large presence of Virgin Media in the constituency who have 88% coverage with their gigabit capable cable network infrastructure. For context, 34% of the UK has access to Gigabit speeds so this is well above the National average.

In regards to Coventry (<https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E08000026>), 98.1% of premises have access to superfast speeds and 90.6% of premises also have access to Gigabit capable broadband.

Around 0.31% of premises are getting less than 10Mbps and so may qualify for the Government's Universal Service Obligation as administered by Ofcom (<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations-and-statements/category-1/uso>).

Note that as well as VirginMedia, both BT Openreach and CityFibre have announced significant gigabit capable fibre rollout plans for Coventry. Here is a recent announcement from CityFibre about their ongoing £60m investment in Coventry <https://www.cityfibre.com/news/coventrys-full-fibre-roll-expands-west-city/> and here is a recent update from Openreach <https://www.openreach.com/news/coventry-broadband-locations-announced-as-openreach-fibre-build-gathers-pace/>

■ **Commonwealth Games 2022: Wolverhampton**

Stuart Anderson:

[115021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the time trial race for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games starting and ending at

West Park in Wolverhampton, what steps the Government plans to take to help Wolverhampton benefit from increased tourism and trade from that event.

Nigel Huddleston:

Birmingham 2022 will be the biggest sporting event ever held in the West Midlands. With the potential to attract a global audience of 1.5 billion and around 1 million tickets available, the Games provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase the best the West Midlands has to offer to the rest of the world. Hosting the start and finish of the time trial race offers Wolverhampton a unique chance to set out a spectacular experience for both visitors and those watching on TV.

In order to maximise the economic benefits of hosting the Games, the government is investing £21.3 million into a £24million Tourism, Trade and Investment Programme which aims to attract investment, businesses and visitors to the region and ensure we deliver a Games legacy for Wolverhampton and other towns and cities across the region.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[116375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to covid-19 lockdown restrictions, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including mobile network outlets, which provide guidance to many customers unfamiliar with technology, on the list of essential retail outlets.

Matt Warman:

The Government recognises the ongoing importance of telecommunications at this critical time.

Whilst the industry has continued to offer consumers support online and over the phone, we also appreciate the role that mobile phone retail outlets play in ensuring that everyone in society remains connected. Tougher national restrictions are necessary to help get the virus under control and to protect the NHS. The current set of restrictions strike the right balance between containing the virus and protecting society whilst allowing limited parts of essential retail to remain open. We are keeping this under constant review. The Government will continue to work closely with the sector to ensure consumers and businesses continue to receive the support they need.

■ **Data Protection**

Sarah Olney:

[\[116614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to update UK international data transfer frameworks to enable onward transfers to other jurisdictions in future free trade agreements.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK does not intend for Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to provide a legal basis, as a matter of domestic law, for the cross border transfer of personal data. Our

domestic adequacy process and international data protection frameworks are separate from, but complementary to, data provisions in FTAs.

The UK's International Transfer Regime (ITR) forms an integral part of our domestic data protection framework. The UK is committed to maintaining high personal data protection standards, including when it is transferred across borders.

■ Data Protection: Japan

Chi Onwurah:

[\[114873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on (a) the cross-border transfer of information by electronic means, (b) personal information protection and (c) the enforceability of UK data protection rights once that data has left the country.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is designed to prevent unjustified restrictions to the free flow of data between the UK and Japan, giving business assurances they can collect, process, and transfer data between the two countries, without facing unnecessary red tape, while ensuring high standards of personal data protection.

CEPA commits both parties to maintain national personal data protection regimes; the UK's existing data protection framework, enshrined in the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR remains unchanged.

UK data protection laws are not undermined or changed by CEPA. Following the transition period, the UK will preserve the effect of the EU's adequacy decision for Japan on a transitional basis, and will continue to provide robust protections for the international transfer of personal data. CEPA addresses data flows between the UK and Japan and not onward transfers to other jurisdictions.

■ Football: Coronavirus

Holly Mumby-Croft:

[\[114348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timescale is for the return of fans to football stadiums; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional financial support to lower-league English Football League clubs who have not spent huge sums on transfer fees in 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to getting spectators back into stadiums as soon as it is safe to do so.

We will continue to work closely with a whole range of sporting bodies, including the football authorities, to understand the latest thinking that might allow spectators to return. This includes inviting the new Sports Technology Innovation Working Group of

sporting bodies and health experts to analyse new technologies which might support this.

I was pleased to see the welcome announcement of an agreement in principle between the Premier League and EFL for a financial support package for League One and Two clubs. It is clear the money exists within the game for it to support itself: I urge the Premier League and EFL to finalise both this deal and one that protects Championship clubs also.

■ Football: Racial Discrimination

Stephen Morgan:

[\[115017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the level of (a) structural and (b) institutional racism within professional football.

Nigel Huddleston:

Racism or any form of discrimination has no place in football or society.

The Government welcomed the launch of the Football Association's 'Football Leadership Diversity Code' to ensure English football better represents our modern and diverse society.

There is still more to do, however, and the Government continues to liaise closely with the football authorities to tackle this issue.

■ Galleries and Museums: Ethnic Groups

Helen Hayes:

[\[117318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the senior leadership of museums and archives (a) with national museum status and (b) in receipt of direct funding from his Department.

Caroline Dinéage:

DCMS has a role in promoting diversity across its sectors, as set out in the department's Single Departmental Plan. This includes understanding where there are barriers to specific groups, bringing people together and creating connections between individuals and communities.

The majority of senior leadership appointments are a matter for each museum to decide, and DCMS works with its ALBs to ensure they consider diversity and inclusion in terms of both their staff and audiences.

Diversity, including BAME representation, is considered, as one of the eight key Principles of Public Appointments in the Governance Code on Public Appointments and must be considered when appointing boards.

Helen Hayes:

[\[117319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of exhibits and projects focused on black history in museums and archives with national museum status; and if he will make an estimate of the amount and proportion of direct funding from his Department that has been allocated to those exhibits and projects.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS-sponsored museums operate at arm's length from the Government and DCMS does not have a role in creative or curatorial decisions. As such we do not directly fund any particular exhibitions or projects.

Many national museums and galleries display or hold material relating to black history with collections including relevant art, ceramics, fashion and photography.

■ **Golf: Coronavirus**

Tom Tugendhat:

[\[114256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what evidence there is on the transmission of covid-19 on golf courses.

Tom Tugendhat:

[\[114257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what evidence there is on the transmission of covid-19 at swimming pools.

Tom Tugendhat:

[\[114258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what evidence there is on the transmission of covid-19 on tennis courts.

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 be closed. 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. We have not introduced further exemptions because when you unpick at one activity the effectiveness of the whole package is compromised. As soon as we're in a position to start lifting restrictions, grassroots sports will be one of the first to return.

■ Greyhound Racing: Finance**Andrew Rosindell:****[115507]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with bookmakers on funding for racing greyhounds.

Nigel Huddleston:

The British Greyhound Racing Fund (BGRF) collects a voluntary levy from bookmakers and uses the funds for greyhound welfare and sports integrity, and to a lesser extent the development and promotion of the sport.

Government officials recently met representatives of the Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) and the British Greyhound Racing Fund to discuss funding for greyhound racing with a view to encouraging bookmakers that have yet to sign up to the voluntary Memorandum of Understanding to do so.

Government will continue to work with the betting and greyhound industries to make sure that greyhound welfare is safeguarded and remains at the heart of the sport.

■ History: Ethnic Groups**Helen Hayes:****[117317]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much and what proportion of his Department's funding has been allocated to (a) organisations and (b) projects focused on black history in each financial year since 2015.

Caroline Dinenage:

The majority of DCMS's funding goes directly to its Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) such as Arts Council England, National Heritage Memorial Fund, Historic England, British Film Institute. Decisions to fund organisations or projects focused on black history would be made by them.

In 2018 the Department did allocate £200,000 to the Black Cultural Archives to secure its immediate future.

■ Motor Sports: Saudi Arabia**Caroline Nokes:****[114845]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will encourage UK motorsport organisations to make their participation in the Saudi Arabian grand prix contingent on the release of (a) Loujain al-Hathloul and other women human rights defenders and (b) Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, Prince Turki bin Abdullah and other political detainees.

Nigel Huddleston:

Participation in international sports events is a matter for the relevant international sports federations, and the national representatives to these federations. These bodies operate independently of government, and enshrine this political freedom in their rules and regulations.

The UK and Saudi Arabia have a longstanding bilateral relationship, based on a number of pillars including trade; investment; defence; security; energy; and shared concerns about regional issues. No aspect of our relationship with Saudi Arabia prevents us from speaking frankly about human rights. We have expressed significant concerns about reports of continuing arrests and arbitrary detentions in Saudi Arabia. The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September, which noted our human rights concerns in Saudi Arabia and called for the release of all political detainees, including the women's rights defenders. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP, most recently raised the women's rights defenders' cases with the Saudi Ambassador to the UK on 16 November. We continue to raise concerns and are monitoring the situation closely.

■ **Public Records: Sri Lanka**

Sam Tarry:

[92023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his predecessor had in 2016 with the National Archives on the document entitled, FCO 37/3978 Involvement of UK companies training Sri Lankan security forces, 1985.

Mr John Whittingdale:

I am not aware of discussions between my predecessor and the National Archives specifically relating to the document entitled, FCO 37/3978 Involvement of UK companies training Sri Lankan security forces, 1985 during 2016.

■ **UK Relations with EU**

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[115540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport what contingency plans he has with respect to the UK's future relationship with the EU in the event of a UK-based companies being disadvantaged through the treatment of data after the transition period.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We are working constructively with the Commission to secure data adequacy by the end of the transition period. We see no reason why we should not be awarded adequacy. However, the process is controlled by the Commission, and we are realistic about the increasingly challenging timelines for completion.

If adequacy decisions are not in place by the end of the transition period, organisations would be able to use alternative legal mechanisms to continue receiving personal data from the EU. Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) are the most common legal safeguard and will be the relevant mitigation for most organisations.

The ICO has created an interactive SCCs tool for businesses to use and further guidance can be found on GOV.UK and the ICO's website regarding steps

organisations may be required to take relating to data protection and data flows by the end of the transition period.

EDUCATION

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Edward Timpson:

[909078]

What steps he is taking to reduce bureaucracy within the adoption system.

Vicky Ford:

Ensuring the adoption system is effective is a top priority for this government, and I am determined to tackle the bureaucracy and inefficiencies that can prevent children who need a stable, loving forever home from finding one quickly.

I want to make sure that enough adopters are recruited for the children who need them, that they are matched swiftly to children and that they are properly supported as they form their new family.

In 2015, we had 180 different adoption agencies, a system which resulted in inefficiencies and delays for children. Our programme to introduce fewer, more efficient regional adoption agencies (RAAs) has now created 28 RAAs and they are starting to drive change.

For example, the first annual RAA evaluation report identified improvements in recruitment, matching and support. The latest evaluation of the RAA programme shows a 14-day reduction time for children waiting for placement. We have also seen a 35-day reduction for placement for our 'harder to place' children.

This year we have invested £1 million into adopter recruitment. RAA leaders, working with voluntary adoption agencies and others in the adoption sector, launched the #YouCanAdopt Campaign in September. The campaign aims to dispel myths and encourage more people from all walks of life to come forward to adopt. You do not need to be married or own your home to be a loving, adoptive parent. Agencies are reporting a large increase in enquiries, including from people from black, asian and minority ethnic communities. I would encourage anyone to look into the YouCanAdopt campaign.

The government has invested significantly in the Adoption Support Fund (ASF), which has provided more than £177 million for therapeutic support to over 62,000 families since it launched in 2015. The support provided to families through the ASF means that families have managed to access more timely therapeutic support for their children/family. Through our ASF COVID-19 scheme, launched in April, we provided £6.5 million to support up to 61,000 adoptive and special guardianship families struggling to cope with the challenges arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.

Elliot Colburn:

[909079]

What steps he is taking to build new schools.

Gavin Williamson:

Through the free schools programme, this government has funded thousands of high quality new school places across the country.

We have approved 225 applications from groups that we are now working with to establish new free schools. This includes 73 special and 9 alternative provision free schools.

The Priority Schools Building Programme is replacing or refurbishing buildings at 537 schools.

Layla Moran:[\[909081\]](#)

What steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Health and Social care to deploy lateral flow covid-19 tests in (a) schools and (b) other education settings.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is piloting the use of lateral flow tests in education settings. This will help us better understand how this new technology can be operationalised to protect those at high risk, find the virus and help enable us to go back to as normal a way of life as possible. Establishing this mass testing capability, with fast turn-around times, should allow students to continue their studies safely and minimise the risk of virus transmission in our communities.

Ian Byrne:[\[909086\]](#)

What discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on replacing the temporary arrangements for supplementary funding with a new strand of the Early Years National Funding Formula for grant-maintained nursery schools.

Vicky Ford:

We announced on 24 August 2020 that local authorities will continue to receive supplementary funding for their maintained nursery schools for the whole of the 2020-21 academic year. The department has regular discussions at official and ministerial level about all aspects of the education system for the forthcoming spending review.

We are committed to funding for maintained nursery schools in the longer term. Any reform to the way they are funded in the future will be accompanied by appropriate funding protections. The Government plans to spend more than £3.6 billion on early education entitlements in 2020-21.

Douglas Chapman:[\[909088\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the potential effect of the end of the transition period on (a) further and (b) higher education.

Michelle Donelan:

We are working with both the higher and further education sectors on what steps they need to take as we come to the end of the Transition Period.

This includes questions around participation in EU-funded programmes and future migration arrangements for example.

Sir David Evennett:

[909089]

What steps he is taking to increase (a) recruitment and (b) retention of teachers.

Gavin Williamson:

Great schools need great teachers. We are transforming the support for teachers to attract more people to teaching and enable them to thrive. We are working with the profession to create the career pathways and development opportunities to make teaching more than a match for other highly-regarded professions.

We have started to roll out the Early Career Framework – the biggest teaching reform in a generation – providing the solid foundations for a successful career in teaching, backed by up to £130 million a year in funding when fully rolled out in 2021. Early roll-out from autumn 2020 is taking place in selected areas (North East, Greater Manchester, Bradford and Doncaster).

We are also launching new National Professional Qualifications, offering high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high quality teaching practice, to those leading multiple schools across trusts.

■ Apprentices

Kate Green:

[117250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeships starts were there in (a) the most recent period for which data is available and (b) the same time period in 2019, by (i) region and (ii) local authority area.

Gillian Keegan:

The number of learners starting apprenticeships by geographical area, including by region and local authority area, is published on GOV.UK. The table attached provides provisional apprenticeship starts for England based on learner home postcode in the first three quarters of the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years, reported to date.

Care should be taken in comparing in-year data with equivalent periods in previous years as this data is provisional and subject to revisions by further education providers; as well as interpreting overall change given the effect of COVID-19.

Further breakdowns by region and local authority for each academic year are published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899753/201920-July_totals-since-may-2010-and-2015.xlsx.

The 2019/20 in-year figures here refer to 'reported to date' to reflect that they are provisional and subject to change. More accurate comparisons can be made once final returns for the 2019/20 academic year are available. Figures for the full, final 2019/20 academic year are due to be published in our next 'Apprenticeships and traineeships' statistics publication, on 26 November.

Data reported for the first three quarters this time last year for 2018/19 (August to April) including by region and local authority was published here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814998/Apprenticeship-starts-ach-geography-tool_201718_Q3-201819_July2019.xlsx.

The above files can be accessed in the FE data library on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>.

Attachments:

1. 117250_Table [117250_table_showing_apprenticeship_starts_England_2018-2020.xls]

■ **Assessments: Coronavirus**

Maria Eagle:

[117174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of school pupils to prepare for examinations in 2021.

Nick Gibb:

Our priority is that there is a consistent approach to what is taught and will be assessed across schools. We know schools will be making every effort, including in areas where there is a high prevalence of COVID-19, to deliver high quality teaching, including through remote education. All schools are expected to plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and make good progress.

The changes to assessments in certain subjects that were announced by Ofqual in the summer, alongside the later starting date for exams in summer 2021, will give schools and colleges extra time to plan teaching and pupils extra time to study. Combined with our £1 billion catch-up package, including a 'Catch-Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million, these changes give young people the best chance of being ready for their exams without undermining the value of the qualifications they receive.

The Department is working with Ofqual and engaging widely with the education sector to identify any risks to examinations at a national, local, and individual student level, and to consider measures needed to address any potential disruption. This could be a student unable to sit examinations due to illness or self-isolation, or schools affected by a local COVID-19 outbreak during the examination season resulting in examination centres not being able to open. More details will be published later in the autumn.

Wes Streeting:

[117309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what changes he plans to make to A-Level and GCSE exams to ensure that students who have missed learning due to the covid-19 outbreak are not disadvantaged.

Wes Streeting:[\[117310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential for regional disparities in school attendance to affect exam results in summer 2020.

Wes Streeting:[\[117311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what contingency plans he has discussed with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholders in the education sector in the event that it is not possible for GCSE and A-Level students to take their exams in summer 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department believes that examinations and assessments are the best and fairest way of judging students' performance. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has confirmed that next year's GCSE, AS and A level examination series will go ahead.

It is a priority for the Department that there is a consistent approach to what is taught and will be assessed across schools. We know schools will be making every effort, including in areas where there is a high prevalence of COVID-19, to deliver high quality teaching, including through remote education. All schools are expected to plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and make good progress.

Changes to assessments in certain subjects, announced by Ofqual over the summer, alongside the later starting date for exams in summer 2021, will give schools and colleges extra time to plan teaching and pupils extra time to study. The Government has committed to a £1 billion catch-up package, including a 'Catch-Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million. These changes will give students the best chance of being ready for their exams without undermining the value of the qualifications they receive.

The Department is working with Ofqual and engaging widely with the education sector to identify any risks to examinations at a national, local, and individual student level, and to consider measures needed to address any potential disruption. This could be a student unable to sit examinations due to illness or self-isolation, or schools affected by a local outbreak during the examination season resulting in examination centres not being able to open. More details will be published later in the autumn.

■ Children and Young People: Mental Health Services and Social Services**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[116438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the change in the level of demand for (a) children's social care and (b) children and adolescent mental health services since schools returned for the 2020 autumn term.

Vicky Ford:

The department has been working closely with local authorities to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on children's services, including any increases in demand, setting up dedicated regional teams that are in frequent contact.

We are monitoring referrals to children's services via our regional teams and via the Vulnerable Children and Young People survey, which collects data fortnightly from local authorities in England. The latest release is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vulnerable-children-and-young-people-survey>.

The most recent data collection (19-21 October) shows that the total number of children looked after was 7% higher than the same time in 2018 and the total number of children on a child protection plan was 1% higher.

Overall, the total number of referrals to children's social care services was 6% lower than the 3 year average of the same week across 2016 to 2018.

NHS Digital publish data on referrals to mental health services here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/mental-health-data-hub/mental-health-services-monthly-statistics>.

Referrals to mental health services since the beginning of the autumn term will be published in due course.

The government has provided £4.6 billion of additional funding to support local authorities in meeting COVID-19 related pressures, including in children's services.

■ Construction Industry Training Board: Redundancy**Jessica Morden:****[117209]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Construction Industry Training Board on recent changes to its redundancy policy; and if he will make an assessment of the effect of those changes on staff.

Gillian Keegan:

The Industrial Training Act 1982, delegates employment matters to the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). Schedule 1 (11) of the Act states, 'An industrial training board may appoint such officers and servants, upon such terms as to remuneration, pension rights and other conditions of service, as the board may determine.'

The Department maintains ongoing dialogue with the CITB and is sighted on key activity impacting on CITB colleagues.

■ Drama: Education**Sir Charles Walker:****[116411]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what (a) steps he is taking and (b) guidance he has issued to ensure that drama schools that provide training as part of a recognised

qualification can open for the teaching of coursework during the November 2020 period of covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

On Saturday 31 October 2020, 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 4 November, the Department for Education published guidance for education and childcare settings on the impact of these restrictions. The guidance can be found through the following link:

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

Schools that provide a full-time education should continue to remain open for all children and young people, as they have since the start of the autumn term, for the duration of the New National Restrictions. This includes schools that specialise in drama, music and/or performing arts, such as Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in Hertfordshire or the BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology in Croydon.

Where provision is taking place outside of school, this provision should only operate where the provision is reasonably necessary to enable parents to work, search for work, or attend education or training, or where the provision is used for the purposes of respite care, including for vulnerable children. This includes provision by supplementary schools offering drama, music or performing arts activities for children and young people 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 suitable 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.

Exams and other assessments for regulated qualifications, including regulated qualifications in the performing arts, can go ahead during the restrictions, so long as they are conducted in line with the public health guidance on autumn exams and the guidance specified by the relevant awarding organisation. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series/public-health-arrangements-for-autumn-exams>.

■ **Education: Coronavirus**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[114235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that education of children who have been told to shield for medical reasons is protected during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department published expectations of the quality of remote education for schools on 2 July as part of the schools guidance for full opening and for further education (FE) providers in August as part of the autumn term guidance, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term>.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education in line with previous guidance and the Temporary Continuity Direction which has been in effect since 22 October 2020.

On the 1 October, the Department announced a further remote education support package, to help schools and FE colleges meet the remote education expectations set out in guidance and Direction. Many elements of the support package are already in place and more will be available over the coming months to schools and FE providers, these can be accessed through the remote education service on GOV.UK, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The support package includes access to the right technology to deliver remote education, peer to peer training on how to use this effectively, and practical tools, good practice guidance and school-led webinars. This adds to existing support including the resources available from Oak National Academy, which provides video lessons across a broad range of subjects for every year group from Reception to Year 11. Oak National Academy will remain a free optional resource for 2020-21. This is available here: <https://www.thenational.academy/>.

As part of over £195 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care, the Department is making over 340,000 laptops and tablets available this term to support disadvantaged children whose face-to-face education may be disrupted.

Schools can order devices for clinically extremely vulnerable children who have been advised to shield by contacting covid.technology@education.gov.uk.

■ Education: Staffordshire**Jonathan Gullis:****[115036]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help children and young people in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire to catch up on the education they missed during the 2019-20 school year as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises that children and young people have had their education disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Government has committed to a £1 billion catch-up package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time on children in England.

The catch-up premium, worth £650 million, provides universal funding which is delivered in three payments to schools over the 2020/21 academic year. The Department's expectation is that this funding will be spent on the additional activities required to support pupils to catch up in their education. To help schools make the best use of this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation has published a support guide for schools with evidence-based approaches to catch up:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/#nav-covid-19-support-guide-for-schools1>. A further school planning guide: 2020 to 2021 is also available:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/guide-to-supporting-schools-planning/>.

The attached table shows the amount of catch-up premium funding that has been provisionally allocated to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent local authorities for the 2020/21 academic year. These allocations are based on the published rates and school census data from October 2019. The final allocations will be re-calculated once the October 2020 school census data is available.

Alongside this, the catch-up package includes a new £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) for disadvantaged pupils aged 5 – 16. This scheme will provide additional, targeted support for disadvantaged pupils who need the most help to catch up. The programme has two pillars which can be accessed by schools. Firstly, schools will be able to access high quality, subsidised tuition from a selection of approved Tuition Partners. The Partners will offer a variety of tuition approaches, including online and face-to-face, and the cost of tutoring will be subsidised by the Department by 75%. Schools can access Tuition Partner support here:

<https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/ntp-tuition-partners>.

The second pillar of NTP supports schools in the most disadvantaged areas to employ in-house academic mentors who can provide small group and one-to-one tuition to selected pupils. Eligible schools can request academic mentors. The first cohort saw 188 mentors start in schools on 2 November, and a further two cohorts will follow in January and February 2021. If schools in Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent would like to register interest for a mentor, they can do so here:

<https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/hire-academic-mentors>.

To minimise the risk of further lost education, the Department has put in place measures to help ensure children have access to high quality remote education if they are unable to attend school in person, due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This will benefit children across the country, including those in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

To help schools and further education colleges meet remote education expectations, the Department put in place a support package which can be accessed through the remote education service: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>. The support package includes access to the right technology to deliver remote education, peer to peer training and guidance on how to use this effectively in the short and long term, and practical tools, good practice guidance and school-led webinars to support effective delivery of the curriculum.

Additionally, over 340,000 laptops and tablets are being made available this term to support disadvantaged children in Year 3 to 11 whose face-to-face education may be disrupted. This supplements over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers which have already been delivered to schools in England during the summer term.

Attachments:

1. 115036_table [115036_Table_showing_catch_up_premium_funding_Staffordshire_StokeonTrent_202021.xls]

■ **Financial Services: Education**

Stephen Morgan:

[114304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of provision of financial education at a primary education level; if he will make an assessment of the potential contribution of Talk Money Week to improving that provision; and if he will make a statement on the educational value of talking about money with children and young people.

Nick Gibb:

Education on financial matters ensures that pupils are well prepared to manage their money, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information, if required. In 2014, for the first time, financial literacy was made statutory within the National Curriculum as part of the citizenship curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds.

The Department also introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides pupils with the knowledge and skills to make important financial decisions. The Government has published statutory programmes of study for mathematics and citizenship that outline what pupils should learn about financial education from key stages one to four.

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

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

Schools should have resumed teaching an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term. This means that all pupils will be taught a wide range of subjects so they can maintain their choices for further study and employment. The Department's latest guidance on teaching to support children is set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The Department supports wider initiatives that aim to improve financial confidence, such as Talk Money Week, led by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS). Talk Money Week is a platform for all UK citizens that aims to encourage open discussions at home, within families and at school about managing money. More information is available at: <https://maps.org.uk/talk-money-week/>.

The Department does not plan to make its own assessment of the contribution of Talk Money Week to improving the provision of financial education at primary education level. We will continue to work closely with the MaPS and other stakeholders such as Her Majesty's Treasury to consider what can be learnt from such initiatives and how to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

Colleen Fletcher:

[116509]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department provides to (a) primary and (b) secondary schools on the amount of financial education that should be provided to students.

Nick Gibb:

Education on financial matters ensures that young people are prepared to manage their money, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information, if required. In 2014, for the first time, financial literacy was made statutory within the National Curriculum as part of the citizenship curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds.

The Department also introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides pupils with the knowledge and skills to make important financial decisions. The Government has published statutory programmes of study for mathematics and citizenship that outline what pupils should learn about financial education from Key Stages one to four.

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

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

Schools should have resumed teaching an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term. This means that all pupils will be taught a wide range of subjects so they can maintain their choices for further study and employment. The Department's latest guidance on teaching to support children is set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The Department's £1 billion COVID-19 "catch-up" package with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020/21 academic year will support education settings to put the right catch-up support in place. More information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time>. The Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 support guide to support schools to direct this funding. This guide can be viewed at: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/#closeSignup>.

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

■ Gambling: Education

Dan Jarvis:

[116487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of teaching about the risks of gambling and gambling-related harm in schools.

Dan Jarvis:

[116488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on teaching the risks of gambling in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education wants to equip young people for adult life and help them make a positive contribution to society. The new subjects of relationships, sex and health education will support all young people in managing risk and making informed decisions, including in key areas such as mental wellbeing and online behaviour. For example, under the topic of internet safety and harms, the guidance sets out that young people should be taught about the risks related to online gambling, including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them, and how to be a discerning consumer of information online. The statutory guidance for the new subjects is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

Other National Curriculum subjects, such as citizenship and computing, can also address online gambling and its dangers. This could be through developing the

financial literacy of young people, and by highlighting the dangers of online gambling whilst using digital platforms (such as gambling opportunities introduced within computer games, and in-app games/purchases, for example “loot boxes”) in their e-safety teaching.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, meets regularly with cabinet colleagues to discuss the Department's agenda. This includes relevant topics covered by the new subjects. The Department has worked with other government departments, including the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, in developing the content for the new curriculum subjects which are being taught in schools from this academic year.

■ GCSE: Coronavirus

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[114221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he make an assessment of the potential merits of cancelling the GCSE examinations due to take place in 2021 in response to Year 11 pupils potentially having been disadvantaged by the (a) mass disruption to pupils and teachers and (b) amount of school teaching time lost as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Exams are the best and fairest way of judging students' performance, and it is our intention that next year's GCSE exam series will go ahead.

The Department is working with Ofqual to engage with the sector to develop contingency plans in the event that disruption as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak affects students' ability to sit exams. Following a period of engagement, more detail will be published later in the autumn.

We have announced a number of measures to help schools and pupils make up for lost teaching time caused by the disruption to education this year, including extra time to prepare for exams next summer, and a catch-up package worth £1 billion:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time>.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr David Lammy:

[114771]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Tottenham of 2 October 2020 on school funding.

Nick Gibb:

I can confirm that a response to the letter dated 2 October 2020 has been sent to the hon. Member for Tottenham.

■ Music: Education

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[117162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future provision of funding for Music Education Hubs.

Nick Gibb:

The Department funds a national network of 120 Music Education Hubs who work with the majority of schools to deliver four core roles, one of which is to enable children from all backgrounds and every part of England to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. This includes children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Discussions between my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury concerning the current spending review have taken place with regards to all departmental policies which includes Music Education Hubs.

The Spending Review is expected to conclude by 25 November.

■ Outdoor Education: Coronavirus

Tom Tugendhat:

[114255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial support he plans to make available exclusively to outdoor education and residential centres forced to close as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's advice on educational visits can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>. The advice is in line with guidance from Public Health England, the Cabinet Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It is currently under review and the findings will be available at the end of November.

The Government has introduced a package of support worth more than £200 billion to help as many individuals and businesses as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes small business grants, the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the deferral of VAT and income tax payments. The measures introduced have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors across the UK.

Further measures have been announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that build on the significant support already available, and set out how the current support will evolve and adapt. These include the extension of the CJRS until the end of March 2021, the extension of the deadline for applications for the Bounce Back Loan scheme and other loan schemes until 31 January 2021, and increased support for the self-employed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants.

Furthermore, businesses in England that are forced to close due to national or local restrictions will receive up to £3,000 per month. Local authorities in England will also receive one-off funding of £1.1 billion to support businesses more broadly over the coming months, as a key part of local economies.

The Government will continue to work closely with local authorities, businesses, business representative organisations and the financial services sector to monitor the implementation of current support and understand whether there is additional need. Businesses can also access tailored advice through our Freephone Business Support Helpline, online via the Business Support website, or through their local Growth Hubs in England.

■ Performing Arts: Children

Kevin Brennan:

[117189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations he has received from youth arts companies on bringing into line with the covid-19 regulations for boarding schools out-of-school arts activities that are run as residential courses.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has been in close communication with various stakeholders, including some with connections to youth arts, since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak with respect to residential trips. We will continue this communication over the coming months.

The guidance for full opening of schools and the guidance for holiday and after school clubs, and other out-of-school settings, set out the Department's current position in relation to educational visits. They can be found at:

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

At present, schools and out-of-school settings can undertake COVID-19 secure day visits within the UK but are advised against the resumption of domestic and overseas residential educational visits. This is because, unlike boarding schools, residential settings have a transient population with different groups rotating in and out of the centre on a weekly basis. This constant change of population serves to increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

This decision has not been taken lightly and is taken in the context of the Government announcing new national restrictions to address rising cases of COVID-19 in England. This position will be reviewed again before the end of November 2020.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Yasmin Qureshi:

[116437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the financial stability of early years providers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

I refer the hon. Member for Bolton South East to the answer I gave on 20 November 2020 to Question [114782](#) to my right hon. Friend, the Member for Bexleyheath and Crayford.

Stephen Hammond:

[117219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance the Government has issued on whether parent and pre-school children classes and groups are categorised as a support group for the purposes of Exception 5 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020.

Vicky Ford:

Parent and pre-school children classes and groups need to meet necessary exceptions to continue during the November 2020 national restrictions.

Where these are held in Ofsted registered settings, they should follow government guidance on the COVID-19 outbreak for early years and childcare providers. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>.

Support groups for new parents in community settings, such as places of worship, community centres or halls, or libraries, and that are essential to deliver in person, can continue. These can be conducted with up to 15 participants where formally organised to provide mutual aid, therapy, or any other form of support. These groups must be organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent, or philanthropic institution, or a public body, and must follow COVID-19 secure guidance. Restricted businesses which are required to close, such as coffee shops, cannot hold support groups. When national restrictions apply, in determining the limit of 15 participants, no account is to be taken of any child who is below the age of 5.

Informal groups, such as those organised by a parent, need to comply with the gathering and household mixing rules. In practice, during the period of national restrictions, this means these groups should only meet virtually.

Supervised activity for children can continue to take place where it is reasonably necessary to enable parents to work, search for work or to undertake training or education, for example in indoor gyms, fitness studios, indoor sports facilities and other indoor leisure centres, community centres or halls.

For further information, Cabinet Office guidance on the new national restrictions can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november#childcare-and-childrens-activities>.

The department's guidance for education and childcare setting during national restrictions can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020#early-years-and-childcare>.

■ Primary Education: Admissions

Sir David Evennett: **[114783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to support primary schools in enabling the parents of prospective students to attend open days before the primary school admissions deadline in January 2021.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities are required, through the School Admissions Code and the School Information (England) Regulations 2008, to provide parents with information about all schools in their area ahead of application deadlines, through publishing a composite prospectus.

Traditionally, schools have also held open events and arranged visits for prospective parents in the autumn term. This year, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, schools have also had to consider how to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.

On 2 July 2020, the Department published guidance to help schools prepare for all pupils to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

This sets out a framework for school leaders to put in place a range of proportionate protective measures for children, staff and visitors. In addition, under the current national restrictions only certain kinds of gatherings are allowed, including gatherings that are reasonably necessary for the purposes of education or training. As a result, face to face open events and visits are unlikely to be possible and schools are considering alternatives. The national restrictions guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>.

The provision of information to parents remains an important part of enabling them to make an informed choice about the schools they wish their children to attend. The Department recognises that many schools have worked creatively to do this, for example, by making videos or holding virtual events. If a school does decide to hold a face to face event, it is essential that a risk assessment is carried out and appropriate control measures are put in place, in line with the guidance and the law.

■ Pupil Premium: North of England

Yasmin Qureshi: **[116443]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that additional pupil premium funding is targeted at long-term disadvantaged pupils in the North of England.

Vicky Ford:

We are committed to levelling up opportunities to make sure everyone has a fair chance to realise their potential and no one is left behind. The pupil premium furthers this objective by helping schools improve the academic attainment and wider outcomes of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Since the pupil premium was introduced in 2011, it has provided more than £18 billion of additional funding for schools and has played an important role in contributing to the narrowing of the disadvantaged attainment gaps at age 11 and 16. Areas with high proportions of students from disadvantaged backgrounds will continue to receive the highest levels of funding, and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed considerably in both primary and secondary schools since 2011.

Through the national funding formula, we provide further funding targeted at schools with higher numbers of pupils with additional needs, including deprivation, worth £6.3 billion this financial year. On top of that, the pupil premium, worth £2.4 billion this financial year, provides additional support for disadvantaged pupils – those currently or formerly claiming free school meals and currently or formerly looked after – to tackle educational inequality.

Pupil premium allocations for the 2020-21 financial year were published in June, and the first quarterly instalments were paid out in June and July. Announcements on pupil premium funding for the 2021-22 financial year will follow later in the year. Announcements for future years will be made in due course.

■ Remote Education: Coronavirus**Wes Streeting:**[\[116579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his Department's policy that children provided with laptops for remote learning whilst they are self-isolating must return them upon return to school.

Wes Streeting:[\[116580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made in encouraging network providers to zero rate educational websites to allow people who use mobile data to access them without charge.

Wes Streeting:[\[116581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of schoolchildren who lack reliable internet access in England.

Wes Streeting:[\[116582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of schoolchildren who do not have access to a computer in England.

Wes Streeting:**[116583]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the average unit price of the laptops purchased under his Department's Get help with technology programme.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has invested over £195 million to support remote education and access to online social care, this includes delivering over 220,000 laptops and tablets during the summer term for disadvantaged children who would not have otherwise had access to a digital device. The Department is adding to this support by making over 340,000 additional laptops and tablets available this term to support disadvantaged children that might experience disruption to their education. Since September, over 100,000 of these have been delivered to schools. This represents an injection of over half a million laptops and tablets by the end of the year.

Laptops and tablets are owned by the local authority, academy trust or school who can lend unused laptops and tablets to children and young people who need them most. The Department has allocated a number of devices to each school. To arrive at this allocation, we used data on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in each school. The Department expects that pupils' device needs will be met to some extent by existing school laptops and tablets. Schools, local authorities and academy trusts can request additional devices if their original allocation from the Department does not meet their needs.

The Department estimated the number of disadvantaged pupils without access to an internet connection using data on pupils eligible for free school meals in each school, taking into consideration estimations by Ofcom and reflecting that some pupils would already have access to a private internet connection. We have invested over £175 million to provide laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers that come with free data for the academic year.

The Department is also working with the major telecommunications companies to improve internet connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable families who rely on a mobile internet connection. We are piloting an approach where mobile network operators are providing temporary access to free additional data, offering families more flexibility to access the resources that they need the most. In the pilot, schools, trusts, and local authorities have identified children who need access to free additional data.

To further support disadvantaged households who rely on a mobile internet connection, the major telecoms companies have zero rated the Hungry Little Minds site. This means that users will not incur data charges when accessing this website, except where the content is hosted on a third party site. Zero rating is being put in place on an operator by operator basis. Zero rating is a helpful way to provide families with support to access critical resources where the majority of content is held on one website.

Maria Eagle:

[117177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of pupils who are told to self-isolate to access online learning at home in circumstances where those pupils do not have access to the internet.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has invested over £195 million to support access to remote education and online social care. As part of this, we have already provided over 50,000 4G wireless routers, with free data for the rest of the 2020/21 academic year; 220,000 laptops and tablets in the summer term; and over 100,000 more this term to support disadvantaged children. Departmental guidance about remote education is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice/remote-education-good-practice>.

The Department estimated the number of disadvantaged pupils without access to an internet connection using data on pupils eligible for free school meals in each school, taking into consideration estimations by Ofcom and reflecting that some pupils would already have access to a private internet connection. We know that schools and local authorities will have the best judgement of the children that need access to a device or internet connection.

We continue to provide 4G wireless routers, with free data, where schools face disruption and children need to access remote education.

In partnership with mobile network operators, the Department is providing temporary access to free additional mobile data, offering families flexibility to access the resources that they need the most.

Schools can request free mobile data uplifts for families who lack sufficient internet access until the end of the academic year via the Get Help with Technology service, when they experience disruption to face-to-face education or for clinically extremely vulnerable children. Further guidance about the Get Help with Technology service is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

■ **Schools: Batley and Spen**

Tracy Brabin:

[116610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £85 million of funding for laptops, tablets and 4G dongles, announced in April 2020, has been spent (a) in total and (b) by school in Batley and Spen constituency.

Nick Gibb:

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 experience disruption to their education. Since September 2020, over 100,000 of these have been delivered to schools.

This scheme is not directly providing funding. It is providing a number of offers to support remote education, including laptops and tablets, 4G wireless routers, other internet offers and support for schools to access education platforms.

Data about the number of laptops and tablets delivered to local authorities and academy trusts over the summer term can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912888/Devices_and_4G_wireless_routers_progress_data_as_of_27_August_2020.pdf.

Data about the number of laptops and tablets delivered or dispatched to Local Authorities or trusts since 1 September can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929064/Ad-hoc_stats_note_shipped_data_231020_FINAL.pdf.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Mary Glendon:

[114168]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what contingency plans he has in place to ensure that children who travel to school by coach can continue to do so in the event that some coach operators cease trading by April 2021 due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has allocated more than £70 million to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), enabling them to increase dedicated home to school and college transport capacity over the autumn term: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-14-october-2020/esfa-update-further-education-14-october-2020>. LTAs have flexibility in how they use this funding to meet the needs of local families, including hiring extra coaches. We are reviewing funding arrangements for the spring term.

Government Departments continue to work collaboratively and with representatives from the coach sector, including the Confederation of Passenger Transport, to understand the ongoing risks and issues the sector faces and how these could be addressed.

The Government has also provided £4.6 billion of un-ringfenced funding to local authorities to support them with the pressures they are facing as a result of COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-emergency-funding-for-local-government>. This funding can be used to support school and college travel.

Sir Charles Walker:

[116414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of restricting the exam curriculum for (a) GCSE and (b) A-Levels

taken in Summer 2021 to reflect the attendance levels during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

It is a priority for the Department that there is a consistent approach to what is taught and will be assessed across schools. We know schools will be making every effort, including in areas where there is a high prevalence of COVID-19, to deliver high quality teaching, including through remote education. All schools are expected to plan to ensure any pupils educated at home for some of the time are given the support they need to master the curriculum and make good progress.

Changes to assessments in certain subjects, announced by Ofqual over the summer, will give schools and colleges extra time to plan teaching, and pupils extra time to study. The outcome of Ofqual's consultation on summer 2021 exams is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2021>.

The Department will continue to work with Ofqual and engage widely with the education sector to identify risks to examinations at a national, local, and individual student level, and to consider measures needed to address any potential disruption. This could, for example, be a student unable to sit examinations, or schools affected by a local outbreak. More details will be published shortly.

Adam Holloway:

[116427]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to reimburse schools for covid-19 related expenditure in the 2020-21 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

Getting all children and young people back into school for the new academic year has been a national priority. To support schools with this they have continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20. On average, schools are attracting 4.2% more per pupil in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20. As stated in our guidance, schools should use these existing resources when making arrangements for this term: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The Department is aware that all pupils, regardless of their background, have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We are providing schools with the resources and tools to address lost education so that all pupils may make up lost ground. Our £1 billion COVID-19 catch-up package is providing additional funding in the 2020/21 academic year so that schools can support pupils who have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time>.

Maria Eagle:

[117178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of fixed penalty notices for non-attendance at school on the wellbeing of households containing a clinically vulnerable adult who is shielding and a child of school age.

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. The Government guidance for the opening of schools during the COVID-19 outbreak is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school. Guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from COVID-19 is available through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>.

The usual powers to secure high levels of attendance continue to be available to schools and local authorities during the COVID-19 outbreak. It would be for either the school or the local authority to decide if they wish to use a penalty notice as a sanction. When considering the appropriate action to tackle absence, schools and local authorities should consider the individual circumstances of each pupil and family and take the best course of action to support the child's return to school.

Schools should consider concerns from pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about school attendance and put the right support in place to address this. Schools will be able to provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

■ Schools: Inspections

Maria Eagle:

[117175]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of schools to prepare for Ofsted inspections in 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Eagle:

[117176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to amend the Education Inspection Framework for 2021 in response to the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on school performance.

Nick Gibb:

The COVID-19 outbreak has had a profound impact on schools across the country. The Department acknowledges the continued hard work of all school staff in ensuring

that pupils receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress whilst putting in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff.

It is important for school inspections to start up again in the new year, but at the right time and in the right way. The Department is working with schools and Ofsted to decide the best way to achieve this in a sensitive and gradual way.

The Department and Ofsted are clear that schools are not expected to prepare for Ofsted inspections.

Wes Streeting:

[\[117314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether routine Ofsted inspections will resume in January 2021.

Nick Gibb:

It is important for school inspections to start again in the new year but at the right time and in the right way. The Department is carefully considering with Ofsted and the sector how this can be achieved safely and sensitively, with a clear focus on provision for pupils whether in the classroom or remotely. Details of the plans will be made available soon.

■ **Schools: Staffordshire**

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[115039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that schools in (a) Stoke-on-Trent, (b) Kidsgrove and (c) Talke receive equitable levels of funding under the National Funding Formula.

Nick Gibb:

The National Funding Formula (NFF), introduced in the 2018/19 financial year, ensures that funding is distributed fairly and consistently based on the characteristics of schools and their pupils. This has replaced the postcode lottery of the past, where funding was based on out-of-date decisions and data.

Stoke-on-Trent local authority is receiving 3.4% more per pupil under the NFF in the 2021-22 financial year, compared to 2020/21. This amounts to £8 million, taking total school funding in the area to £191 million. This is above the national average per-pupil increase.

Local authorities currently remain responsible for determining schools' final allocations, using the funding they receive through the NFF. The funding that schools in Kidsgrove and Talke receive, from the total available to Stoke-on-Trent, will therefore be determined by the local school funding formula. The Government is committed to move to a 'hard' NFF in future, which will determine individual schools' budgets directly rather than through local formulae set independently by each local authority. We will consult on proposals to that end in due course.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Remote Education**

Tulip Siddiq: **[116601]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funding the Government has made available to ensure that (a) children without SEN who have to self-isolate and (b) vulnerable children that are shielding have adequate access to the equipment required for remote learning; and what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of that funding.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is continuing to do everything in its power to ensure that children and young people can continue to attend school and college safely, as this is the best place for them to be for their education, development and wellbeing. The Department recognises that, for some pupils, remote education will need to be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum, alongside on-site teaching.

The Department set out expectations for remote education provision in schools in its full opening guidance published in July 2020:

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

It also published similar guidance for further education (FE) colleges in August 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term>.

The Department also wants to make clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state funded, school age pupils who are unable to attend school due to COVID-19 in line with guidance and the law. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education gave a Direction which places an express legal duty on schools to provide remote education in these circumstances which has been in effect since 22 October 2020.

If it has been confirmed by their doctor that a pupil is clinically extremely vulnerable, they are currently advised not to attend school. In these situations, the Department expects schools to be able to offer clinically extremely vulnerable children immediate access to remote education, in line with guidance and the law.

On 1 October 2020, the Department announced a further remote education support package, to help schools and FE colleges meet the remote education expectations set out in guidance. The support package includes access to the right technology to deliver remote education, peer to peer training and guidance on how to use this effectively in the short and long term, and practical tools, good practice guidance and school-led webinars to support effective delivery of the curriculum.

Schools will also be able to support disadvantaged children across all year groups who might be shielding at home on official or medical advice due to them, or a member of their household, being clinically extremely vulnerable. As part of over £195 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care,

the Department is making over 340,000 laptops and tablets available this term to support disadvantaged children in Years 3 to 11 whose face to face education may be disrupted. This supplements over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers, which have already been delivered during the summer term. This represents an injection of over 500,000 laptops and tablets by the end of the year.

Schools will also be able to support disadvantaged pupils across all year groups who might be shielding at home on official or medical advice due to them or a member of their household being clinically extremely vulnerable.

The Department wants to ensure that all vulnerable children and young people, as far as possible, have access to the same remote education support and provision as their peers. The guidance sets out steps that schools should take to support vulnerable children or young people where they are having to self-isolate, including regular contact with that individual, contact with their social worker if they have one, checking whether they are able to access remote education, to support them access it, and to regularly check that they are doing so.

Low-income families of children and young people with disabilities or who are seriously ill who may require specialist software or hardware devices to support their needs can apply to the Family Fund. The Department has provided the Family Fund, with £37 million in the 2020-21 financial year, of which £10 million is specifically intended to help support home education needs.

Schools have continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in the 2020-21 financial year, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to the 2019-20 financial year. This includes an additional £780 million this year and £730 million next year for high needs – taking total high needs funding to over £8 billion. As stated in the Department's guidance, schools should use their existing resources when making arrangements to support pupils this term.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Sir George Howarth:

[91950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on students' exam performance of their disrupted schooling as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department acknowledges that pupils due to sit examinations next summer have experienced considerable disruption to their education. The Government is determined to do everything possible to ensure that no pupil is prevented from fulfilling their potential due to COVID-19.

The Department has been working closely with Ofqual, the examination boards and groups representing teachers, schools, colleges, and students, to consider its approach to examinations and other assessments for 2021. It is working closely with the sector representatives to identify any risks to examinations at a national, local,

and individual pupil level, and consider measures needed to address any potential disruption. The extent of necessary public health restrictions over the year is of course unknown so the Department is planning for every eventuality.

Working jointly with Ofqual, the Department is also considering the approach to grading, to ensure the 2021 cohort is treated fairly compared to previous cohorts. It continues to believe that examinations are the best and fairest way of judging pupils' performance and the Government is committed to GCSE, AS and A level examinations taking place next year.

More detail will be published later this autumn.

■ Students: Travel

Alex Sobel:

[116643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue additional guidance on the student travel window to students who are also classed as key workers.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is committed to ensuring that students who wish to return home for the winter break are able to do so. It is essential that measures are put in place to ensure this can happen as safely as possible for students, staff and the communities that they return to.

On 11 November, the department published guidance for providers on plans for the end of the autumn term. This guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/student-movement-and-plans-for-the-end-of-autumn-2020-term>.

As outlined in the guidance, published on 11 November, many healthcare students who are on placements are considered essential workers and such placements can continue until the end of term. We will shortly be issuing further detailed guidance on how the end of term guidance applies to all students on placements, including courses where placements can continue.

The Office for Students, the regulator of higher education in England, also issued a FAQ for students on going home for the end of term, available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/coronavirus-end-of-term>. This will also be updated shortly, to address questions that students may have about their placements.

■ Teachers: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[114303]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to protect clinically vulnerable people who teach in schools from covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) to publish guidance to support schools to welcome back all children from the start of the autumn term.

The guidance provides a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for pupils and staff. These measures include regular handwashing, promoting good respiratory hygiene, and schools minimising contact between individuals.

Where schools implement the system of controls outlined in our guidance, in line with their own workplace risk assessment, PHE and DHSC confirm that these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. It is therefore appropriate for teachers and other school staff to attend their workplace setting. This includes staff who are clinically vulnerable. School leaders should explain to staff the measures the school has put in place to reduce risks.

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

The guidance for schools on full opening can be found here:

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

The guidance on the new national restrictions can be viewed here:

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

Teachers: Stoke on Trent**Jonathan Gullis:****[115038]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase (a) recruitment and (b) retention of teachers in Stoke-on-Trent.

Nick Gibb:

It is a top priority of the Government to ensure the whole country has a strong teaching workforce. In January 2019, the Department launched the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy. Whilst implementation of these commitments will support all schools, the Department recognises that some schools and local areas face greater challenges with recruitment and retention than others.

To supplement the national strategy, we are delivering targeted programmes to support recruitment and retention in challenging areas, including funding a range of regionally targeted financial incentives. For example, in financial years 2017 to 2019, £20 million of scholarship funding was made available to support teachers and head teachers in certain areas to take up a National Professional Qualification to support their professional development. Teachers and head teachers in schools in Stoke-on-Trent were eligible for this funding.

Stoke-on-Trent is also one of the areas where eligible mathematics and physics teachers can claim a £2,000 retention payment in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. Eligible mathematics, physics, chemistry, and languages teachers in Stoke-on-Trent can apply for larger early-career payments of £7,500. Finally, Stoke-on-Trent is one of 25 local authorities where eligible languages, physics, chemistry, biology, and computing teachers can claim back student loan repayments.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[115033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential (a) economic and (b) environmental merits of widespread planting of deciduous woodland.

Rebecca Pow:

Trees and woodlands deliver a wide range of benefits – capturing carbon and delivering many other environmental outcomes, creating spaces for people and communities to enjoy, and providing food and wood products which support the economy.

In our recent consultation on proposals for a new England Tree Strategy, we outlined a need to address the biodiversity and climate crises together - planting a range of species to create varied habitats. We are currently considering the responses to this consultation and plan to publish the full England Tree Strategy early next year.

■ Air Pollution: Housing

Geraint Davies:

[\[116376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking (a) to support research into indoor air pollution to help build the evidence base and (b) to work with other Departments to facilitate a cross-government approach to improving indoor air quality.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is supporting work on indoor air quality by gathering evidence needed to inform effective policies. Our Air Quality Expert Group, with input from members of the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) Committee on the Medical Effects of

Air Pollutants, will be publishing a paper on indoor air quality in the new year. This will focus on fine particulate matter and volatile organic compounds as the air pollutants which are prevalent in indoor environments. We have also engaged actively with the research community through the Clean Air Programme, which is part of UK Research and Innovation's Strategic Priorities Fund. Wave 2 of this programme is focused on the indoor/outdoor air quality interface.

Earlier this year, Defra attended a cross-Government roundtable on indoor air quality hosted by the Chief Medical Officer and Government Chief Scientific Advisor. Given the health drivers for action, DHSC and Public Health England will be taking the lead on indoor air quality and Defra will continue to support them, alongside other Government departments.

■ **Animals: Exports**

Craig Mackinlay:

[117330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the report by Kent Action Against Live Export (KAALe) sent to his Department by that organisation on 25 October 2020 and by the hon. Member for South Thanet on 20 October 2020; and what steps he plans to take in response to the findings of that report.

Victoria Prentis:

The report produced by Kent Action Against Live Exports (KAALe) is currently being reviewed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on behalf of Defra. Where any non-compliance set out in the report is confirmed, APHA will take appropriate regulatory or enforcement action.

The Government is committed to the welfare of all animals and to making further improvements to animal welfare in transport. We fully intend to take advantage of our departure from the European Union to improve animal welfare and to ensure the highest standards. We have a commitment to end excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening and we intend to consult on how we deliver on that manifesto commitment before the end of this year.

■ **Consumers: Environment Protection**

Sarah Olney:

[116611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage consumers to make more environmentally friendly purchase decisions.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to encouraging consumers to make more environmentally friendly purchasing decisions.

In the Resources and Waste Strategy (2018), we committed to incentivise consumers to purchase sustainably, provide consumers with better information on the sustainability of their purchases, and to ban the most problematic plastic products.

The single-use plastic carrier bag charge has been successful in reducing usage by 95% in the main supermarkets to date. Accordingly, we will, from next year, increase the charge to 10p, and extend it to all retailers. We introduced a ban on polluting microbeads in personal care products and have also introduced restrictions from October 2020 on the supply of plastic straws, cotton buds and drink stirrers.

We are also seeking powers in our landmark Environment Bill to charge for single-use plastic items, and to introduce requirements for improved labelling and consumer information focused on the resource efficiency of products, for example their repairability and durability and on how to dispose of products at end of life.

We also want to increase the sustainability of the food sector. The UK will work with leading food service sector representatives to develop and consult upon a Sustainable Food Service Sector Action Plan to be published in 2021 and delivered throughout 2022, which will provide information to associations, member companies, customers, and end users on issues relating to forest risk commodities.

■ Dairy Products: Import Duties

Hilary Benn:

[\[115482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the assessment he has made of the effect on dairy producers in the UK of tariffs being charged by the UK and the EU in the event of no agreement being reached in the current negotiations on the future relationship.

Victoria Prentis:

Previous studies (e.g. LEI Wageningen Uur, 2016) have indicated that the application of MFN tariffs on trade between the EU and UK would result in an increase in domestic farm gate prices for raw milk.

■ Mink: Coronavirus

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[114214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions the Government is having with officials in countries outside of Europe which farm mink on the status of coronavirus on their farms.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is monitoring the situation carefully and working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Public Health England.

Our Chief Veterinary Officer and other officials have been having regular interactions with the Danish technical experts to understand better the mink cases and the implications of the new variant virus strains. They also have regular contact with our European neighbours who farm mink for fur. FCDO have been leading on our interactions further afield, with Defra support.

We have published a cross-Government risk assessment for the UK on this situation:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/hairs-risk-assessment-on-sars-cov-2-in-mustelinae-population

Mink farming is banned across the UK. The legislation came into force in England and Wales in 2000 and in Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2002.

■ Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances: Packaging

Ben Lake:

[117344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances in non-essential packaging on (a) the environment and (b) UK ecosystems.

Ben Lake:

[117345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning the use of per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances in (a) food packaging and (b) other non-essential packaging.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Swansea West on 16 November, PQ UIN 113464.

A number of PFAS are already banned or highly restricted. The UK is a Party to the Stockholm Convention, which has already agreed restrictions on the use of certain PFAS; there are also restrictions in place under the REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) regulation.

At the end of the Transition Period the UK will put in place its own domestic chemicals regulatory framework. Existing restrictions under REACH will be brought into UK law. Our commitments under the Stockholm Convention will continue to apply. Future UK decisions to control the environmental and human health impacts of substances will be taken under our independent regime and will be based on rigorous assessment of the scientific evidence, including looking at approaches taken by chemical regimes across the world.

We are working to improve our understanding of the emissions and risks of PFAS in the UK, and how we manage these chemicals will be considered in our forthcoming Chemicals Strategy. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) also regularly reviews new information on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and will be considering the upcoming review by the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) of the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) latest scientific opinion on PFAS in food.

■ Pets: Disease Control

Sir Charles Walker:

[116416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what research his Department has undertaken on the effect of pet parasitical treatments on the (a) land-based and (b) water-based natural environment; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has commissioned a research project, with the University of Sussex, to investigate the potential direct and indirect environmental exposure pathways for cat and dog parasiticide products to assess the significance of veterinary use on levels of neonicotinoids (e.g. imidacloprid) and other parasiticides (e.g. fipronil) in the aquatic environment. No results are available yet from the project.

The VMD has not commissioned any research on the potential effect of pet parasitical treatments on the land-based natural environment as the priority is to assess the impact on the aquatic environment.

Pets: Fireworks**Bill Esterson:**[\[116464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what comparative assessment he has made of the effect on animals of the discharge of fireworks in (a) Sefton, (b) the North West and (c) the UK in (i) 2020 and (ii) previous years.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra understands concerns about the distress noisy fireworks can cause to pets, livestock and wildlife. This is one of the reasons that there is a noise level limit of 120 decibels on fireworks for home use. It is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to cause an animal any unnecessary suffering and this includes through the misuse of fireworks. The Government is supporting the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill, currently before Parliament, which will increase the maximum custodial penalty for this offence from six months to five years.

Defra has shared advice on our social media channels on how owners can keep their pets safe. The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs, made under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, encourages dog owners/keepers to act responsibly, including avoid exercising dogs during events which they may find frightening such as firework displays. We would encourage livestock owners who are concerned about planned firework displays to contact the organisers to see if any compromises can be made, such as using less noisy fireworks.

Ramsgate Port: Livestock**Craig Mackinlay:**[\[117331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of whether all live animals for export loaded onto livestock transporters at Ramsgate Port have received full inspections by adequately accredited veterinary officers; and if he will publish that assessment.

Victoria Prentis:

Government accredited Official Veterinarians ensure that every animal for which export certification is requested is fit to travel and has been rested, fed and watered.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) undertakes supervised loadings in all bar exceptional circumstances at departure premises where animals are being exported for further fattening or slaughter. In addition, welfare checks are conducted on all vehicles on arrival at Ramsgate. These checks range from ensuring all watering and ventilation systems are fully functional, to an inspection of the animals on board the vehicle.

APHA inspectors are present at every sailing from Ramsgate involving the export of live animals destined for slaughter. Where breaches in the legislation are identified APHA can, and does, take regulatory action to ensure compliance, protect the welfare of the animals and to achieve ongoing compliance.

■ Tobacco: Litter

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[114838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has received an offer from (a) Philip Morris International, (b) Imperial Brands, (c) Japan Tobacco International and (d) British American Tobacco to tackle litter from their products following the ministerial round table held by his Department in September 2020 on that matter; and if he will bring forward legislative proposals to mandate such a scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

We believe that the tobacco industry must take responsibility for the litter created by its products. Since the roundtable, we understand that Keep Britain Tidy has been working with the tobacco industry to develop a non-regulatory producer responsibility scheme for smoking related litter.

We are watching this work with interest as it could provide a more rapid means of securing significant investment from the industry to tackle this litter than taking legislative action. We have been clear that any such scheme must be developed in accordance with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the FCTC guidelines and the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control.

If smoking related litter continues to be a significant environmental concern, we will reflect on the steps the Government can take to ensure that the tobacco industry takes more responsibility. Measures in the Environment Bill will allow us to legislate for an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for tobacco products, if such an intervention was considered necessary.

Cigarette and tobacco product packaging will be covered by the reforms to the packaging producer responsibility scheme.

■ Tyres: Exports

Judith Cummins:

[\[117282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to require that used tyres be processed sustainably in the UK under the principles of the circular economy instead of being exported to developing countries.

Rebecca Pow:

Used tyres have a range of applications in the UK, including for reuse as part-worn tyres, various recycling routes including commercial tyre retreading and the use of granulated tyres in sports and safety surfaces and for recovery, where tyres are used as a fuel in cement kilns. Export is also a feature of the used tyre market. For example, my officials are pursuing with the Indian authorities questions related to the environmentally sound movement and subsequent treatment of tyres there.

Under the Government's 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy we identified a number of waste streams, including used tyres, as candidates on which to consult for future producer responsibility approaches. We will consider circular economy principles in the design of schemes that result from that.

Wildlife: Trade**Luke Pollard:**[\[114321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what inter-country policy negotiations have taken place in advance of the November G20 meeting on tackling the root causes of the covid-19 pandemic; and if he will use that meeting to promote the benefits of a global ban on the trade of non-essential wildlife and wildlife products to help prevent a future zoonotic pandemic.

Luke Pollard:[\[114322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in the context of the covid-19 pandemic, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential role of the G20 meeting in November and COP15 and COP26 in 2021 in bringing forward proposals for a global ban in the trade of wild animals and wild animal products.

Luke Pollard:[\[114324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to make representations to participants at the G20 meeting in November 2020 on creating an inter-country trade ban on legally imported (a) wildlife and (b) wildlife products during the covid-19 pandemic.

Rebecca Pow:

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with a stark reminder of what happens when our relationship with nature breaks down. We know that ecological damage, the illegal wildlife trade and consequent increased human-wildlife interactions increases the risk of zoonosis. As such, the UK is committed to supporting calls for countries to agree, apply and enforce strong controls and the highest standards of biosecurity to minimise the risk of disease transmission, including the prohibition of certain species or practices where appropriate.

The UK has actively participated in discussions as part of this year's G20 and will continue to be at the forefront of the debate on how we can tackle the key drivers of zoonotic disease emergence both at the G20, and other international forums. The UK

is committed to the adoption of ambitious goals and targets to address global biodiversity loss at CBD COP-15.

In addition, at UNGA in September the UK signed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature. This pledge includes commitments to tackle the illegal wildlife trade and integrate a One Health approach into all relevant policies. Nature is a key theme for the UK-hosted COP26 in November 2021 in Glasgow.

■ Zoo Animals Fund

Emma Hardy:

[\[116634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to review the eligibility criteria and application deadline for the Zoo Animals Fund.

Victoria Prentis:

The initial Zoos Support Fund was superseded by the £100 million Zoo Animals Fund which incorporated different eligibility criteria. To make this fund more accessible we expanded the eligibility criteria so that grant payments to zoos begin when zoos reach their final 12 weeks of finance, rather than six weeks. Zoos can also apply at any time (and can apply now), before reaching this 12 week point to help with their business planning. We have expanded the range of eligible costs so zoos can now claim costs relating to pre-planned essential maintenance and repair works as well as animal care costs. We have also recently announced an extension of the application deadline to 29 January 2021.

Emma Hardy:

[\[116635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Zoo Animals Fund in supporting zoos and aquaria during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

39 applications for the Zoo Animals Fund have been received to date, 10 awards have been granted and no applications have been rejected. The Zoo Animals Fund is still open for applications and remains open for applications until 29 January 2021, providing support up until March 2021. The grants awarded to date have ensured that zoos have been able to maintain the welfare of their animals in these challenging times.

■ Zoos: Nature Conservation

Emma Hardy:

[\[116636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional support for zoos and aquaria to allow them to continue their involvement in conservation projects in the UK and abroad during the covid-19 pandemic.

Victoria Prentis:

Following on from the success of the first round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, the Government has now confirmed that it will be doubling the size of the fund by making an additional £40 million available. This will bring the total to £80 million. This extra money will be used in a second round, to be launched in early 2021. The Green Recovery Challenge Fund will kick-start a pipeline of nature-based projects to restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with the natural environment. In round 1 a number of eligible bids were received from zoos and aquaria for conservation projects outside their core business.

The Government has also provided a package to support businesses, including zoos, through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19. Zoos are eligible to apply for a range of support schemes including the Furlough Scheme, VAT deferral, Business Rates Relief, the Business Interruption Loan and the option to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay.

In addition to the full range of financial support available to all businesses and employers, we have established an extra £100 million support fund for zoos facing severe financial difficulty, and the deadline for applications from this fund has now been extended to 29 January. The fund provides support up until March 2021.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Caribbean: Hurricanes and Tornadoes****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:****[115818]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to provide funding and long term support for people affected by Hurricane ETA.

Wendy Morton:

The British Government is supporting the humanitarian response in Central America in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. The Start Fund, to which the UK contributes, has released funding to NGOs in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala for immediate humanitarian assistance. FCDO has also procured aid supplies, including emergency shelter kits, to be distributed by local partners across the region. The British Government funded NGO, Map Action, is providing crucial mapping services to support regional relief efforts.

We have also deployed RFA Argus, a ship of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, to support the US military's relief operations in Honduras. We are donating £1 million to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) emergency appeal. The UK is also a large donor to multilateral agencies already responding across the region, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the World Food Programme. We are continuing to monitor the situation, and will consider providing further support as required.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Dan Carden:

[\[115795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has plans to attach public interest conditions to his Department's funding for research and development on covid-19 vaccines and treatments to ensure the (a) affordability, (b) accessibility and (c) social responsibility of the licensing of those vaccines.

Wendy Morton:

To ensure affordability and accessibility, the FCDO supports the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator in collaborating globally to develop affordable new vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics, which are accessible to everyone who needs them, as quickly as possible. The UK has contributed £313 million to ACT-Accelerator partners to develop new vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. These international not-for-profit organisations are committed to ensuring that once developed, products are affordable and accessible in low and middle-income countries. This includes selecting products that can be developed and scaled-up quickly to support global access.

In addition, the UK has committed up to £548 million for the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, which will support access to COVID-19 vaccines for 92 developing countries by contributing to the supply of 1 billion doses in 2021, subject to vaccines successfully securing stringent regulatory approvals. Gavi will negotiate prices and supply volumes with companies based on its established expertise in supporting global immunisation, and take into account investments made in research and development by ACT-Accelerator partners. We welcome the commitments made by several manufacturers to not-for-profit pricing during the pandemic period. At the United Nations General Assembly, the pharmaceutical industry came together to pledge their collective support for ensuring the affordable, global distribution of vaccines.

■ Coronavirus: Technology

Dan Carden:

[\[115794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the proposal from the President and Minister of Health of Costa Rica for the World Health Organisation to create a global pool for rights in covid-19 related technologies for the detection, prevention, control and treatment of covid-19.

Wendy Morton:

As details of the COVID-19 technology access pool (C-TAP) now emerge from the World Health Organisation, we will identify if C-TAP could add value to existing wider innovation and access infrastructure, such as the Medicines Patent Pool, which we helped set up 10 years ago.

■ Ethiopia: Politics and Government

Stephen Farry: [\[115848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking in response to the political situation in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by the ongoing violence in the Tigray region as well as by Amnesty International's report of killings of civilians on 9 November: we call for transparency and accountability to be delivered for such incidents. We have called on all involved to ensure the protection of civilians, and to restore and maintain humanitarian access to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance and essential services. The Foreign Secretary called Prime Minister Abiy of Ethiopia on 10 November to raise these concerns and stress the urgent need to de-escalate the situation. On 18 November, I reinforced this message with the Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK. The British Ambassador to Ethiopia and other officials also continue to reinforce these messages at the highest levels and we continue to engage regional and wider international partners to push for swift de-escalation of the situation. We are in close contact with UK funded humanitarian agencies working in Tigray to understand humanitarian needs and programme adaptations.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[91997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral evidence of the Permanent Under Secretary of his Department to the Foreign Affairs Committee on the Work of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on 10 November 2020, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Integrated Review on his Departments priorities.

James Cleverly:

The Integrated Review will cover all aspects of international and national security policy - defence, diplomacy, development and national resilience. Uniting development and diplomacy in one department brings together Britain's international effort to have even greater impact and influence on the world stage as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The Review will assess what will be needed to deliver our new strategy, in addition to seizing the opportunities offered by the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

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

■ Israel: Palestinians

Stephen Morgan: [\[115804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is providing to coexistence projects in Israel and Palestine.

James Cleverly:

UK aid has recently funded a £3 million people-to-people programme, that brought together Israelis and Palestinians to cooperate on issues that can have a positive impact on communities, improve understanding between people on both sides of the conflict, and help build support for a peaceful, negotiated resolution. The programme included a research component that will help inform any future work in this area.

Also, the UK funds peacebuilding projects in Israel as part of its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund Middle East Peace Process portfolio. One such project works with Jewish and Muslim religious communities, supporting them to develop joint peacebuilding initiatives.

Stephen Morgan:[\[115805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the creation of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

James Cleverly:

The International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace is a concept generated by the Alliance for Middle East Peace. The UK's three-year £3 million people-to-people programme had similar aims of bringing together individuals from both sides of the conflict to build understanding and build support for a just and peaceful political solution.

While the UK supports the concept that lies behind the International Fund we have no plans to commit financial support at this stage. We will, however, continue to engage with the Alliance for Middle East Peace.

■ Kenya: Pensions**Stephen Timms:**[\[117167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Kenyan authorities on the non-payment since January 2019 of pensions to former Kenyan Government employees now living in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

This matter is the responsibility of the Kenyan authorities. FCDO officials spoke to the Kenyan High Commission in London last month for an update on the non-payment of pensions to former Kenyan civil servants. I can confirm that the Kenyan Treasury Pensions Department was in touch with Crown Agents Bank in the UK at the beginning of October to request additional information in order to take this matter forward. We will stay in touch with both parties (the Kenyan Treasury Pensions Department and Crown Agents Bank), and continue to encourage them to resume pension payments as soon as possible.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[117200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to question 18532 answered on 3 March 2020, what discussions officials of his Department have had with (a) representatives of the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and (b) the Head of the Pensions Department in the Kenyan National Treasury on the non-payment of pensions to former Kenyan civil servants.

James Duddridge:

This matter is the responsibility of the Kenyan authorities. FCDO officials spoke to the Kenyan High Commission in London last month for an update on the non-payment of pensions to former Kenyan civil servants. I can confirm that the Kenyan Treasury Pensions Department was in touch with Crown Agents Bank in the UK at the beginning of October to request additional information in order to take this matter forward. We will stay in touch with both parties (the Kenyan Treasury Pensions Department and Crown Agents Bank), and continue to encourage them to resume pension payments as soon as possible.

■ Mexico: Religious Freedom

Jim Shannon:

[115655]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Mexican Government on behalf of the protestant families in La Mesa Limantitla who have been pressured by local authorities to renounce their faith and who are now being threatened with expulsion from the community as a result of their religious beliefs.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of the reports of protestant families in La Mesa Limantitla being threatened with expulsion from the community as a result of their religious beliefs. We raised this with the Mexican authorities on 13 November. The UK Government continues to engage regularly with the Mexican authorities at ministerial, official, and state level to discuss human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and to support a broad human rights agenda in Mexico.

The Mexican Constitution guarantees freedom of religion or belief for all its citizens. States as well as federal officials have responsibility for ensuring non-discrimination, and we welcome the 2019 launch of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Respect and Tolerance of Religious Diversity. The overall assessment by the Mexican Government, the local UN Human Rights office, and local civil society organisations is that while there are some cases of individuals being targeted because of their religion or beliefs, people are more often targeted for their work and activities in defence of human rights, or because of religious intolerance between faith groups in Mexico.

■ Overseas Aid

Dan Jarvis:

[\[117262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 October 2020 to Question 106362 on Overseas Aid, how many of the 16 projects delivered under the Integrated Activity Fund and covered by Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessments during the 2019-20 financial year were subject to Ministerial consultation.

James Cleverly:

During the 2019/20 financial year one Integrated Activity Fund project was covered by an Overseas Security and Justice Assessment that had undergone Ministerial consultation.

Chris Law:

[\[117286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2020 to Question 111558 on Overseas Aid, (a) on what date the in-year review of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office programme budgets was conducted and (b) which Government department or departments applied for the two programmes over £1 million which will be delivered in 2020-21.

James Cleverly:

The review took place in September 2020 after the International Programme received confirmation of its revised allocation, including £8.4 million for the Gulf Strategy Fund. Both programmes over £1 million were applications by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Chris Law:

[\[117287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, further to written answers 5457 and 103608 in which the Minister stated in January that the allocated budget for the Integrated Activity Fund (IAF)/ Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF) for the financial year 2020-2021 was £20m, but in October stated that this number had been reduced to £8.4m, to account for the reduction in funding allocated to the fund.

James Cleverly:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office programming, including the International Programme (IP), was temporarily put on hold earlier this year owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, except where the programmes were directly responding to Covid-19 or National Security priorities. Following a Ministerial-led reprioritisation exercise in the summer of 2020, a revised allocation for the IP, which includes £8.4 million for the Gulf Strategy Fund was approved in September to be spent in the remainder of the financial year.

Chris Law:

[\[117288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2020 to Question 111558, if he will publish

information on (a) the total number of applications over £1 million that were made to the Integrated Activity Fund (IAF) in the 2019-20 financial year, (b) which Government departments made those applications and (c) how many applications over £1 million each Government department made.

James Cleverly:

We do not disclose information related to individual Integrated Activity Fund projects to maintain the confidence and confidentiality of our Gulf partners.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[91995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate the Government has made of the monetary value of 0.7 per cent of GNI in 2020-21.

Wendy Morton:

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) is responsible for producing forecasts of the economy and public finances, not the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The last official OBR forecasts of Gross National Income (GNI) was published on 11 March 2020 and so did not reflect the full impact of COVID-19. OBR will publish their next set of forecasts of GNI on 25 November 2020.

■ **Palestinians: Radicalism**

John Howell:

[\[117220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Palestinian Authority on the glorification of martyrdom among some sections of Palestinian society.

James Cleverly:

Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle any language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We have a regular dialogue with the Palestinian Authority in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, any type of action and language that makes it more difficult to achieve a culture of peaceful coexistence and a negotiated solution to the conflict.

■ **Palestinians: Schools**

Nicola Richards:

[\[92026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to scrutinise the Palestinian Authority's newly released educational curriculum.

James Cleverly:

Following UK calls for action, the EU commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute, a specialist textbook analysis centre, to undertake a robust, impartial review of Palestinian textbooks. This review is ongoing, and the final report is not due until the end of 2020. We will study its findings carefully before deciding any next steps.

■ Palestinians: Terrorism**John Howell:**[\[117221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the Palestinian Authority's practice of paying salaries to prisoners convicted of terrorist offences.

James Cleverly:

We have raised the need for reform at the highest levels of the Palestinian Authority, including when the Foreign Secretary visited the Occupied Palestinian Territories in August 2020.

No UK aid is used for payments to prisoners or their families. The UK has robust controls against fraud and the diversion of aid to ensure UK aid reaches the intended beneficiaries.

■ Treaty On the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**Owen Thompson:**[\[114962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessments his Department made of the potential effectiveness of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons for (a) improving the international security and (b) increasing trust and transparency prior to the Government's decision not to ratify that treaty.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in line with our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Government firmly believes that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament negotiated using a step-by-step approach that strengthens trust and transparency under the NPT. The UK will not sign or ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as we do not believe that this treaty will bring us closer to a world without such weapons. The TPNW fails to address the security obstacles that must first be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament. It will not improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency, and risks undermining the NPT.

■ Turkey: Hamas**Bob Blackman:**[\[117240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart on reports that Turkey has granted citizenship to senior Hamas operatives.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of reports about the granting of Turkish citizenship to Hamas figures. Hamas continues to pose a threat to Israel and Israeli civilians. The UK is clear that Hamas' failure to renounce violence and recognise Israel remains a significant barrier to peace. We continue to call upon Hamas to end permanently their incitement and indiscriminate attacks against Israel. The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas, in its entirety. Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001.

■ USA: Elections**Stephen Morgan:**[\[115803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on the Middle East of the outcome of the 2020 US Presidential election.

James Cleverly:

The UK works closely with the US on matters relating to the Middle East and North Africa region, and we will continue to work closely with the US Administration, as we would normally do, on a variety of issues. Only the leaders of Middle Eastern and North African nations can determine whether their relationship with the US can meet the needs and aspirations of the people they represent. For more details on US relations with individual countries in the Middle East, you would need to speak to the US.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[109723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to provide medicinal cannabis prescriptions on the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

Following the rescheduling of cannabis-based products for medicinal use under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, as of 1 November 2018, doctors on the General Medical Council's Specialist Register have been able to prescribe these medicines, where clinically appropriate and in the best interests of patients. The same rules apply regardless of whether medicinal cannabis is prescribed on the National Health Service or privately.

Two licensed cannabis-based medicines have recently been made available for prescribing on the NHS for patients with Multiple Sclerosis or hard to treat epilepsies, where clinically appropriate. This follows clear demonstrated evidence of their safety, and clinical and cost effectiveness.

■ **Cocaine: Death**

Grahame Morris:

[\[114143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the rate of cocaine-related deaths among (a) women and (b) men.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 November 2020]: The Office of National Statistics report 'Deaths related to drugs poisoning in England and Wales: 2019 registrations' shows that cocaine deaths have risen for the eighth consecutive year to their highest level, with the male death rate in 2019 being nearly four times higher than the female death rate. The second phase of Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs is focussing on treatment and recovery services, for the misuse of cocaine and other drugs, and the final report will be made available to Ministers later this year.

■ **Contraceptives: Pregnancy**

Sarah Champion:

[\[91889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department holds estimates for the number of women who became pregnant while on waiting lists for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) fittings in 2019.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold this information centrally.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Jon Trickett:

[\[91942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish details of all contracts awarded to private companies relating to the Government's covid-19 response.

Edward Argar:

As part of the response to COVID-19, the Government has established partnerships with industry, academia, local government and others to its testing programme – from companies supplying testing kits and supplies, to logistics and processing partnerships. All the Departmental COVID-19 contracts are, or will be, published on the GOV.UK contract finder service.

■ **Coronavirus: Hospital Beds**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[110728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the current capacity is of hospitals in England to treat covid-19 patients; and if he will set out the evidence which

shows that hospitals would run out of that capacity by the end of November 2020 on present trends of the spread of covid-19.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 9 November 2020]: The publication of weekly bed availability, including critical care beds, and occupancy for winter 2020/21 has recently been started and the data can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/uec-sitrep/>

An assessment of projected increases in COVID-19 cases and National Health Service bed availability was set out ahead of new national measures introduced from 5 November. This information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/slides-to-accompany-coronavirus-press-conference-31-october-2020>

■ **Coronavirus: Personal Care Services**

Barbara Keeley:

[114127]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020, if he will publish the scientific advice on the effect of closing (a) nail and beauty salons, (b) hair salons and (c) barbers on the transmission of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 16 November 2020]: Throughout the pandemic, the Government has listened carefully to the views of the scientific community, in particular the information from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its sub-groups when taking decisions on the best way to tackle the pandemic.

The evidence that is considered by SAGE and used to support the Government's response to COVID-19 is shared on GOV.UK at the following link:

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

Close contact services including hairdressing and beauty services are associated with an increased risk of transmission of the virus. Scientists have made it clear that the more you break the chains of transmission the more you reduce spread of the virus. Therefore, the current restrictions are in place to limit the number of interactions that people have and therefore reduce the risk spread.

■ **Dementia: Coronavirus**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[113026]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will include people with dementia on the clinically vulnerable list.

Jo Churchill:

Keeping people safe throughout this period, especially society's most vulnerable, is the Government's top priority.

Dementia has not been added to the list of health conditions defined as clinically vulnerable, due to the varied presentation and severity of the condition. However, people with dementia may fall within the category of 'vulnerable' by, for example, meeting the criteria on age or the other defined health conditions.

■ Drugs: Imports**Liz Saville Roberts:****[114275]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help enable the unhindered movement of medicinal drugs from EU countries into the UK after the end of the transition period.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 November 2020]: Our priority is to ensure that patients continue to have access to the medicines they need. We continue to work closely with industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to deliver the shared goal of continuity of safe patient care by mitigating any potential disruption to supply into the United Kingdom of medicines at the end of the transition period.

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

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

■ Drugs: Poisoning**Grahame Morris:****[114141]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take in response to the Office for National Statistics report, Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2019 registrations, published on 14 October 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 November 2020]: The Office of National Statistics report shows the number of deaths due to drug poisoning registered in 2019 remains at a similar level to 2018. However, since 2012, we have seen an increase in the number of drug-related deaths many of which are preventable. We are committed to reducing drug misuse and the harms it causes.

The second phase of Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs was announced on 27 February 2020 and is focussing on treatment and recovery services. Drug treatment

services reduce harm and help thousands of people to recover every year. Everyone who needs it must be able to get the treatment they need, which we know saves lives. The Review findings will feed into wider Government work to tackle harms, including the rising number of deaths caused by substance misuse. The final report will be made available to Ministers later this year.

■ Drugs: Storage

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[113102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many refrigerators for the storage of pharmaceutical products the Government has access to.

Edward Argar:

It is not possible to quantify the total volume of refrigerated space for the storage of medicines that the Government has access to as some of its stockpiles are held by suppliers and wholesalers on its behalf.

The Government holds stockpiles of a range of different medicines, including crucial medicines used to treat COVID-19 patients, vaccines, and the Essential Medicines Buffer Stock, to help ensure there is uninterrupted supply over the coming months. Some of those stockpiled products are held by Public Health England (PHE), and also by suppliers, in refrigerated storage.

PHE currently has access to around 6,000 chill (2-8 degrees Celsius) storage pallet spaces. This will be increasing in 2021 in line with anticipated storage requirements.

PHE has also secured 58 ultra-low temperature freezers which provide sufficient storage for approximately five million doses of potential COVID-19 vaccines which require ultra-low temperature storage.

As part of our end of European Union Exit Transition Period contingency plans we have requested suppliers to stockpile to a target level of six week's total stock on United Kingdom soil by 31 December 2020, where possible. Supplier stockpiles, which continue to be built, will also make use of refrigerated storage.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[113103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many refrigerators for the storage of pharmaceutical products with temperatures below minus 80 degrees the Government has access to.

Edward Argar:

It is not possible to quantify the total volume of refrigerated space for the storage of medicines that the Government has access to as some of its stockpiles are held by suppliers and wholesalers on its behalf.

The Government holds stockpiles of a range of different medicines, including crucial medicines used to treat COVID-19 patients, vaccines, and the Essential Medicines Buffer Stock, to help ensure there is uninterrupted supply over the coming months. Some of those stockpiled products are held by Public Health England (PHE), and also by suppliers, in refrigerated storage.

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■ Food: Packaging

Geraint Davies:

[\[113463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on Denmark's decision to ban per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in food packaging for reasons of public health.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 November 2020]: The Department of Health and Social Care regularly engages with other government departments, including the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on a range of topics related to chemicals and chemical policy and is aware of Denmark's national ban preventing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) being intentionally used in paper and board food-contact applications.

The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) is an independent scientific committee that provides advice to the Department of Health and Social Care, the FSA, and other departments and agencies on matters concerning the toxicity of chemicals, including PFAS. The FSA regularly reviews new information on this subject and will consider COT's upcoming review of the European Food Safety Authority's scientific opinion on PFAS in food packaging.

■ Health Services: Finance

Dan Jarvis:

[\[117259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department will publish an updated (a) multi-year capital settlement and (b) Health Infrastructure Plan.

Edward Argar:

The Chancellor has confirmed a one-year Spending Review on 25 November, which will set the Department's capital budgets for 2021-22, as well as provide multi-year capital settlements for priority infrastructure projects, such as hospital building. Details on the Department's settlement will be published in due course and updates to the Health Infrastructure Plan will depend on the outcome.

■ Health Services: Older People

Stuart Anderson:

[107107]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that elderly and vulnerable people can access urgent dental and GP appointments during the winter months.

Jo Churchill:

General practice continues its vital role in supporting high-risk patients with ongoing care needs, including those who have been in the 'shielding' cohort, those who may need to shield in future, care home residents and those needing COVID-19 aftercare and support.

NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance on COVID-19 states that all general practitioner practices must offer face-to-face appointments at their surgeries as well as using remote triage and video, online and telephone consultation wherever appropriate – whilst also considering those who are unable to access or engage with digital services.

Practices continue to undertake routine and preventative work including vaccinations and immunisations and screening, as well as supporting their more high-risk patients with ongoing care needs.

National Health Service high street dental services are able to offer face-to-face care and there are currently no plans to restrict NHS dental provision during the winter months. NHS England and NHS Improvement issued guidance setting out the priority order in which patients should be seen – focused on urgent treatment, particularly vulnerable groups and then routine care which is overdue.

■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

Peter Kyle:

[117316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date ordinarily resident EU nationals will be able to apply for the new UK EHIC card.

Edward Argar:

A new United Kingdom European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) has been developed for those eligible under the Withdrawal Agreement to protect the existing healthcare rights of people living, working and studying in the European Union prior to the end of the transition period. The new card will be valid from when it is received and for travel from 1 January 2021.

EU nationals living in the UK before 31 December 2020 will be able to apply for the new UK EHIC in December 2020. We will work with stakeholders and target communications at the relevant groups and audiences to ensure they get the call to action to apply for a new EHIC.

Should an EU national who is eligible for a new EHIC under the Withdrawal Agreement not have the card in time for any travel, they will still remain covered. If

they require necessary healthcare whilst in the EU, they will be able to ask for a Provisional Replacement Certificate from the NHS Business Services Authority.

■ **Hormone Replacement Therapy: Coronavirus**

Fleur Anderson:

[113237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the availability of Hormone Replacement Therapy supplies during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 November 2020]: As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the pandemic, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to access safe and effective medicines. We are aware of supply issues that have affected some hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations for various reasons, including regulatory or manufacturing issues and commercial decisions made by some companies to divest some products. While a very limited number of HRT products are currently affected, most, including alternatives to those experiencing supply issues are available.

We have been working closely with all suppliers of HRT medicines to maintain overall access to patients and have provided regular updates about these issues and management advice to the National Health Service. The overall situation has been improving since the end of February 2020 and will continue to improve in the coming months.

■ **Hospitals: Construction**

Dan Jarvis:

[116490]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Health Infrastructure Plan 3 consultation will begin; and what criteria his Department will use to assess funding applications.

Edward Argar:

Details regarding the consultation and criteria for major capital investments after 2030 under the rolling Health Infrastructure Plan have not been finalised.

The Government recently confirmed 40 hospitals will be built by 2030, with funding of £3.7 billion confirmed over the next four years. An open competition will be run to identify eight further new schemes, delivering on the Government's manifesto commitment. The bid process for the remaining eight hospitals is currently being designed, but as these schemes will be delivered in the second half of the decade, we will shape the competition process and announce it in due course.

We will continue to closely work with trusts and regions to ensure when any future process does take place, the criteria for selection best meets the needs of the National Health Service.

■ Influenza: Coronavirus

Jon Trickett: [\[110054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people aged 50 and above are eligible for the flu vaccine in winter 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

This season, the flu vaccine programme will be extended to include the 50-64 year old age group, following prioritisation of those in at risk groups and frontline health and social care workers from 1st December.

Those 50-64 year olds who do not fall within an at-risk eligible cohort will be invited to receive a free vaccination later in the season.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Nick Smith: [\[100344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is offering to healthcare settings to ensure adequate stocks of the flu vaccine for winter 2020-21.

Nick Smith: [\[100345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle low stocks of the flu vaccine (a) for healthcare and other key workers and (b) in general.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 13 October 2020]: There is no national shortage of the flu vaccine. There is sufficient vaccine for up to 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter.

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

Alex Norris: [\[109585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 October 2020 to Questions 91703 and 91704 on Influenza: Vaccination, when new models of delivery and blueprints which have been shared with regional commissioning teams will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement shared the information regarding possible models of implementation with all regional commissioning teams earlier in the flu season. In addition, best practice evidence

from provider models is being shared to allow others to learn from successful projects. There are no plans to publish this.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[110223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to encourage uptake of the NHS flu vaccine in (a) Slough and (b) England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 November 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to ensure that regional teams have plans in place to increase coverage of the flu vaccination this winter. This includes a flu communications and engagement plan developed in partnership with Public Health England (PHE), local partners, community contacts and patient group members to encourage uptake of flu vaccination amongst eligible groups.

PHE have launched a new marketing campaign to encourage uptake of flu vaccination amongst eligible groups. The marketing campaign promotes the vaccine through TV adverts, local media, social media, newsletters and videos, with material available in multiple languages.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are also using an enhanced call and recall system, so that those who are eligible are reminded to book a vaccination. They are also working closely with general practices and school immunisations teams to identify areas of low uptake and implement targeted communications for these areas.

Additional flu vaccine has been purchased by the Department, which is now available to providers to increase uptake in existing groups.

Luke Pollard:

[111613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that an adequate supply of the flu vaccine is available so that vulnerable and elderly people are able to access that vaccination; and if he will issue guidance to vulnerable and elderly people on that matter.

Jo Churchill:

General practitioners and community pharmacists are responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults, with deliveries phased through the season. The Department has procured additional doses of seasonal flu vaccine to ensure more flu vaccines are available this winter. Overall, there is sufficient vaccine for more than 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter.

Delivery of the flu vaccine programme has begun, with priority given to those who are most at risk from the effects of flu. This includes those with underlying health conditions and those aged 65 years and over.

Sarah Owen:

[91931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of flu vaccine doses that will be delivered to the people aged over 50 in winter 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 November 2020]: The flu vaccine programme is currently being delivered, with priority given to those who are most at risk from the effects of flu, and frontline health and social care workers. There will be further communication on extending the programme to those aged 50-64 later in the season. Overall, there is sufficient vaccine for more than 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter.

■ **Kawasaki Disease: Health Education**

Dr James Davies:

[110182]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to raise clinical and public awareness of Kawasaki disease.

Jo Churchill:

Recent studies have found links between COVID-19 and a 'Kawasaki-like' syndrome. NHS England has taken steps to work with experts to define what is now called 'Paediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Disorder Temporally Related to Sars CoV2 infection (PIMS-TS)'. All paediatric units and intensive care units have been briefed.

The Government plans to publish a new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework by the end of 2020 to replace the current Strategy which will outline the key priorities for rare diseases in the UK over the next five years. One priority area, as identified through the 'national conversation' on rare diseases, is to further increase awareness of rare diseases amongst health professionals.

■ **Kawasaki Disease: Health Services**

Dr James Davies:

[110181]

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 number of patients receiving treatment for Kawasaki disease in (a) Wales and (b) the UK.

Jo Churchill:

The Department only holds data for activity in England as health is a devolved matter. The Department, alongside NHS England, continues to consider the impact of COVID-19 on patients with Kawasaki disease and other rare diseases.

NHS England has had discussions with some services and patients/patient groups to understand the impact of COVID-19. NHS England has worked with commissioned providers, patient groups and charities throughout the pandemic to ensure that patients, carers and their families have been supported during the COVID-19 outbreak and ensuring those discussions inform planning for autumn and winter.

■ Kawasaki Disease: Medical Treatments

Dr James Davies:

[\[110183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that children suffering from Kawasaki disease can access suitable treatment.

Jo Churchill:

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that rare disease patients, including those with Kawasaki disease have access to suitable treatment, and takes steps to improve access via implementation of the United Kingdom Strategy for Rare Diseases.

The Government plans to publish a new UK Rare Diseases Framework by the end of 2020 to replace the UK Rare Disease Strategy. One priority area, as identified through the 'national conversation' on rare diseases, is to improve access to specialist care.

Specialised commissioning within NHS England and NHS Improvement have ensured sufficient stock of intravenous immunoglobulin ahead of the second wave of COVID-19.

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[115525\]](#)

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

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 19 November 2020]: The Government welcomes the report and we are considering Baroness Cumberlege's recommendations carefully. We will update Parliament before the end of the year.

■ Mental Health Services: Veterans

Sir John Hayes:

[\[111424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure veterans have swift and comprehensive access to mental health treatment.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Veteran's mental health needs are very often no different to those of the general population. Data in England has shown that most patients suffer from common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety and readily make use of the mainstream mental health services.

For veterans who do need specialist support this government is fully committed to providing high quality evidence-based services. The National Health Service in

England has set up two dedicated veterans mental health services, the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service and the Complex Treatment Service. The recently launched Veterans' Mental Health High Intensity Service provides crisis care and therapeutic inpatient support for those who need urgent and emergency care. Together, these three services provide a complete mental health care pathway for veterans.

■ NHSX

Philip Davies: [\[115543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the headquarters of NHSX is in London.

Philip Davies: [\[115544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are employed by NHSX in London by pay band.

Philip Davies: [\[115545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new NHSX jobs are based in London.

Philip Davies: [\[115546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of NHSX to consider technology solutions outside of London.

Philip Davies: [\[115547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made on the effect of having NHSX headquartered in London on the Government's levelling-up agenda.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHSX offices are located in London and Leeds, in buildings shared with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Department. NHSX is not headquartered in London - it works across both sites.

NHSX is a joint unit, and staff are employees of either NHS England and NHS Improvement or the Department. Vacancies are usually advertised for both Leeds and London, although some posts have been targeted at Leeds. The information requested on the number of permanent NHSX staff in London by pay band is shown in the following tables.

Departmental employees

CIVIL SERVICE GRADE	NUMBER BASED IN LONDON
Administrative Officer	1
Executive Officer	7

CIVIL SERVICE GRADE	NUMBER BASED IN LONDON
Higher Executive Officer	7
Fast Stream	6
Senior Executive Officer	8
Grade 7	33
Grade 6	8
Senior Civil Servant	13
Total	83

NHS England and NHS Improvement employees

AGENDA FOR CHANGE PAYBAND	NUMBER BASED IN LONDON
Band 4	1
Band 5	9
Band 6	6
Band 7	19
Band 8a	12
Band 8b	18
Band 8c	15
Band 8d	10
Band 9	14
ESM 1	10
ESM 2	4
ESM 3	2
Total	120

NHSX is supporting digital transformation of the National Health Service and social care throughout England and takes a national and international view of the best technology to do this. NHSX sets the standards for digitisation, and provides front-line support, to allow local health and social care providers to secure the appropriate digital solutions, which means we have truly national scope.

In accordance with the Government's levelling-up agenda, we are aiming to reduce our estates space in London with the Leeds office becoming the bigger site.

■ **Obesity: Surgery**

Darren Jones: [\[91916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase funding for bariatric surgery in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for commissioning complex obesity services for adults, which include all bariatric surgical procedures and the associated care. We are already providing all National Health Service organisations with significant funding commitments including the Chancellor's funding for the healthcare response to COVID-19, with £31.9 billion of support for health services announced at the summer Economic Statement and a further £16.4 billion as part of the Winter Economy Plan. This is in addition to the funding increase by £33.9 billion by 2023-24.

Through 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' we are delivering a range of measures on weight management. Further details about these measures will be available later in the year.

■ **Radiotherapy**

Tim Farron: [\[114129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the radiotherapy backlog from Public Health England's latest Radiotherapy Dataset.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 November 2020]: The Radiotherapy Dataset does not collect data on delayed or cancelled radiotherapy treatments relating to COVID-19 or have a count of patients who may be in a cancer treatment backlog.

■ **Schools: Protective Clothing**

Kate Osamor: [\[96966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether schools are required to ensure that pupils wear face masks while on school premises and outside of the classroom.

Kate Osamor: [\[96967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued to schools on the wearing of face masks by pupils.

Jo Churchill:

Children in primary schools do not need to wear a face covering. In primary schools where social distancing is not possible between adults in indoor areas (for example when moving around in corridors and communal areas), settings have the discretion

to recommend the use of face coverings when indoors on site, for both staff and visitors.

In schools where pupils in year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults (staff and visitors) and pupils when moving around indoors in corridors and other communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Face coverings are not currently required in school classrooms due to the negative impact they have on communication between teacher and student, and because schools are able to put other COVID-19 secure measures into place.

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering. Where anybody is struggling to access a face covering, or where they are unable to use their face covering due to having forgotten it or it has become soiled or unsafe, education settings should take steps to have a small contingency supply available to meet such needs.

We continue to provide guidance to educational settings online.

HOME OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Fay Jones:

[115023]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support asylum seekers at Penally Barracks, Pembrokeshire.

Chris Philp:

The AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help offers support and guidance to vulnerable migrants.

AIRE asylum services provide free independent advice, guidance and information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK.

■ Asylum

Neil Coyle:

[117277]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to introduce the new service standard for deciding asylum claims.

Chris Philp:

For the year 2020, we are continuing to prioritise claims to concentrate on older claims, cases with acute vulnerability and those in receipt of the greatest level of support, including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). Additionally, we are prioritising cases where an individual has already received a decision, but a reconsideration is required.

Asylum Operations are dealing with sustained high levels of new applications which is creating pressure, however we are working to balance the overall needs of the system to ensure cases are appropriately prioritised.

There have been some operational challenges resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak that has impacted our decision making across all claims.

We are continuing to formulate plans on a new service standard for all asylum claims, which should provide asylum seekers and partners with clear expectations of how and when a decision should be made.

■ Asylum: Burton

Kate Griffiths:

[110257]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are currently being accommodated in hotels in Burton constituency; and how much that accommodation cost the public purse in the most recent period for which data are available.

Chris Philp:

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

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

Data is published on a quarterly basis from 31st March 2014 with the latest information covering until 30th June 2020. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in November 2020

■ Asylum: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan:

[92010]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 5 November 2020 to Question 109623, whether Public Health England has advised her Department that the eviction of destitute former asylum seekers poses no threat to public health.

Afzal Khan:

[92012]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 5 November 2020 to Question 109623 on Asylum: Coronavirus, which (a) other Government Departments and agencies and (b) local authorities she has consulted in her regular review of the process of issuing discontinuation notices.

Afzal Khan:

[92013]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has conducted an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the decision to recommence evictions from asylum accommodation.

Chris Philp:

Failed asylum seekers who have exhausted their appeal rights are eligible to receive accommodation and other support provided they take reasonable steps to leave the UK or there is a legal or practical obstacle to their departure. The Home Office Voluntary Returns Scheme pays for the flight to the home country and provides reintegration assistance.

Only failed asylum seekers who are able to take steps to leave the UK, but choose not to, are therefore issued with notices that their support will be discontinued.

The process of issuing discontinuation notices is kept under regular review, taking consideration of public health guidance and the impact of the virus on those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

We have been working closely with National and Local health officials throughout the pandemic to inform our approach and will continue to do so.

We remain committed to working closely with the accommodation providers and communicating with local authorities to relieve pressure and capacity as much as possible and ensure that health guidance is being followed.

A review was undertaken in accordance with our Public Sector Equality duties and included careful discussion and planning with Public Health Agencies, Local Authorities, Other Government Departments and Stakeholders, which included members of the voluntary and community sector, on how support cessations should appropriately recommence.

We continue to consult public health officials in relation to the application of relevant guidance for supported asylum seekers.

■ **Asylum: Dorset**

Conor Burns:

[113050]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers in the initial stage of assessment were housed in hotel accommodation in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council area on (a) 1 July 2020, (b) 1 August 2020, (c) 1 September 2020 and (d) 1 October 2020.

Chris Philp:

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

This includes the numbers of those accommodated under Section 98, Section 95 and Section 4.

Data is published on a quarterly basis from 31st March 2014 with the latest information covering until 30th June 2020. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in November 2020

■ **Asylum: Employment**

Stuart Anderson: [\[92016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the remit is of the Government's review of the restrictions on asylum seekers' right to work; and when the Government plans to publish the outcome of that review.

Chris Philp:

ASYLUM SEEKER RIGHT TO WORK IS A COMPLEX ISSUE. A REVIEW OF THE POLICY IS ONGOING, AND WE ARE CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE PUT FORWARD ON THE ISSUE. THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW WILL BE ANNOUNCED ONCE THE WORK HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

■ **Asylum: Housing**

Afzal Khan: [\[92008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the order of the High Court of 2 November directing her Department to continue to provide accommodation under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to former asylum-seekers, whether departmental staff have been instructed to (a) cease to issue new discontinuation notices to persons to whom the order applies and (b) withdraw (i) notices under appeal and (ii) other such notices where they have not yet led to withdrawal of accommodation.

Afzal Khan: [\[92009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the order of the High Court of 2 November 2020 directing her Department to continue to provide accommodation under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to former asylum-seekers, what instructions she has issued to companies contracted by her Department to provide accommodation and/or advice to former asylum-seekers; and if she will publish those instructions.

Afzal Khan: [\[92011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 5 November 2020 to Question 109623, whether she has instructed her staff not to defend discontinuation notices in appeals to the Asylum Support Tribunal as a result of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Chris Philp:

The High Court on 2 November 2020 issued an Interim Order to pause decisions on support for failed asylum seekers.

Departmental staff have been instructed to cease issuing new discontinuation notices to persons to whom the Interim order applies.

The Home Office has withdrawn from appeals lodged as a result of a negative cessations notification letter issued prior to the Interim Order and have continued to provide accommodation and support to those affected. We have also instructed contractors to pause cases that were being implemented at the time that this order came into effect.

Providers have been instructed not to implement Notices to Vacate (NTV) for negative cessations. These instructions have been cascaded to Provider staff and we remain in close contact.

Appeals lodged to the Asylum Support Tribunal regarding cessations of support that do not meet the criteria in the Interim Order will continue to be defended by the Home Office.

■ Asylum: Interviews

Jessica Morden:

[113032]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time was for an asylum interview after the date of an asylum claim in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is unable to state what the average waiting time is for an asylum interview after the date of an asylum claim in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 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 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.

Stuart C McDonald:

[115701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she will take to ensure asylum interviews of persons applying for refugee status on grounds of sexual orientation are not affected by the potential views and prejudices of interpreters present at the interview.

Priti Patel:

All interpreters are subject to qualification checks when joining the Home Office interpreter panel and performance is regularly monitored and assessed. Interpreters

are also governed by a Code of Conduct that clearly sets out requirements and expectations. Any breaches of standards are rigorously investigated, assessed and appropriate action taken.

A revised version of the Code of Conduct was published in November 2020. We are also in the process of revising our sexual orientation guidance for caseworkers, which will highlight and enhance these requirements.

■ Biometric Residence Permits

Jessica Morden:

[113030]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time was for a Biometric Residency Permit to be issued after a positive outcome in a UKVI application in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) January to November 2020; and how many applicants were waiting for a Biometric Residency Permit to be issued six months after a positive outcome of their UKVI application in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not keep data relating to delays issuing Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), but it does have service level agreements (SLAs) with partners for the creation and delivery of BRPs. The Home Office can also check whether and how quickly an individual BRP was created and delivered.

The Home Office aims to deliver a BRP within 10 working days of an immigration application being approved.

The DVLA, which produces BRPs, has an SLA to complete 90% of production requests within one working day and the remaining 10% within two working days. While this was met consistently until early 2020 the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions and safe working practices have caused occasional delays of up to four working days since April.

Our delivery partner is required to attempt first delivery of 99% of BRP within two working days of collection from DVLA. This target was met up until February 2020 and is 91% since then. We are working to improve our performance in all areas.

■ British Nationality and Immigration: Complaints

Neil Coyle:

[117278]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has established the Terms of Reference for the review of the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship System complaints procedure.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is working with the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) to finalise the terms of reference for an independent review of the complaints system and advise on improvements. The review should commence early next month.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

Sarah Owen:

[117382]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people self-isolated in (a) July, (b) August, (c) September and (d) October 2020 after entering the UK from a country with which the UK does not have a travel corridor.

Chris Philp:

Information relating to Health measures at the border and compliance with quarantine restrictions are available on GOV.uk at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border>.

■ Forensic Science

Charlotte Nichols:

[92022]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to reduce forensic service caseloads.

Kit Malthouse:

Forensic Science is a vital tool in the Criminal Justice System and the government takes the welfare of all forensic scientists very seriously.

Approximately 80% of forensic service provision is delivered by policing in-house, with the remainder delivered by external service providers under police contract. The quality of these services is overseen by the Forensic Science Regulator.

The Home Office has invested in the Forensic Capability Network (FCN), which has operated since April 2020 on behalf of all police forces in England and Wales to increase efficiency and quality; to manage demand in forensic services; and to support the National Police Chiefs Council in co-ordinating policing's response to major incidents such as the response to Covid-19.

A national contingency plan has been enacted to manage the impact of Covid-19 and the NPCC is working closely with external service providers. The Home Office will continue to support the FCN and the NPCC in delivering these plans.

■ Immigrants: Finance

Stephen Timms:

[117164]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 6 November 2020 to Question 105275, for what reason the figure provided for in-country family extensions in the Immigration statistics referred to in that answer does not equate with the figure provided for the proportion of people with no resource to public funds.

Chris Philp:

Pursuant to question 105275, the data on how many people were granted an extension to their Leave to Remain with No Recourse to Public Funds were produced from Management Information on a live database, and caveated subject to change.

The published statistics do not include a breakdown of those granted with or without the No Recourse to Public Funds condition; the link to the published statistics was provided in the response to the written Parliamentary Question 105275 to provide context and to show where the headline figures for extensions are published.

■ Immigration: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan:

[\[92014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Answer of 28 October 2020 to Question 106945 on Immigration: Coronavirus, what the parameters are of her review into previously enrolled biometrics; what her timeframe is for that review; whether she plans to enable MPs to submit evidence; and whether she plans to publish the results of her inquiries.

Kevin Foster:

We want to widen our reuse of previously enrolled biometrics and will develop our plans in the New Year. A rollout plan will be developed to look at expanding the scheme further which will include engagement with relevant stakeholders.

■ Members: Correspondence

Peter Kyle:

[\[117315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the number of queries from MPs which her Department does not answer within the 20 working-day target timeframe.

Kevin Foster:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of MPs written correspondence within 20 working days. Performance has been impacted by a very significant 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.

The Department recognises we have not been able to meet service standard in some cases but have implemented an action plan to clear backlogs and drive up performance.

Staff unable to perform front facing roles in the Department have been redeployed to assist in clearing MPs correspondence backlogs. This has started to impact productivity after initial investment in their training and development. The Department are also contacting MPs offices by telephone to offer to close urgent cases by telephone while we continue to work through the backlog and to offer regular engagement surgeries to discuss and resolve enquiries.

■ Refugees: Resettlement

Margaret Ferrier:

[114913]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has for the resumption of refugee resettlement flights to the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

We have been working closely with key domestic and international stakeholders on plans to safely resume UK resettlement arrivals against the backdrop of unprecedented restrictions and pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of this work, and as announced by Baroness Williams of Trafford in the House of Lords on 9 November, the UK will shortly restart UK resettlement arrivals to fulfil our commitment of resettling 20,000 refugees affected by the conflict in Syria under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and we are working closely with partners to deliver this commitment.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Sarah Owen:

[117381]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people have been required to self-isolate in each of the last four months after entering the UK from a country where there is no travel corridor.

Chris Philp:

Information relating to Health measures at the border and compliance with quarantine restrictions are available on GOV.uk at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border/data-on-health-measures-at-the-uk-border>.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Stuart C McDonald:

[109421]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 October 2020 to Question 102848 on Undocumented Migrants: English Channel, what representations she has received from legal professional bodies on her use of the phrase activist lawyers; when those representations were received; and what steps she took in response to those representations.

Chris Philp:

The Home Secretary has not received any representations from legal professional bodies on the phrase “activist lawyers”.

■ Undocumented Migrants: EU countries

Tim Loughton: [114759]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many illegal migrants have been (a) successfully returned to EU countries and (b) booked on to planes to return to EU countries but where the place has not been taken up, in 2020 to date; and what the cost was in each case.

Tim Loughton: [114760]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the nationality is of illegal migrants returned to EU countries in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020 to date.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes data on returns in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Data on the number of returns and by nationality to EU Member States are published in table Det_D01 of the [returns detailed datasets](#). Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending June 2020.

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

Providing the information requested on the number of those where removal did not proceed and the costs in each case would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

■ Visas: Artificial Intelligence

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [116657]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 102174, what decision-making algorithms her Department uses for processing visa applications.

Kevin Foster:

Pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2020 to question 102174, there are no decision-making algorithms used in the processing of visa applications.

Every application is assessed by a decision-maker against the Immigration Rules, on its individual merits and taking into consideration the evidence provided by the applicant and any other relevant factors at the date of the decision.

■ Visas: New Businesses

Martyn Day: [115734]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on the ability of Tier 1 entrepreneur migrants to meet their visa requirements.

Martyn Day:

[\[115735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will issue guidance for Tier 1 entrepreneur migrants who are unable to create at least two full-time jobs by the date that their visa expires owing to covid-19 restrictions.

Martyn Day:

[\[115736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will issue guidance on the visa extension eligibility criteria for Tier 1 entrepreneur migrants who are unable to create at least two full-time jobs by the date that their visa expires owing to covid-19 restrictions.

Kevin Foster:

We recognise the impact the ongoing pandemic is having on those establishing businesses under the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) route.

We have put in place provisions to enable those with leave in the Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) route who are unable to satisfy the job creation requirement, as a result of the pandemic, to extend their leave, allowing them time to create employment opportunities post pandemic.

The Home Office COVID-19 guidance will be updated shortly to reflect this position

■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review

Stephen Timms:

[\[116378\]](#)

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

Priti Patel:

The comprehensive improvement plan set out the aim to review all the compliant measures and cumulatively. We are currently in the discovery and scoping phase of the review.

There are six primary streams to the compliant environment – some of which only apply to England and Wales – which will be covered in our response to this recommendation. These are:

- Work – to prevent those who are ineligible from working;
- Housing – to prevent those without lawful status from accessing the private rental sector.
- Public Funds – to prevent those who are ineligible from accessing mainstream support and benefits;
- Health – to charge upfront for non-urgent health care and recover costs for emergency treatment where payment upfront was not possible;

- Financial Services – to prevent people deemed as disqualified due to lack of lawful status from accessing current accounts;
- Driving – to prevent those without lawful status from holding licences while in the UK.

A full evaluation of the Right to Rent scheme is already underway. The evaluation includes a call for evidence to tenants, landlords and letting agents; a large mystery shopping exercise; and surveys of landlords. Members of the right to rent consultative panel provided input into the design of the evaluation. COVID-19 has impacted the field work and delivery of the final implementation report is now scheduled for spring 2021.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Neil Coyle: [\[115689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether funds made available to local authorities to support covid-19-related work are allocated under the provisions of the National Assistance Act 1948.

Luke Hall:

MHCLG has provided unringfenced funding for local government to support their response to the COVID-19 pandemic using the powers provided by section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

■ Hassockfield Secure Training Centre

Mr Richard Holden: [\[117389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which Department owns or is now responsible for the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in Medomsley, near Consett; and what plans that Department has for the redevelopment of that site.

Christopher Pincher:

Homes England currently own the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham. The Government is considering options for future use of the site.

■ High Rise Flats

Mike Amesbury: [\[117361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the definition of high-rise to 11 metres to improve the regulation of (a) buildings used as student accommodation and (b) other similar buildings.

Christopher Pincher:

There is no industry wide accepted definition for the height threshold above which buildings are classified as high rise in the United Kingdom, however the guidance to the buildings regulations (Approved Documents) uses triggers such as height for additional provisions.

As part of the technical review of the fire safety guidance to the building regulations (Approved Document B) we have commissioned the BRE to undertake some research on the trigger thresholds used in this document. This work is scheduled to be completed by the latter part of 2021.

■ High Rise Flats: Bolton**Mike Amesbury:**[\[117360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to publish the Building Research Establishment report into the fire at the Cube student accommodation in Bolton on 15 November 2019.

Christopher Pincher:

Information from the Report has been shared with the Expert Panel, Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation**Sarah Olney:**[\[116615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to compensate residents in blocks with dangerous cladding who have had to fund (a) waking watches and (b) other interim safety measures while waiting for the cladding to be inspected and/or removed.

Christopher Pincher:

Building owners are legally responsible for ensuring the safety of their buildings and residents. Interim safety measures such as waking watch should only ever be short term and are not a substitute for remediation. By targeting remediation funding where it is needed most, by removing and replacing cladding, we can help to make homes safer, quicker. However, the Government recognise residents' concerns about the cost of waking watch measures and the lack of transparency of these costs. That is why we have collected and published information on waking watch costs. This will enable those that have commissioned waking watches to make comparisons and challenge providers on unreasonable prices. The data we have published also illustrate that alarm systems can provide a more cost-effective means of protecting resident safety, and Fire and Rescue Services are encouraging greater consideration of this through their guidance and advice on interim measures.

Housing: Insulation

Andy Slaughter: [\[116418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 10 November 2020 to Question 110299, what the planned timescale is for Michael Wade's report on proposals to protect leaseholders from unaffordable remediation costs.

Christopher Pincher:

Government Advisor Michael Wade is advising the department on how to protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs. We will provide an update to Parliament before the Building Safety Bill returns to Parliament.

Andy Slaughter: [\[116420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Building Safety to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee on 19 October 2020, whether the Government plans to implement a similar system to Flood Re in order to protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs.

Christopher Pincher:

The department is working on proposals to protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs caused by historic building safety defects. We will provide an update before the Building Safety Bill returns to Parliament.

Sarah Olney: [\[116612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will introduce provisions to require shared ownership residents to pay only a proportion of the funds required for building safety remediation.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department is undertaking analysis on the affordability of costs for leaseholders and an update to the analysis will be included in the revised Impact Assessment to the Building Safety Bill. We are committed to protecting all leaseholders from unaffordable costs, including shared ownership residents, and an update will be provided before the Building Safety Bill returns to Parliament.

Sarah Olney: [\[116613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to provide greater transparency for shared ownership residents throughout the application and remediation process.

Christopher Pincher:

We expect responsible entities to inform all leaseholders and residents if they apply for government funding for remediation. Responsible entities should also inform leaseholders and residents of the nature of the works they intend to carry out and should provide regular updates to leaseholders and residents on the progress of their funding application and remediation works.

Mike Amesbury:

[\[117364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many (a) office or (b) commercial blocks clad with (i) ACM or (ii) HPL cladding have been converted into residential blocks using permitted development rights since 2013.

Christopher Pincher:

We do not hold this information.

■ **Housing: Older People**

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[117338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the extent to which firms are not enforcing clauses on exit fees in lease agreements for retirement properties; and what assessment he has made of the effect of such non-enforcement on the owners of those properties.

Kelly Tolhurst:

This information is not held by my Department.

■ **Local Government: Conduct**

Bill Wiggin:

[\[117190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to re-establish the Standards Board for England.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[117191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has plans to reimpose a code of conduct for elected and co-opted members of local authorities.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[117192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to promote high ethical standards in local government since the abolition of the Standards Board for England.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[117193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to investigate complaints against members of local government since the abolition of the Standards Board for England.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[117194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to monitor and maintain standards amongst members of local government since the abolition of the Standards Board for England.

Bill Wiggin:[\[117195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what routes are available for people to make complaints against local government to central Government.

Luke Hall:

The Localism Act 2011 abolished the Standards Board for England and decentralised responsibility for maintaining high ethical standards to local authorities. Local authorities must adopt a code of conduct for elected and co-opted members consistent with the 'Nolan' principles of selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.

Abolishing the Standards Board and devolving responsibility for ethical standards has encouraged local authorities to take ownership for building and maintaining a culture of high ethical standards. It has also provided the flexibility and discretion to resolve standards issues informally where appropriate and to tailor procedures to their specific circumstances. The Government has no plans to re-establish the Standards Board for England or to reimpose a central code of conduct on local authorities.

The Localism Act 2011 also requires local authorities to put in place procedures for considering complaints where members are alleged to have breached the code of conduct, including appointing an independent person to advise the authority before it decides on an allegation. As it is for individual local authorities to determine their own complaints procedures, it would not be appropriate for the Government to investigate individual complaints against members of a local authority.

If a member of the public has a concern about the actions, decisions or conduct of their local authority, they should first look to use the authority's formal complaints system. If they remain unsatisfied, an individual can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to investigate cases where they are alleged to have suffered personal injustice arising from maladministration by a local authority.

My department has responsibility for the core Local Authority Governance & Accountability Framework, for ensuring that it is functioning effectively and contains the right checks and balances. The Committee on Standards in Public Life's Report on Ethical Standards in Local Government affirms that there is a willingness and capacity to uphold the highest standards of conduct amongst local government in England. The Report makes a number of recommendations to strengthen the standards and conduct system for local government. The Government is carefully considering the report and will respond in due course.

■ Remote Working: Coronavirus

Chi Onwurah:[\[115652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support the Government is providing (a) directly and (b) through local government for shared workspaces during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

Where work places are required to close due to national and local restrictions, up to £3,000 per four week period will be paid via local authorities to help with fixed business costs.

£1.1 billion in additional non-ringfenced funding is also being provided to local authorities in order to provide support to their wider business community in line with need in their area.

■ Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus**Paul Blomfield:**[\[116463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 114247 from the hon Member for Bristol West on Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus, whether his Department has decided on the allocation of (a) £15 million funding through the Protect Programme and (b) £10 million funding through the Cold Weather Fund.

Kelly Tolhurst:

I refer the Hon. Member to my previous answer to PQ 114247 on 16 November.

Jon Trickett:[\[91940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will put in place the Everyone In covid-19 funding scheme for rough sleepers for winter 2020-21.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Everyone In campaign is ongoing and by September we had successfully supported over 29,000 vulnerable people; with over 10,000 in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 moved on into settled accommodation.

The 'Protect Programme' was announced by the Prime Minister on Thursday 5 November. A further £15 million will be provided to support the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic, and is on top of the previously announced £10 million Cold Weather Fund for all councils to help keep rough sleepers safe this winter.

Areas with high numbers of rough sleepers will receive extra targeted support to provide accommodation for those currently sleeping rough, prioritising those who are clinically vulnerable. This work will continue throughout the winter.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Computer Software: Japan****Chi Onwurah:**[\[91966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, on the potential effect of

Article 8.73 on source code of the Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on promoting transparency of algorithmic decisions; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The ambitious digital package negotiated in the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement includes protections against the forced transfer of source code and coded algorithms. This means that UK businesses will not be forced to share their source code as a condition of entering the Japanese market and serves to protect companies' trade secrets. As a consequence, these companies can be confident they will retain any competitive advantage that their source code provides.

However, the agreement also ensures that regulatory bodies and judicial authorities are still able to access source code and algorithms when needed. This ensures government can monitor adherence to, and enforce, laws and regulations concerning algorithmic decisions.

■ **Data Protection: Japan**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[116477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she had with the Secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport on the potential effect of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on Government data adequacy decisions; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

My department is working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, as we negotiate data provisions in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Data provisions in FTAs including the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) are separate from, but complementary to, the UK's adequacy process and international data protection frameworks.

The UK will conduct assessments of countries outside of the UK under an independent UK adequacy capability. These assessments ensure personal data is only transferred via an adequacy decision where countries provide high standards of personal data protection, so that UK citizens' personal data can be transferred without further safeguards being necessary.

■ **Exports: West Midlands**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[115813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to support the West Midland's economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak through exports.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) delivers a range of export services across the West Midlands. These include: providing support in accessing international opportunities; participation in trade missions; providing export credit and

insurance through UK Export Finance (UKEF); access to DIT's international network; and support provided by experienced International Trade Advisers (ITAs). These advisers are also helping West Midlands companies to cope with the impacts of Covid-19 and their preparations for EU transition.

As I announced last month, as part of our response to Covid-19, the Export Growth Plan has additional measures supporting the West Midlands including a new Internationalisation Fund through ESIF providing grants to SMEs, the recruitment of additional ITAs and a new Export Academy providing training and expertise for exporters.

■ **Flowers: Import Duties**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[116682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made an economic assessment of the potential effect the introduction of a flower tariff after the transition period will have on small florist businesses.

Greg Hands:

We have put forward our proposals and are working hard to reach a deal with the European Union (EU). Avoiding tariffs is beneficial to both sides, so our aim is a zero tariff zero quota Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The UK Global Tariff (UKGT) is the UK's permanent tariff, and will apply from 1 January 2021. It will apply to all trade that does not benefit from a preferential arrangement, such as an FTA.

In designing the UKGT, we assessed in depth all available evidence submitted during the public consultation and considered a range of factors, including the five principles set out in the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018. We have also conducted our own assessment to ensure that the UKGT is robust and supportive of the UK's economy.

Reducing the cost pressures and processes associated with trade is in the interests of people and businesses across the UK. No tariff lines have had their tariff increased under the UKGT.

We will publish more analysis on the UKGT in the Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) alongside the legislation, as is standard practice.

■ **Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees**

Dan Carden:

[\[116639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has plans to end UK Export Finance support for fossil fuel projects.

Dan Carden:

[\[116641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department plans to announce an end to UK funding for fossil fuels overseas to include an end to UK Export Finance support for fossil fuels.

Graham Stuart:

At the UK-Africa Investment Summit in January we announced an end to HMG support for thermal coal mining and coal power plant overseas, and we continue to keep our approach to other fossil fuel investments and financing overseas under review.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is obliged to consider all requests for its support to UK exports in all sectors. This includes the oil and gas sector, but also many other sectors such as renewables and green growth.

UKEF is helping to drive UK content into overseas renewables and green growth projects across the globe and has been proactively developing the breadth of its support for these sectors. This is supported by £2 billion of direct lending for UKEF, which was announced in the Spring Budget, to support UK exports to these sectors.

The support provided by UKEF to UK exporters takes the form of direct loans, guarantees and insurances for which premiums are charged and, for which, there is no net cost to the taxpayer.

■ Trade Promotion**Simon Hoare:**[\[116577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will publish a list of (a) members of the Board of Trade and (b) trade envoys.

Graham Stuart:

The Board is chaired by my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board. She is its only standing member. The list of advisers to the Board of Trade is available on GOV.UK.

Regarding Trade Envoys, I refer my Honourable Friend to the answer given to Sir Christopher Chope by my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea and Fulham (Greg Hands) on 9th November 2020, UIN: 111412.

■ Trade Union Advisory Group**Emily Thornberry:**[\[117201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish (a) an updated list of members of her Department's Trade Union Advisory Group as of 13 November 2020 and (b) the (i) number and (ii) dates of meetings that group has held since it was established.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Trade Union Advisory Group met on 16th October and its membership is available on GOV.UK.

■ USA: Riot Control Weapons

Patrick Grady:

[117290]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the use of anti-riot gear manufactured by (a) DMS Plastics and (b) other British-based manufacturers by US law enforcement in response to Black Lives Matter protests in the US; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Officials in the Export Control Joint Unit have carried out two reassessments of whether the events in the United States – since George Floyd was killed on 25th May 2020 – give rise to a clear risk under Criterion 2a of the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the “Consolidated Criteria”) that crowd control equipment exported to the US might be used for internal repression.

The first reassessment was completed in July and it was determined that no clear risk that such equipment might be used for internal repression existed. The second reassessment was completed in September 2020 and this concluded likewise.

Given the broad list of end-users covered by the licences, the reassessments assumed that it was possible that crowd control equipment exported from the United Kingdom was and/or could be sold to and used by police forces involved in these or similar protests, whether or not this was the case; accordingly, this supersedes an assessment on whether such equipment was actually used.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the US remains a beacon for freedom, opportunity and democracy. The US maintains the rule of law and has robust institutions. Further, there is democratic oversight, accountability and extensive public scrutiny, including by an active civil society and free press.

JUSTICE

■ CAFCASS

Liz Saville Roberts:

[117326]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (a) management, (b) staff, (c) trade union representatives, (d) users and (e) other stakeholders on maintaining the effectiveness of that service.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice monitors the effectiveness of Cafcass through a partnership relationship which includes regular contact between Departmental officials and senior Cafcass executives. The Ministry of Justice is represented on a weekly Programme Board held by Cafcass to monitor the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on its performance, staff and users. The Permanent Secretary, as Principal Accounting Officer, has also been in regular communication with the Chief Executive and Chair of Cafcass to discuss how services to users can be effectively maintained, and how

Cafcass staff are being supported, during current restrictions. Ministers have oversight of the performance of the wider family justice system and agree key priorities through the national Family Justice Board which includes Cafcass and relevant stakeholders in the family justice area.

Cafcass, as an Arms' Length Body (ALB) of the MoJ, employs and regulates relations with its staff independently of the Ministry of Justice. As an ALB, discussions with trade union representatives are a matter for Cafcass only.

■ **CAFCASS: Coronavirus**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[117323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the effectiveness of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[117324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what additional resources he has allocated to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service during the covid-19 outbreak.

Alex Chalk:

As an essential public service, Cafcass continues to work hard to maintain its service to children and families during very challenging circumstances. This is a tribute to its leadership and staff at all levels.

At the beginning of the first national lockdown, Cafcass closed all its offices to the public and conducted its work with children, families and the family courts remotely and continued as far as possible to file welfare reports, attend remote hearings and progress cases accordingly. In the summer, Cafcass published protocols setting out how and when its staff attend court in person and on the use of remote video technology and in-person visits to speak with children in their home, in outside spaces such as parks, or at a re-opened Cafcass office from late July.

On 17 November Cafcass published new guidance setting out its approach to working with children and families during the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. It is Cafcass' priority to see children and families in person when it is in their best interest to do so, and this will depend on the particular circumstances in each case. From the end of November all Cafcass offices and touchdown locations will be open to provide Covid-secure places to work and to meet children and families while keeping safe. Cafcass will continue to review and ensure that all these measures are in accordance with government and public health guidance.

In terms of the impact of remote hearings on Cafcass, research by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory published in October shows that most professionals, including Cafcass staff, feel that overall the courts are now working more effectively and that there are even some benefits from remote working. However, the report also highlights some areas of concern that need to be addressed. There are clearly

circumstances where more support is required to enable parents and young people to take part in remote hearings effectively, and this is under consideration by the senior family judiciary.

Cafcass continues to experience high levels of demand for its services while managing a rise in the number of open cases due to a reduction in case disposals. The Ministry of Justice has allocated an additional £3.4m this year to help Cafcass meet these challenges. Cafcass has put in place a protocol to enable it, where necessary, to prioritise cases in local service areas so that it can continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and families.

■ **CAFCASS: Finance**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[117325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the amount of funding required to maintain the effectiveness of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service over the next 12 months.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[117327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of moving responsibility for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service to the Department for Education on the effectiveness of that service.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice is in discussion with the Treasury about the department's overall settlement, including funding for Cafcass in 2021/22. No decisions have yet been made.

Cafcass when established in 2001 was the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor's Department. That responsibility transferred to the former Department for Education and Science in 2004 before transferring in 2014 to the Ministry of Justice. The Government's assessment in 2014 was that the work Cafcass does in supporting vulnerable children, and ensuring their voice is heard in court proceedings, is essential and that bringing Cafcass into the Ministry of Justice would be of great benefit to the family justice system.

There is no evidence that a further transfer of responsibility for Cafcass is necessary, nor that it would have any benefits. Indeed, it would likely be an unhelpful distraction. The Ministry of Justice works closely with the Department for Education in relation to Cafcass and the role of local authority children's services in public law children proceedings. Ministers in both departments have oversight of the performance of the wider family justice system and agree key priorities through the national Family Justice Board.

■ **Care Proceedings****Alex Cunningham:****[116473]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate his Department has made of the average time for care proceedings cases to be heard in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

Information relating to the time to the first definitive disposal for care proceedings is published by the Ministry of Justice on a quarterly basis. The table below details the latest published statistics on the total number of disposals in care proceedings, the mean and median disposal duration (in weeks), and the proportion of disposals made within 26 weeks, in each of the last five years.

The number of disposals relates to the number of children subject to a disposal outcome. The following outcomes are considered as disposals for the purposes of these statistics:

- The making of a Care Order, Supervision Order, Residence order or Special Guardianship Order;
- A decision by the court to make no order; and
- The withdrawal of an application.

The latest Family Courts Statistics Quarterly publication can be accessed here:

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

YEAR	TOTAL DISPOSALS	MEAN DISPOSAL DURATION (WEEKS)	MEDIAN DISPOSAL DURATION (WEEKS)	% DISPOSED IN 26 WEEKS
2015	21,537	28.3	25.1	58%
2016	24,155	27.0	24.9	62%
2017	26,221	28.2	25.3	57%
2018	25,849	30.4	26.4	49%
2019	23,837	33.2	29.6	41%

■ **Courts: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:****[116471]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the average monthly cost of running each Nightingale court at current capacity.

Chris Philp:

We have added vital capacity by opening 16 Nightingale courts providing 29 extra court rooms, alleviating the pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic.

The average monthly running cost to date for a Nightingale court room is £27,916. This includes the cost of venue hire, additional staffing, security, and cleaning, but does not include judicial costs or venue set up costs. I am not able to provide a breakdown of average monthly cost by venue due to license payments that are commercially sensitive.

HMCTS has published updates on their response to Covid-19 in the criminal and civil, family and tribunals jurisdictions in England and Wales. They provide comprehensive updates on recovery plans and include details about Nightingale courts and our actions to make sure our buildings are Covid-secure, which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-and-tribunal-recovery-update-in-response-to-coronavirus>

Alex Cunningham:**[117251]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons posters on the HM Courts and Tribunals Service estate advise people to pause contact tracing through the NHS covid-19 app when entering the estate.

Chris Philp:

Posters advising people to pause contact tracing have not been put up for those entering the HM Courts and Tribunals Service estate.

Posters describing when to pause contact tracing have been placed in areas where people are:

- working behind a fixed Perspex (or equivalent) screen and are fully protected from other people, and
- next to lockers where mobile phones are stored.

These scenarios are covered in the NHS Test and Trace app FAQ:

<https://faq.covid19.nhs.uk/article/KA-01100/en-us>

The posters remind people to turn the contact tracing back on when they leave these areas.

■ Courts: Legionnaires' Disease**Alex Cunningham:****[117255]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 114854 on Courts: Legionnaires' Disease, how many outbreaks of legionella there have been within the HMCTS estate in the last 12 months; and what the locations were of those outbreaks.

Chris Philp:

Public Health authorities categorise an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease as two or more diagnosed cases, contracted from a common source of infection.

There have been no recorded outbreaks of legionella from the HMCTS estate in the last 12 months.

■ Employment Tribunals Service**Andy McDonald:**[\[116492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the cost to the public purse of employment tribunal cases brought in relation to the failure of companies to follow redundancy consultancy procedures required by law in each of the last three years.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not held centrally.

Costs directly attributable to each claim / case type are not separately identifiable as current financial systems do not allow us to link costs to claims / cases.

Employment tribunal cases can vary in nature and complexity and some can last over more than one year, particularly where collective disputes are involved. Claims in employment tribunals can be classified into either single or multiple claims. Multiple claims being where two or more people bring proceedings arising out of the same facts, usually against a common employer. Where claims are grouped as multiples, they are processed administratively and managed judicially together. Claims can be disposed of in a variety of ways, including being rejected either because they are out of time, or have no reasonable chance of success. A minority of cases are disposed of at a full hearing. There are therefore many ways an employment tribunal case can be interpreted.

As a result, it is not possible to provide costs for each of the last three years for employment tribunal cases brought in relation to the failure of companies to follow redundancy consultancy procedures required by law.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Housing**Margaret Greenwood:**[\[116520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the ability of residents in the Wirral local authority area to receive local Legal Aid Housing Advice.

Margaret Greenwood:[\[116521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the population in England and Wales that live in a local authority area in which there are no housing legal aid providers.

Margaret Greenwood:

[116522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of local authority areas in England and Wales in which there are no housing legal aid providers.

Alex Chalk:

Legal Aid services are commissioned and delivered through procurement areas, rather than local authority areas. For the housing and debt categories of law (which are contracted together), England and Wales is split into 134 procurement areas. In this instance the Wirral procurement area corresponds with Wirral Borough Council.

In the housing and debt categories, the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) aims to have at least one provider in each procurement area. There are currently no legal aid housing providers in the Wirral procurement area. This has been the position since March 2020 and although contracts were recently put out to the market, the LAA received no bids in this area. The LAA will continue to take steps to place services in this area.

There are housing advice services available for residents in Wirral via Civil Legal Aid (CLA), which provides housing and debt legal advice via telephone and email. There are also five legal aid housing and debt providers delivering services through eight offices in the neighbouring procurement area of Liverpool, and it is open to residents of Wirral to access these services. Additionally, there is a Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) in Birkenhead Court, which provides “on-the-day” emergency advice and advocacy to anyone facing possession proceedings.

Nationally there are currently 12 procurement areas which do not have access to a face-to-face housing and debt legal aid provider. These are listed in the table below, with the corresponding local authorities. The Ministry of Justice does not hold data which would allow us to estimate what proportion of the population in England and Wales live in a local authority area in which there are no housing and debt legal aid providers.

HOUSING AND DEBT PROCUREMENT AREA	LOCAL AUTHORITY/AUTHORITIES
Bury	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
City of Kingston upon Hull	Hull City Council
Dorset	Dorset County Council
Doncaster	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
East Riding of Yorkshire	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Leicestershire and Rutland	Leicestershire County Council Rutland County Council
North Hertfordshire	East Hertfordshire District Council North Hertfordshire District Council Stevenage

HOUSING AND DEBT PROCUREMENT AREA	LOCAL AUTHORITY/AUTHORITIES
	Borough Council Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Sandwell	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Shropshire	Shropshire Council Telford and Wrekin Council
Somerset	Bath and North East Somerset Council Somerset County Council
South Tyneside	South Tyneside Council
Wirral	Wirral Borough Council

The LAA regularly monitors capacity and availability of access to services, and takes action where it identifies gaps in services or where demand is greater than the available supply. We have recently concluded a housing and debt tender and will continue to take steps to place services in these areas.

In the meantime, residents in the procurement areas that do not currently have a housing legal aid provider can contact Civil Legal Aid (CLA), which provides housing advice via telephone and email, and/or can obtain advice from a legal aid housing provider in a nearby procurement area.

■ Magistrates' Courts

Alex Cunningham:

[\[117254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Magistrate court days there have been and (b) Magistrate Court trials have been listed in each of the last 12 months.

Chris Philp:

(a) Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), management information systems for magistrates' courts record data by session not daily sittings. Magistrates' courts list each day into two sessions (am and pm) which when combined are reported as the equivalent of one day's sitting. This is provided in the table below.

(b) While data on magistrates' trials in England and Wales is published, the requested data, in a monthly format, is not available in the public domain. However, the following has been provided in the table below specifically for this response.

Magistrates Courts Data 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020

MONTH	SESSIONS RECORDED	SITTING DAY EQUIVALENT	NUMBER OF TRIALS
Jul-19	18347	9173.5	10262
Aug-19	16176	8088	8212

MONTH	SESSIONS RECORDED	SITTING DAY EQUIVALENT	NUMBER OF TRIALS
Sep-19	16454	8227	9,341
Oct-19	17826	8913	9,371
Nov-19	16368	8184	8,817
Dec-19	13386	6693	6,469
Jan-20	17282	8641	9,564
Feb-20	15519	7759.5	8,279
Mar-20	14257	7128.5	5,612
Apr-20	6451	3225.5	76
May-20	6642	3321	361
Jun-20	10026	5013	1,278
Total	168734	84367	77642

The next Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly (CCSQ) publication is scheduled for release on 17th December 2020 and will cover data up to September 2020.

■ Prisoners' Release: Mobile Phones

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[117214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October to Question 99573, why the provision of mobile phones to prison leavers who do not have to access to have a phone of their own has stopped since the second lockdown was implemented on 5th November.

Lucy Frazer:

Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) have been advised that phones should continue to be issued to any offender leaving prison without one if the office that they are reporting to is not able to accommodate a face to face appointment.

A number of activities are currently been undertaken to ensure that offenders who need access to a phone are supported. This includes the re distribution of stock across CRC's to address areas of need. Where appropriate to do so, CRC's are required to seek the return of phones that can be reallocated to ensure that resources are used effectively and offender needs are being met.

■ Recorders

Alex Cunningham:

[117252]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to increase the number of Recorder sitting days.

Chris Philp:

We are continuing to work to maximise capacity across the whole Courts and Tribunals system. Recorders are integral to these plans, playing a key role in ensuring that we deliver as many sitting days as possible in order to provide access to justice. Data relating to sitting days, including recorders will be published in the first half of 2021 as part of the regular Official Statistics relating to Civil Justice.

■ Remand in Custody

Alex Cunningham:

[116472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people remanded in custody in each of the last 24 months were (a) found not guilty and (b) did not receive a custodial sentence on conviction.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on custodial remands and sentencing outcomes found in the 'Remands: Magistrates' Court' and 'Remands: Crown Court' data up to December 2019. The data is in tools available at:

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888658/remands-magistrates-court-tool-2019.xlsx
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888657/remands-crown-court-tool-2019.xlsx

These tools identify the number of individuals remanded in custody (annually) that were found:

- not guilty (select: Convicted/Not convicted); or
- did not receive an immediate custodial sentence (Select: all options in 'outcome' except Immediate custodial sentence').

*To avoid double counting individuals dealt with at Crown Court, deselect those sent for trial or sentencing in the magistrates' court in the 'Outcome' drop down list.

The figures can be shown quarterly by selecting individual quarters in the pull-down menus. To provide figures for each individual month for the last 24 months that have been published (which would be January 2018 – December 2019) would require bespoke analysis which we would not be able to deliver within the allocated time. Please note that data beyond December 2019 is due for publication in the National Statistics release in May 2021.

■ Reoffenders

Colleen Fletcher:

[91977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of re-offending rates among (a) under 25s and (b) over 25s in (i) Coventry, (ii) the West Midlands and (iii) England since 2010.

Lucy Frazer:

Reoffending rates amongst the January to December 2018 offender cohort broken down by the requested geographical areas are as follows:

	UNDER 25s	25 AND OVER
Coventry	28%	28%
West Midlands (region)	28%	29%
England*	29%	28%

*Excludes cases where geography is unknown.

Reoffending rates for previous years can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/930450/Geographical_data_tool_jan08_dec18_final.xlsx

Latest figures show that the proven reoffending rates for offenders both under 25, and 25 and over, are the lowest rates in the last twelve-years.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards: Disclosure of Information

Andrea Leadsom:

[117249]

To ask the Leader of the House, what discussions he has had with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards on the potential merits of publishing investigations into non-ICGS matters on her website.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Committee on Standards published its report on Confidentiality in the House's standards system in June and recommended that "the Commissioner should be given authority to publish a list of ongoing non-ICGS investigations and to confirm or deny whether a non-ICGS matter is being looked into, as she did before 19 July 2018." The Government is continuing discussions with the Committee ahead of bringing forward a motion to implement the Committee's recommendations.

■ Virtual Proceedings

Patrick Grady:

[\[116547\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, whether he plans to bring forward provisions to enable hon. Members who are required by law to self-isolate under NHS test and trace procedures to participate in substantive proceedings of the House by virtual means.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

We have ensured that people who cannot be here for a range of reasons can vote by proxy and participate in interrogative proceedings. The Government has brought forward a motion to allow additional virtual participation for debates in the Chamber for any member who has been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable. The change is in line with the Government advice to the whole country that the clinically extremely vulnerable should currently not go into work.

I will continue to engage with Members on how we best strike the balance between facilitating virtual participation and allowing scrutiny and legislation to continue. As I have always said, we continue to keep this matter under review.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Cars: Northern Ireland

Colum Eastwood:

[\[117393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish his Department's correspondence with the Treasury on changes to the VAT margins scheme regarding VAT on second hand cars purchased in Great Britain and imported to Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I regularly liaise with Her Majesty's Treasury on a wide range of issues affecting Northern Ireland.

During an Urgent Question on 18 November, I committed to engaging with the Treasury on this very issue, however it would not be appropriate to disclose inter-departmental discussions at this time.

We are committed to implementing the Protocol in a flexible and proportionate way and to deliver unfettered access for Northern Ireland business to the whole UK market. Talks are ongoing as part of the Joint Committee process on the impact for certain industries at the end of the transition period, including the re-sale of second-hand cars.

■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

Simon Hoare:

[\[116578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to Annex A of the New Decade New Approach Agreement, what recent assessment he has made of (a) the merits of and (b) progress on establishing the Independent Fiscal Council.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Fiscal Council is an important new part of the governance of Northern Ireland. It has the potential to make a huge contribution to fiscal sustainability in Northern Ireland over the long-term and strengthen Northern Ireland's fiscal performance. The Northern Ireland Department of Finance is leading on developing the Terms of Reference for the Fiscal Council. The Northern Ireland Finance Minister has recently updated the Assembly that his department is now actively refocusing on this issue.

In his engagement with Executive ministers, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has consistently emphasised the need to press ahead with an Independent Fiscal Council as a priority in his regular communications with members of the Executive and at both previous meetings of the Joint Board.

The UK Government will continue to work with the Northern Ireland Executive to agree terms of reference that reflect our joint ambitions for this new institution and get it up and running as soon as possible.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation and Shipping: Carbon Emissions****Harriett Baldwin:**[\[115635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to reduce carbon emissions to zero from 2050 from the (a) aviation and (b) maritime sectors for UK (i) imports and (ii) exports.

Rachel Maclean:

Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan will set out the measures we will take to reduce carbon emissions from the aviation and maritime sectors for both freight and leisure travel, in line with our commitment to deliver net zero emissions across the transport sector by 2050.

The aviation and maritime sectors are international by nature and, in addition to our domestic work to reduce emissions, we are continuing to drive ambition for global emissions reductions in international fora.

■ Aviation: Finance**Sarah Olney:**[\[117334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing (a) bailout funding or (b) loans to airlines that (i) would or (ii) would not be contingent on commitments to reduce emissions to ensure that airlines can continue to operate during the covid-19 pandemic.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry as a result of Covid-19 and firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the

unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills.

In the Chancellor's letter to the aviation sector on 24 March 2020, he made it clear that the Government would consider bespoke financial support for firms as a last resort, once all other options had been exhausted. This means firms must have exhausted the comprehensive package of economy-wide measures we have put in place and all other funding options, including with shareholders and commercial debt providers. In order to protect the interests of taxpayers, any support would need to represent value for money. Companies receiving support also need to agree to appropriate conditions, including conditions relating to tax, supplier payment terms, climate change and corporate governance.

■ Aviation: Repayments

Sarah Olney:

[\[117333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Government will make an assessment of the potential merits of directly refunding passengers in the event of flight disruption to help ensure that airlines do not collapse during the covid-19 pandemic.

Robert Courts:

The Chancellor has already announced a host of measures to help businesses in this period with £330bn worth of Government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses. The Government has no current plans to either create a scheme specifically to issue refunds on behalf of businesses, or assess the potential benefits of such a scheme. The Government has been clear that airlines and travel agents should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund if it is requested, and this should be done in a timely manner.

■ Bus Services: Finance

Alan Brown:

[\[117294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of providing bespoke sectorial financial support for the coach hire industry.

Rachel Maclean:

We have announced several financial support measures available to UK businesses, including the coach industry. This includes measures announced on 24 September as part of the Winter Economy Plan, further support on 22 October for businesses in local lockdown areas, changes to the Job Support Scheme (JSS), and increased business grants. With the introduction of new national restrictions on 5 November, the COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme has also been extended until March 2021.

The full return to education supports a key revenue source for the industry and this has been augmented by the additional vehicles needed compared to previous years. The Department of Education has announced over £70 million to local transport authorities to provide additional dedicated school and college capacity in our

transport system, helping children and young people to get to and from their schools and colleges whilst social distancing reduces the capacity of existing public transport

We continue to work closely with representatives from the coach sector including the Confederation of Passenger Transport, and with other government departments, to understand the ongoing risks and issues the sector faces and how these could be addressed.

■ Department for Transport: Holiday Leave

Grahame Morris: [\[117234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff in his Department who have a right to 31.5 days annual leave, accrue annual leave at their standard rate when on long-term sick leave.

Grahame Morris: [\[117235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether staff on long-term sick leave in his Department accrue privilege leave.

Grahame Morris: [\[117236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of staff in his Department have the right to (a) 31.5 days and (b) 30 days annual leave, by (i) age, (ii) sex and (iii) ethnicity.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

All staff at the Department for Transport, regardless of their contracted working hours, are entitled to accrue annual leave while on long term sick leave. Public holidays and the privilege day are excluded as employees are expected to have taken these days during their sick leave.

The information requested on the number of staff who have a right to 31.5 days and 30 days annual leave by age, sex and ethnicity can only be produced at disproportionate cost.

■ Electric Vehicles: Sales

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[116607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric cars have been purchased in each NUTS region in 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

Data for vehicle purchases are not available. However, the following table shows the number of battery electric cars registered for the first time in the UK, by NUTS 1 region, during the first 6 months of 2020.

Data covering all of 2020 are scheduled to be published in April 2021.

NUTS 1 CODE	NUTS 1 REGION	NEW REGISTRATIONS OF BATTERY ELECTRIC CARS
UK	United Kingdom*	31,047
UKC	North East	427
UKD	North West	1,250
UKE	Yorkshire and The Humber	3,617
UKF	East Midlands	1,318
UKG	West Midlands	3,983
UKH	East of England	2,901
UKI	London	2,398
UKJ	South East	7,165
UKK	South West	5,041
UKL	Wales	946
UKM	Scotland	1,658
UKN	Northern Ireland	339

* The UK total includes 4 new registrations that could not be assigned a region due to an incomplete or invalid postcode.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Electric Vehicles

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[116382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to support fleet delivery companies to switch to (a) electric or (b) hydrogen-fuelled vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

The transition to zero emission vehicles will help to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals, contribute to reducing poor air quality and contribute to economic growth in the UK by providing skilled jobs in the automotive sector. Our approach to delivering our long-term ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral and we are supporting hydrogen where the market favours its use.

As part of publishing the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the Government announced that we will end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 and that all new cars and vans will be fully zero emission at the tailpipe from 2035. To support the transition, we announced an accompanying support package of £2.8 billion. This includes £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major

roads, and installing more on-street chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car.

In addition to grant schemes to install chargepoints at the workplace and at home, fleet delivery companies and their employees can also take advantage of our Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Fleet Support Scheme, which has supported both public and private sector fleets to become early adopters of hydrogen cars and vans. The Government has also put in place a favourable tax regime that rewards the cleanest vehicles, including company fleets.

■ Railways

Sarah Olney:

[\[117336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on ensuring rail capacity is increased over the Christmas 2020 period.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Decisions concerning service levels in each of the four nations is a matter for each country's respective government. Cross-border operators continue to consider guidance published by each government when planning services, as well as expected passenger demand and the level of service that can be resourced within existing staffing constraints.

■ Railways: Carbon Emissions

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[117351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to reduce carbon emissions produced by railway infrastructure construction.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Reducing carbon emissions from railway infrastructure construction is necessary to deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Network Rail's Decarbonisation Programme is examining how future infrastructure can be built in a more carbon-efficient way, including by reusing, repurposing or redeploying materials.

The Government funds RSSB research on reducing embedded carbon reduction and supports the development of carbon measurement tools, which will help industry measure and reduce carbon from construction.

■ Railways: Electrification

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[117349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of electrifying the remaining railway lines, where it is feasible to do so.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Network Rail-led Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy will inform decisions about the scale and pace of rail decarbonisation. Further electrification will not be the

best solution to achieve decarbonisation across all of the currently unelectrified network. Where electrification is the right solution, the Department will assess costs as individual electrification schemes are developed.

■ Railways: Finance

Sarah Olney:

[\[117335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to increase rail (a) capacity, (b) staffing and (c) funding over the Christmas 2020 period to ensure people travelling are able to follow social distancing guidance.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have been clear that our priority remains the safety of staff and passengers. Rail operators are running the maximum level of services that can be resourced reliably, in a context of rising staff absence caused by COVID-19. The government recognises that public transport, including rail transport, is instrumental in keeping the country moving. This is why we have made sufficient funding available to rail operators to ensure services can run, so those who need to travel can do so with confidence. We continue to support the rail industry in providing crucial rail services, as we have done since the beginning of the pandemic.

Operators seek to provide as much capacity as possible so that those who need to travel can observe social distancing, and continue to deploy additional staff at stations to manage passenger flows, provide advice and guide passengers.

Measures implemented to promote social distancing include messaging at trains and stations to remind people to keep apart, floor stickers and one-way systems to control passenger flows, and regular reminders to encourage passengers to use the whole length of the train when boarding.

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance

Sarah Olney:

[\[117337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of a moratorium on non-essential engineering works over the Christmas 2020 period to reduce travel disruption.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Carrying out engineering works is essential to ensure that the railway remains safe for passengers and staff, and that changes can be made to improve passenger journeys. Network Rail and train operators take all possible measures to minimise the impact this essential work has on passengers. This includes diverting trains from their usual routes, and planning engineering works in a way that preserves connectivity, and providing alternative transport by road where needed.

This winter, engineering works will involve upgrades and routine maintenance around Britain. Most of the railway will stay open for business as usual, but passengers should check their journeys in advance if they are planning to travel during this time.

Operators will also provide passengers with advance notice, so they know how their journeys will be affected and what alternatives are available.

■ Railways: Solar Power

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[116619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether there are plans to extend the First Light solar-powered railway line pilot in Aldershot to other areas.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government supports the increased use of renewable energy to decarbonise the railway, including through funding for innovative schemes such as First Light. As part of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Network Rail is working to develop large-scale renewable energy generation, alongside other uses of the rail estate such as increasing biodiversity, carbon offsetting, housing and commercial use. The First Light project will inform this further development.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[117348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of using solar panels to power signalling and lights on the railway.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government supports the increased use of renewable energy to decarbonise the railway. As part of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy published this year, Network Rail is working to develop large-scale renewable energy generation on the rail estate. Electricity generated in this way may be used to power trains or for other uses.

Network Rail is also developing new technology to power lighting and generators using solar and battery energy through the Site of the Future project.

■ School Streets Initiative

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[116618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 91850, when he plans to bring into effect Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, so that local authorities outside London can enforce school streets schemes.

Rachel Maclean:

The moving traffic enforcement powers under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 require a set of statutory instruments to be made covering enforcement, level of penalties, financial provisions, approved devices, adjudication and representations and appeals. This will take several months to bring into force, after which those local authorities with civil parking enforcement powers can apply for a designation order for moving traffic enforcement.

■ Shipping: Carbon Emissions

Alex Cunningham:

[116475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 114164 on Shipping: Carbon Emissions and with reference to page 31, paragraph 92 of the Clean Maritime Plan, if he will list the negative externalities associated with zero emission shipping technologies which deter (a) public and (b) private investment in low or zero emission fuels for the shipping industry.

Robert Courts:

DfT-commissioned research, published in 2019 to support the publication of the Clean Maritime Plan, explored market failures and other barriers to the take-up of emission abatement options. This research highlighted that negative externalities associated with emissions of GHGs and air pollutants from the consumption of fuels constitute a market failure that influences the perceived cost effectiveness of any possible abatement option.

As set out in the Clean Maritime Plan, the negative externalities associated with zero emission shipping technologies mean that the return on investment for many technologies is not currently sufficient to attract finance at competitive rates. Further information on the nature and implications of this and other market failures and barriers to the transition to clean maritime is publicly available on GOV.UK ^[1]

^[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815671/identification-market-failures-other-barriers-of-commercial-deployment-of-emission-reduction-options.pdf

■ Trains: Hydrogen

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[117350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has for the use of hydrogen-powered trains on the rail network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government supports the use of new technologies like hydrogen-powered trains to decarbonise the railway and help us meet our net zero carbon emissions by 2050 target. The Network Rail-led Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy indicates that decarbonising the railway by 2050 will involve a mix of the deployment of alternative traction technologies and further electrification.

The Government is supporting the development of battery and hydrogen technology through innovation funding and research. This includes work on safety and wider issues that will have to be considered to allow battery and hydrogen trains smooth entry onto the network.

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions

Ian Lavery:

[\[115671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what effect the Transport Decarbonisation Plan will have on the Green Jobs Taskforce launched on 12 November 2020; and when he last discussed the low carbon economy and employment levels in public transport with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Rachel Maclean:

The Green Jobs Taskforce forms part of the government's ambitious plan to build back greener and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. We will set out measures needed to reach net zero for transport in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Department for Transport and Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy ministers have regular discussions on a range of issues, including tackling climate change and delivering our net zero commitments.

■ Transport: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[91978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding his Department has provided for transport projects in Coventry since 2010.

Rachel Maclean:

As Coventry City Council is a constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority; some funding for transport projects in Coventry will have been paid directly to the Combined Authority.

The funding provided directly by the Department for Transport to Coventry City Council for transport since 2010 is shown in the table below.

YEAR	£M
2010/11	6.040
2011/12	0.165
2012/13	0.226
2013/14	4.515
2014/15	8.121
2015/16	5.480
2016/17	1.963
2017/18	8.067
2018/19	8.588
2019/20	3.003

YEAR	£M
2020/21	39.748
Total	85.916

■ Transport: North East

Chi Onwurah: [\[116476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the (a) implications for his policies and (b) potential level of funding required for the Transport North East's Connected North East Blueprint.

Rachel Maclean:

The blueprint is due to go to public consultation shortly. The Department looks forward to receiving it in due course.

Many of the projects included in the blueprint are already under consideration by the Department and complement existing Department priorities including the Government's long term vision to increase active travel, commitment to achieving net zero emissions across all modes of transport and improving the strategic road network.

We continue to work closely with Northern leaders to identify local priorities through the Northern Transport Acceleration Council, which is due to meet again in December.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Stuart C McDonald: [\[116512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of (a) pre-departure testing (b) testing after arrival on the length of quarantine required for international travellers entering the UK during the covid-19 pandemic.

Robert Courts:

The Government is actively working on the practicalities of using testing to release people from self-isolation earlier than 14 days. The Global Travel Taskforce is working at pace to consider how testing, technology and innovation can drive a recovery for international travel and tourism, without adding to infection risk or infringing on our overall NHS test capacity.

TREASURY■ **Bank Services****Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[116493\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what comparative estimate he has made of how much money was in dormant assets on (a) 1 January 2020 and (b) 17 November 2020; and what the budgetary headings are for how those funds have been spent.

John Glen:

The Government does not currently have estimates for the increase in dormant assets money over the period set out in this question. We have been working with industry stakeholders to estimate the value of dormant assets in the insurance and pensions, investment and wealth management, and securities sectors, and will be publishing our findings in due course.

The distribution of dormant accounts money is governed by the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Act 2008. The Act dictates that all dormant accounts money must be used to fund initiatives that have a social or environmental purpose, with a specific focus on youth, financial inclusion and social investment in England. Since 2011, over £745m has been released for such initiatives across the UK through The National Lottery Community Fund.

■ **Beer: Excise Duties****Grahame Morris:**[\[116461\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 113535, how many breweries in Easington constituency have indicated their support for the changes to Small Brewers Relief.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has not categorised comments by brewers on the proposed changes to Small Brewers Relief by constituency.

■ **Breast Cancer: Research****Munira Wilson:**[\[116668\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including in the forthcoming spending review the financing of a Life Sciences Partnership Fund to secure funding for Breast Cancer Research for the next three years.

Kemi Badenoch:

Medical research charities are an integral part of the United Kingdom's world-leading life sciences sector and we welcome the interest of honourable members in this area. The government is monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on the work of medical research charities. To this effect, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Department of Health and Social Care is closely liaising with the Association of Medical Research Charities, as well as individual charities, to

understand the impact of the pandemic on this sector and identify how best the Government and charities can work together to ensure that patients continue benefiting from charity funded research. While it would not be appropriate to respond in detail at this stage of the Spending Review, I can assure you that the issues you've raised have been noted.

■ Capital Gains Tax

Dan Carden:

[\[116640\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of aligning Capital Gains Tax more closely with Income Tax.

Jesse Norman:

Capital Gains Tax (CGT) is an annual tax charged on the profits made on an asset between the point of its acquisition and its disposal.

Earlier this year, the Chancellor commissioned the Office for Tax Simplification to examine and make recommendations on how to make CGT as clear and efficient as possible, including considering the interactions of how gains are taxed compared to other types of income.

The Government keeps all taxes under review, and any changes are made at fiscal events within the context of wider public finances. The Government's priority is to support jobs and the economy, through the Winter Economy Plan and Plan for Jobs.

■ Diabetes: Medical Equipment

Munira Wilson:

[\[92019\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the merits of increasing funding for diabetes technology in the Spending Review.

Steve Barclay:

I recognise the major impact that diabetes has on society and would like to assure you that the Government is committed to continuing to improve diabetes care within the NHS.

While it would not be appropriate to respond in detail at this stage of the Spending Review, I can assure you that the issues you've raised have been noted.

■ Funerals: Pre-payment

Gavin Robinson:

[\[117274\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of delaying plans to bring funeral plan providers under the remit of the Funeral Planning Authority in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The government is committed to strengthening regulation of the pre-paid funeral plan sector. As part of the Budget, and following consultation, the Chancellor announced the government's intention to legislate to bring pre-paid funeral plan firms within the

remit of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This will ensure that, for the first time, all firms offering pre-paid funeral plans are subject to compulsory and robust regulation.

The government intends to lay the necessary legislation very soon. Once this legislation is made, there will be an implementation period before the new regulatory framework comes fully into force. This will allow time for funeral plan providers and firms which sell plans to take the necessary steps to meet the new regulatory requirements.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Alex Sobel:

[\[117359\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding will be allocated towards achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 under the new Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Green Industrial Revolution will mobilise £12 billion of government investment to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK, and spur over three times as much private sector investment by 2030. This investment will accelerate the UK's path to Net Zero.

■ Housing: Heating

Caroline Lucas:

[\[117226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department is having with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on using for the forthcoming spending review to tackle the health risks that may arise from the concurrence of covid-19 and cold homes.

Steve Barclay:

The Government is committed to improving the energy efficiency of homes. In July, the Chancellor announced over £2 billion of new funding to upgrade homes, including through the new Green Homes Grant scheme.

The Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan set out further plans to make people's homes warm and comfortable. This includes a further £1 billion next year and the extension of the Energy Company Obligation to continue making our buildings more efficient and cheaper to heat.

The Government is also using other policy levers, including regulation, to meet its ambition for warm homes.

■ Job Support Scheme

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[116515]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to subsidise employer contributions to future rollouts of the JSS for businesses in the sectors most effected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

As the Chancellor recently announced, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) CJRS has now been extended until the end of March 2021. In light of that, the Job Support Scheme has been postponed.

Under CJRS, eligible employees will receive 80 per cent of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month, and businesses will have flexibility to use the scheme for employees for any amount of time and shift pattern, including furloughing them full-time.

There is no employer contribution to wages for hours not worked. Employers will only be asked to cover National Insurance and Employer pension contributions for hours not worked. For an average claim, this accounts for just 5 per cent of total employment costs or £70 per employee per month. The Government will review the policy in January.

Additionally, we are supporting businesses affected by restrictions through:

The Local Restrictions Support Grant, giving businesses that are forced to close due to national or local restrictions up to £3,000 per month; this is worth over £1bn per four weeks with the new restrictions in place and will benefit over 600,000 business premises.

One-off funding available to every local authority in England under the Additional Restrictions Grant, worth £1.1bn nationally; this allows local authorities to help businesses affected but not closed by restrictions.

■ Motor Vehicles: Northern Ireland

Colum Eastwood:

[117394]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the VAT paid on second hand vehicles entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain is solely for the profit made rather than on the sale price of the vehicle after the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

The Northern Ireland Protocol frames the approach to VAT on goods, including the second-hand margin scheme, in Northern Ireland. As is the case for tax policy generally, the Government is keeping this under review.

■ Offshore Industry and Shipping: Coronavirus

Ian Lavery:

[\[115670\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason workers in the (a) offshore oil and gas and (b) shipping industries were not specifically included in the Plan for Jobs announced on 8 July 2020; and what steps he has taken since that date to support levels of domestic (i) employment and (ii) training in those industries.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Plan for Jobs, announced on 8 July, invested in opportunities for people to develop skills to find and retain a job, expanding the National Careers Service, tripling the number of sector-based work academy placements for 2020-21, tripling the scale of traineeships, and funding a brand new offer to all 18 and 19 year olds studying high value level 2 and 3 courses. Recognising young people are particularly at risk of labour marketing scarring, the Government also launched a new £2bn Kickstart Scheme, creating hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people (16-24) at risk of long-term unemployment across Great Britain. There is also a guaranteed foundation of support to all 18-24 year olds on Universal Credit in the Intensive Worksearch group, through its new Youth Offer. The Plan for Jobs' focus on traineeships and jobs for young people was well received by Oil & Gas UK, the offshore oil and gas industry trade body. The offshore oil and gas industry and shipping industry can both access the economy-wide support measures offered through the Plan for Jobs.

On the 5 November, the Government announced a further extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, until the end of March. This means employees can receive 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The Government has also announced an increase to the third self-employed grant, covering November to January, from 55% to 80% of trading profits.

The Government is in frequent contact with the offshore oil and gas industry to support it in tackling the twin challenges of a low oil price and Covid-19. This has included regular engagement with the industry regulator, the Oil and Gas Authority, and the trade body, Oil & Gas UK.

Furthermore, the Government remains committed to seafarer training through its Support for Maritime Training programme which will see its budget increase to £30m by 2024/25. In addition, the Maritime Skills Commission is undertaking a Cadet Review, led by the Maritime Coastal Agency, which will look at the skills needs of cadets. The Government also remains committed to the development and delivery of maritime apprenticeships.

■ Parents: Coronavirus

Mark Menzies:

[\[115610\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to parents of school children unable to work as a result of a young child being required to self-isolate, but who have not themselves been asked to self-isolate.

Steve Barclay:

The Government has committed to an unprecedented package to support individuals through this difficult time. This includes the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, as well as the injection of an additional £9.3bn into the welfare system according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates.

If an employee earns average weekly earnings of at least £120 per week, they will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they are self-isolating under Government guidance and cannot work from home. This includes parents living in the same households as children self-isolating with symptoms of Covid-19. The Government has changed the rules so that SSP is now payable from day 1, not day 4, for Covid-19 cases.

Parents of children who are self-isolating under government guidance may be eligible for “new style” Contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if they are ineligible for SSP and unable to work from home. We have made it easier for people to claim by removing the seven-day waiting period which means people can get support from day one.

In terms of wider support, the Chancellor has recently announced that the CJRS will be extended until the end of March 2021. We have strived to ensure that the CJRS can be accessed by as many people as possible. All employers with a UK bank account and a PAYE payroll scheme that was registered on or before 30th October can claim, whilst employees are required to have been employed and on an employer’s PAYE payroll on 30th October 2020. Any employee who meets this eligibility criteria can be furloughed by their employer.

Parents on lower incomes can also benefit from the Government’s wider changes to the welfare system to support the most vulnerable. According to the latest OBR estimates, we have injected over £9.3bn of support into the wider welfare system. These changes include: a £20 per week increase to the UC standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1bn increase in support for renters through increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for UC and Housing Benefit claimants.

■ Pensions: Uprating**Zarah Sultana:****[116670]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made on the potential effect of the retail prices index (RPI) review on RPI-linked pensions.

John Glen:

The Retail Prices Index (RPI) is a measure of inflation with a number of shortcomings. To address these shortcomings, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) has made a proposal to reform RPI by bringing the methods and data sources of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH) into RPI.

Owing to the use of RPI in specific index-linked gilts, prior to 2030 the Chancellor's consent to this proposal is required before it can be implemented.

At the Budget in March, the government and UKSA launched a consultation to consider whether UKSA's proposal should be implemented at a date other than 2030, and, if so, when between 2025 and 2030. The consultation closed for responses on 21 August. As part of the consultation, the government sought views on the broader impacts of the proposed reform of RPI.

The consultation document can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-the-reform-to-retail-prices-index-rpi-methodology>.

As announced on 9 November, the government and UKSA will respond to the consultation alongside the Spending Review on 25 November.

The 9 November announcement can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-letter-from-rishi-sunak-to-sir-david-norgrove-on-the-date-of-the-government-and-uk-statistics-authoritys-response-to-their-joint-consultation-on-re>.

■ Plastics: Taxation

Ian Murray:

[116456]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the plastic packaging tax on trends in the availability of 100 per cent compostable packaging.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government carefully considered the impacts of the tax across the supply chain when making the decisions set out in the summary of responses to the consultation, which was published on 12 November. As per the Tax Information and Impact Note, the Government considered the overall impacts on up to an estimated 20,000 producers and importers of plastic packaging that would be liable for the tax, including those who produce compostable packaging. More information on impacts is available in the Tax Information and Impact Note -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-a-new-plastic-packaging-tax/introduction-of-a-new-plastic-packaging-tax>.

As set out in the summary of responses to the consultation the Government believes that alternative plastics can play a role in addressing plastic waste if used in the right circumstances. However, further evidence is needed on the impact of widespread adoption of such materials, and it is right to include them within scope of the tax at this stage. As part of the Bioeconomy Strategy, the Government is working with industry and the research community to better understand the impact of using bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics. Following the conclusion of the Bioeconomy Strategy, the Government will consider further these plastics in relation to Plastic Packaging Tax.

■ Political Parties: Finance**Colum Eastwood:**[\[117395\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) financial support to furlough staff employed by and (b) other financial support for political parties has been allocated (i) intentionally and (ii) in error during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC are not able to provide information on political parties or any other specific organisations that may have received financial support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

This is because of HMRC's duty of confidentiality. HMRC cannot publish identifying information that relates to their functions, which includes the CJRS, unless there is an appropriate legal basis for publication. No such legal basis was in place for the CJRS prior to 12 November 2020 when the latest CJRS Direction was signed.

In line with the published direction, as part of HMRC's commitment to transparency and to deter fraudulent claims, HMRC will publish information about employers who claim for periods starting on or after 1 December 2020.

■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland**Stephen Farry:**[\[116704\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of permitting the Northern Ireland Executive to carry forward moneys from the 2020-21 financial year as a result of uncertainty about spending profiles arising from the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

As part of our response to coronavirus we have provided the Northern Ireland Executive with upfront certainty that they will receive at least £2.8bn in additional funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding. This has allowed the Executive to plan and deliver their response to coronavirus.

As set out in the Statement of Funding Policy, the Executive are able to carry forward a certain percentage of their budgets from one year to the next through Budget Exchange. This means the Executive will be able to carry forward a proportion of their overall budget for 2020/21 which includes the £2.8bn additional funding due to coronavirus. As with UK government departments, any excess underspends will be forfeited unless exceptionally agreed otherwise with HM Treasury.

■ Public Sector: Redundancy Pay**Daisy Cooper:**[\[115824\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to conduct an equalities impact assessment of the implementation of the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations.

Steve Barclay:

An Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted on the primary legislation and published alongside the 2019 consultation document. An updated Equalities Impact Assessment has since been conducted based on the final regulations and has been published here: [Equalities Impact Assessment](#)

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Directors**Drew Hendry:****[117292]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using CT600 returns to allow for the provision of payments under the Self Employment income Support Scheme to company directors paying themselves via dividends.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC's view is that information provided in the CT600 Company Tax Return cannot be used as a basis to provide support for directors paying themselves in dividends. The CT600 shows the company's profits. It does not provide information on dividends received by the company's directors.

The Government has worked with stakeholders and carefully considered the case for providing a new system for those who pay themselves through dividends. However, targeting additional support for those who pay their wages via dividends is much more complex than existing income support schemes.

Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the package of financial support available. More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Mortgages**Ian Mearns:****[117238]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2020 to Question 91961, whether his Department plans to direct mortgage lenders to consider income received from the self employed income support scheme as earned income for the purposes of an assessment of affordability.

John Glen:

As set out in the response to Question 91961, how lenders assess affordability (beyond the regulations set out by the Financial Conduct Authority) and determine lending criteria are commercial decisions which the Government does not seek to intervene in. We are clear that lenders should treat customers fairly, especially in the current context of Covid-19 and will continue to monitor the mortgage market and engage with industry on the availability of mortgage products.

■ Shipping: Tax Allowances

Grahame Morris: [\[116457\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the seafarers earnings deduction in tax year 2020-21.

Grahame Morris: [\[116458\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of qualifying claimants for seafarers earnings deduction in tax year 2020-21.

Jesse Norman:

Estimates of the number of qualifying claimants and cost to the public purse of Seafarers' Earnings Deduction in the tax year 2020-21 are not available.

Grahame Morris: [\[116459\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he last made an assessment of the effectiveness of the (a) structure and (b) purpose of the seafarers earnings deduction.

Grahame Morris: [\[116460\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the effect of covid-19 on the seafarers earnings deduction.

Jesse Norman:

The Seafarers' Earnings Deduction (SED) entitles seafarers to a 100% deduction from income tax for their foreign earnings in certain circumstances. The deduction is available for an eligible period of at least 365 days provided that a minimum of half of the period is spent outside the UK, and that no more than 183 consecutive days are spent in the UK during that period.

Eligible periods for SED are not bound to the tax year, and seafarers are able to add periods of work abroad to previous, or future, eligible periods. Seafarers that claim SED each year are likely to be able to add work done before COVID-19 restrictions to their previous eligible period, and so are unlikely to lose their SED entitlement.

As Financial Secretary to the Treasury, I have engaged recently with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Aviation and Maritime on the Seafarers' Earnings Deduction.

The Government keeps all taxes under review as part of its annual Budget process.

■ Test and Trace Support Payment

Maria Eagle: [\[116404\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Test and Trace Support Payment is liable to income tax; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Eagle:

[116405]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether people in receipt of the Test and Trace Support Payment will have a change applied to their PAYE code as a result of that payment having been made.

Jesse Norman:

The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme in England and equivalent support schemes in the Devolved Administrations are linked to employment, and the legislative default is that these payments are liable to income tax. This is in line with the tax treatment of other COVID-19 support payments.

HM Revenue and Customs will use existing powers to gather data from local authorities on the payments made through this scheme. This information will be used to adjust the tax codes through the employer's PAYE scheme for employees receiving Test and Trace Support Payments.

Such payments are normally liable to National Insurance Contributions (NICs), but the UK Government has granted a NICs exemption in England to reduce the administrative burden on the local authorities making the Test and Trace Support Payments and employers.

The UK Government is working with the Devolved Administrations to extend this NICs exemption to their equivalent schemes.

■ Wholesale Trade: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[116393]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to maintain jobs in parts of the wholesale sector that supply hospitality venues that are closed during (a) national and (b) local covid-19 restrictions.

Steve Barclay:

The Government has provided unprecedented levels of support for workers and businesses to protect, as much as possible, against the current economic emergency. Food and drink wholesalers have been eligible for a number of these support schemes, with the most relevant likely to include:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help keep millions of people in employment;
- £10,000 cash grants for all business properties in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief and Rural Rates Relief;
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme for small businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000, with no interest payments or fees for the first 12 months.

Food and drink wholesalers have also benefited from the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme which provided over 100 million half price meals during August and helped to protect the livelihoods of the 1.8 million people working in the hospitality sector.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[116446\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps her Department has taken to help tackle the disproportionate effect of the covid-19 outbreak on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Kemi Badenoch:

The steps we have taken to tackle the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on ethnic minority groups were set out in my first quarterly progress [report](#) to the Prime Minister, published on 22 October, and in my statement to the House of Commons on the same day.

■ Females: Equality

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[116445\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the Foreign Secretary on the Government's commitment to international women's rights ahead of the G20 summit in Riyadh.

Kemi Badenoch:

As has been the case under successive administrations, details of internal policy discussions are not routinely disclosed.

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

The UK has consistently called for women in Saudi Arabia to be able to participate fully in society. We welcome positive developments, including reforms to the guardianship system. The World Bank's "Women, Business, and the Law 2020" report recognises Saudi Arabia's efforts to advance women's economic participation within the Kingdom. However, women's rights still fall significantly short of international standards. We will continue to raise the issue with Saudi Arabia, and work to promote and support further progress.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Maintenance

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[116694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether additional charges and fines placed on parents paying child maintenance have been (a) revised and (b) temporarily halted due to financial hardship as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

Collection charges apply when a case is being managed in the Collect and Pay service. The Direct Pay service does not incur any on-going collection charges. Charges have not been paused as a result of the covid-19 outbreak. We expect paying parents to do the right thing and continue to pay child maintenance due. Where paying parents experience a change in income, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) can review their case and check if the amount paid should change. To help reduce the short-term financial pressure that may be experienced by many paying parents whose income has been affected by the Covid 19 outbreak, the time period over which that change in income is assessed has been reduced from 12 to 2 weeks.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[116695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what provisions the Child Maintenance Service has put in place to help parents paying child maintenance whose wages have decreased as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and who have to make late or reduced payments.

Guy Opperman:

The Government has been clear in its commitment to support paying parents who have experienced a drop in income as a result of the public health emergency. Where paying parents experience a change in income, the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) can review their case and check if the amount paid should change. For paying parents who are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19, the time period over which that change in income is assessed has been reduced from 12 to 2 weeks. In the short-term, paying parents may be advised to reduce their payments.

We know the majority of parents take their responsibilities extremely seriously and will do what is needed to ensure their children are supported.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Telephone Services**Karen Bradley:**[\[117247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether self-employed musicians can submit music for use on her Department's helplines.

Guy Opperman:

DWP has a procurement framework with a list of suppliers whom we can purchase from. The Department must ensure that any music used is licence-free and adheres to accessibility standards. There are also set parameters regarding audio frequencies to ensure a quality experience for callers, particularly when using a mobile telephone.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Coronavirus**Neil Gray:**[\[116495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of claimants have been kept on the assessment rate of new style employment and support allowance

because they cannot access a telephone assessment; and what conditions those claimants have.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not held.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Seema Malhotra:

[117269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of young people who have started a Kickstart placement in each region and nation of the UK.

Mims Davies:

Over 100 young people started working in Kickstart funded job placements within the first weeks of the scheme opening to participants on the 2nd November. As of 20/11/20 there were nearly 20,000 approved roles which we are currently matching young people to.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Sole Traders

Sir Mike Penning:

[115532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many sole traders have successfully applied for Kickstart funding via a Kickstart gateway.

Mims Davies:

We are not yet able to break Kickstart data down by sector or employer type.

■ Pension Credit

Ian Lavery:

[115659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will assess the potential merits of introducing time-bound targets for increasing Pension Credit uptake.

Ian Lavery:

[115660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to develop new awareness raising campaigns to boost Pension Credit uptake.

Ian Lavery:

[115661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to implement innovative technological solutions to increase the uptake of Pension Credit.

Ian Lavery:

[115662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will produce an action plan for increasing the uptake of Pension Credit.

Guy Opperman:

The latest Pension Credit take-up statistics covering 2018-19 were published on 29 October 2020, which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-

[related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up-financial-year-2018-to-2019](#). They show a small but encouraging improvement in the take-up of Pension Credit. Take-up of Guarantee Credit – the safety-net element of Pension Credit – has risen from 68% to 70% of those eligible to claim it. The statistics also show a significant improvement in the take-up of Pension Credit by expenditure, with some 76% of Pension Credit being claimed, up from 70% in the previous year.

This year we took steps to raise awareness of Pension Credit by launching a campaign aimed at dispelling some of the common misconceptions about Pension Credit eligibility. We engaged with our stakeholders to ensure that the key campaign messages could be widely disseminated because we know that trusted organisations working in the community are often one of the first places that people are likely to go to seek information.

We have updated our online Pension Credit toolkit (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit>) with the recent awareness campaign materials to supplement the resources it already contains for those working with pensioners, such as guides to Pension Credit and information designed to help older people understand how they could get Pension Credit.

In May we also launched the digital ‘Apply for Pension Credit’ (<https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim>) service as part of our Covid 19 response to help people claim Pension Credit online with minimal delay and to ensure they can do so while adhering to social distancing or shielding measures. This online claim service for Pension Credit supplements the existing free Pension Credit claim line number (0800 99 1234) and postal claim facilities and around 50% of claims are being made using it.

We continue working with stakeholders to find the best ways to reach eligible pensioners and raise awareness of Pension Credit.

■ Pensions: Uprating

Neil Gray:

[117276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the Government’s proposed reform to the Retail Prices Index methodology on pension schemes.

Guy Opperman:

As you will be aware, at the Budget in March the Government published, jointly with the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), a consultation on reform to Retail Prices Index (RPI) Methodology. The consultation sought views on whether UKSA’s proposal to reform RPI should be implemented at a date other than 2030, and if so, when between 2025 and 2030. As part of the consultation, the Government invited views on matters including how the holders of the Government’s issues of index-linked gilts, all of which use RPI as their reference rate, will be affected by the implementation of reform.

The consultation closed on 21 August, since when the Government has been considering the responses to the consultation. The potential effect of the proposed reform is a matter for HMT, which is the lead government department. The Government and UKSA's response to the consultation will be published alongside the Spending Review on 25 November.

■ Redundancy: Coronavirus

Mike Amesbury:

[\[92004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of the need to provide financial support for employees made redundant before 23 September 2020 who cannot be furloughed and are not entitled to any statutory redundancy payment.

Will Quince:

Universal Credit is in place to support claimants in difficult circumstances. The Government introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth around £9.3 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year.

Our long-term ambition is to level up across the country and continue to tackle poverty through our reformed welfare system that works with the labour market to encourage people to move into and progress in work wherever possible.

Our £30bn Plan for Jobs is the first step on the ladder to achieving this and will support economic recovery through new schemes including Kickstart and Job Entry Targeted Support.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Neil Gray:

[\[116494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 84635 on Social Security Benefits, what recent assessment she has made of the accessibility of telephone assessments for claimants of (a) personal independence payment and (b) other welfare benefits during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

All of our assessment providers are advised to consider the needs of claimants when arranging assessment appointments. If a claimant believes they may have difficulties attending their appointment or that they need additional support, the claimant should discuss this with their provider as soon as possible, using the contact details on their appointment letter.

We are aware that for some claimants, particularly those with certain health conditions or disabilities, it may not be possible or appropriate to carry out assessments over the telephone. Where it is not possible to carry out a Personal Independence Payment telephone assessment, a decision will be made based on all the evidence available to ensure any payment is not delayed. For Work Capability

Assessments, claimants will remain on their current award until we gather the evidence needed to make a recommendation or are able to conduct a face to face assessment, or until their benefit is due to end (new-style ESA).

■ State Retirement Pensions: Females

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[115620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of women who reached state pension age on 6 April 2016, received a Married Woman's Pension Rate based on their husband's National Insurance contributions but subsequently divorced and failed to receive an uplift to a full basic state pension.

Guy Opperman:

There are no women who meet the criteria.

■ Universal Credit

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[117374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether people who had their universal credit payments reduced due to the periodic assessment regulations error will receive compensation.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[117375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the estimated cost to the public purse is of the new periodic assessment regulations.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[117376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people's universal credit payments will be affected by the change to periodic assessment regulations.

Will Quince:

There is no change to the period of assessment for Universal Credit.

The Court of Appeal's Judgment in the case of *Johnson and others* affects a small minority of claimants in very specific circumstances and the estimated cost is expected to be minimal. Those affected receive two calendar monthly payments of earnings in one assessment period and may lose out if they are entitled to a work allowance. We know that this issue can occur when a claimant's monthly pay date and the last day of their assessment period are close together.

The legislation we laid on the 20th October, revises those arrangements and provides a remedy that satisfies the Court of Appeal Judgment in the case of *Johnson and Others*. This legislation came into force on 16th November and means that in future for cases affected by this issue, monthly earnings will be reallocated to another assessment period, which means that only one set of earnings will be taken into account rather than two, and certain claimants will be able to benefit from any applicable work allowance.

■ Universal Credit: Care Leavers**Anne McLaughlin:**[\[116566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the 2013 Care Leaver Strategy, what progress has been made on introducing a care leaver marker in the universal credit system.

Will Quince:

The Department takes seriously the need to support vulnerable claimants, and wants the application process for Universal Credit to be as quick and easy as possible, ensuring that claimants receive money at the earliest opportunity.

Through locally agreed protocols, Jobcentres and local authorities support care leavers transitioning to DWP paid benefits. This helps ensure care leavers are identified promptly and receive the support they need, for example through the advance claim preparation facility.

All Universal Credit claimants, including those who are care leavers, are assigned to a named Work Coach, with whom they can build a trusting relationship. With the permission of the claimant, a Work Coach is able to record, in a free text format, through the use of 'pinned notes' in the Universal Credit system, information which supports staff in identifying and managing relevant experiences and circumstances of individual claimants.

Additionally, the Department funds Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland to deliver 'Help to Claim' which provides tailored, practical support to people making a Universal Credit claim and is available across Great Britain. Claimants can access this support through self-referral, or may be directed towards or referred to the service by DWP or other support agencies.

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus**Neil Gray:**[\[116496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to resume the universal credit managed migration pilot in Harrogate.

Will Quince:

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, and the significant increase in the Universal Credit caseload to 5.7 million, the decision was taken to temporarily suspend the Move to UC pilot in the area served by Harrogate Jobcentre, as part of the Government's wider and ongoing response to the pandemic.

Neil Gray:[\[116497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the timeline for the rollout of universal credit.

Will Quince:

The Department successfully completed the rollout of Universal Credit in December 2018 and it is available in every Jobcentre across the country.

Universal Credit has stood up to the challenge of the COVID-19, whereas the previous legacy benefit system would have buckled under the pressure, with millions of people able to access welfare which is fairer and more generous. The application process is deliberately designed to be as quick and easy as possible, so that claimants receive money at the earliest opportunity. Universal Credit is a predominantly digital service, ensuring we make best use of technology to deliver a modern and effective working-age welfare system, allowing our staff to concentrate on those people who require additional support

Mike Amesbury:

[\[92005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the need to remove the five-week wait for universal credit for employees made redundant prior to 23 September 2020 and who are not eligible for statutory redundancy pay.

Will Quince:

Nobody in need has to wait for a payment under Universal Credit (UC). UC New Claim Advances allow eligible claimants to receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront within a few days. Claimants will receive their annual award over 13 payments during their first year, instead of 12. They are paid quickly and can be applied for online or over the phone. These upfront payments can be spread across two years instead of one from October 2021, as announced in the 2020 Budget.

■ Universal Credit: Disability

Neil Gray:

[\[116498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of additional disabled claimants she plans to naturally migrate to universal credit as a result of delays to managed migration.

Will Quince:

Natural migrations to Universal Credit occur when a legacy benefit claimant has a change of circumstances that means that they need to make a new claim for support. In these cases, they will claim Universal Credit rather than a legacy benefit. As natural migrations only occur when a claimant's circumstances change, the Department cannot and does not plan such moves.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

EDUCATION

■ Pupils: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[115692]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) revenue and (b) capital funding in cash terms was provided per pupil in state (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in (A) Coventry North East constituency and (B) Coventry in each of the last ten years.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 19 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Nick Gibb:

The revenue funding allocated for schools for the financial years 2010/11 to 2019/20 for Coventry local authority is shown in the table below. Aggregated schools funding is not allocated to primary and secondary schools separately, nor to parliamentary constituencies. Primary and secondary pupil numbers for each local authority in England can be found in the local authority tables for each year through following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>.

FINANCIAL YEAR	COVENTRY LOCAL AUTHORITY (£MILLIONS)
2010-11	241.9
2011-12	249.8
2012-13	257.6
2013-14	279.6
2014-15	292.0
2015-16	298.0
2016-17	302.2
2017-18	314.2
2018-19	324.5
2019-20	337.2

Data for allocations prior to 2011/12 are not readily available. Most funding allocations are calculated at a responsible body level, and cannot be broken down to per pupil, primary or secondary, and constituency levels. This is because many

responsible bodies, such as academy trusts, span local authority boundaries and decisions on investment in individual schools are often taken at a local level.

Basic need funding is allocated to local authorities to provide new school places in their area. The Department provides basic need funding for every place that is needed, based on local authorities' own data on pupil forecasts. These allocations are calculated in line with demographic growth in the local area rather than existing population, so allocations may fluctuate across years. There are now 8,594 more school places in Coventry than there were in 2010.

In addition to this, Coventry has been allocated nearly £4 million through the Special Provision Capital Fund across 2018-21. This funding is intended to help local authorities create new places and improve facilities for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

(All VALUES £MILLIONS)	2011- 12	2012- 13	2013- 14	2014- 15	2015- 16	2016- 17	2017- 18	2018- 19	2019- 20	2020- 21	2021- 22
Basic Need allocations	9.9	9.7	12.5	12.5	0	0	3.2	6	8.2	1.9	23.7
Special Provision Capital Fund								0.8	2.4	0.8	

(All Values £millions)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 and 2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Basic Need allocations	9.9	9.7	12.5	12.5	0	0	3.2	6	8.2	23.7
Special Provision Capital Fund	0.8	2.4	0.8							

[1], [2]

In addition to basic need funding, the Department allocates condition funding each year to those responsible for school buildings to improve and maintain the condition of the school estate.

For an explanation of condition funding and a breakdown of condition allocations paid to Coventry local authority to invest in maintained schools over the last ten years, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 November 2020 to Question [114205](#).

[1] For financial years 2015/16 to 2020/21, the figures above may differ from the original allocations. This is because allocations have been subsequently adjusted to reflect a revised schedule of payments, for example where payments have been modified in order to support local authority cashflow.

[2] This table does not include historic Targeted Basic Need funding – Coventry received £9.2 million through this in 2013-15.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[62458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 tests performed at home were sent to testing centres on each day from 27 April 2020 to 5 May 2020.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Ms Nadine Dorries

Helen Whately:

Using data from Royal Mail the number of home tests conducted in this time frame are shown in the following table. It should be noted that the Royal Mail's data captures when the kit is delivered at their delivery office near the laboratory. For example, if the kit is 'scanned as delivered' on 4 May, it will then make it to the laboratory the following morning, 5 May, at the agreed 'drop-off' time.

Tests returned are counted and reported only once they have been processed by the laboratory and will appear in the data for pillar 2.

Data on the number of tests processed by pillar is available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/testing>

Information on the methodology of how testing data is compiled is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-methodology/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-methodology>

DATE	KITS SCANNED AS DELIVERED
26 April 2020	954
27 April 2020	2,069
28 April 2020	2,762
29 April 2020	2,377
30 April 2020	2,966
1 May 2020	4,895
2 May 2020	5,907

DATE	KITS SCANNED AS DELIVERED
3 May 2020	6,906
4 May 2020	7,110
Total	35,946

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Hong Kong Six-monthly Report

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab): [\[HCWS591\]](#)

The latest Six-monthly Report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2020. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office>). I commend the report to the House.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Dental Patient Charge Uplift 2020/21

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care (Jo Churchill): [\[HCWS593\]](#)

The National Health Service (Dental Charges) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (“the Amendment Regulations”) will be laid before Parliament to increase National Health Service dental patient charges in England from **14th December 2020**.

This is the fifth and final year of the Spending Review 2015 commitment to annually uplift dental patient charges by 5% for the duration of the Spending Review period.

Following a six-month freeze, the dental charge payable for a band 1 course of treatment will rise by £1.10, from £22.70 to £23.80. For a band 2 course of treatment will increase by £3.10 from £62.10 to £65.20. A band 3 course of treatment will increase by £13.50 from £269.30 to £282.80.

Details of the revised charges for 2020-21 can be found in the table below:

BAND	DESCRIPTION	2020/21 (PROPOSED PATIENT CHARGE)
1	This band includes examination, diagnosis (including radiographs), advice on how to prevent future problems, scale and polish if clinically needed, and preventative care (e.g. applications of fluoride varnish	£23.80

BAND	DESCRIPTION	2020/21 (PROPOSED PATIENT CHARGE)
	or fissure sealant)	
2	This band covers everything listed in band 1, plus any further treatment such as fillings, root canal work or extractions	£65.20
3	This band covers everything in bands 1 and 2, plus course of treatment including crowns, dentures, bridges and other laboratory work	£282.80
Urgent	This band covers urgent assessment and specified urgent treatments such as pain relief or a temporary filling or dental appliance repair	£23.80

PRIME MINISTER

■ Ministerial Code

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS592\]](#)

I would like to update the House on the outcome of an investigation under the Ministerial Code.

In reaching my decision I took advice from the Independent Adviser, Sir Alex Allan, in relation to the allegations made earlier this year around the Home Secretary's conduct. I take this issue very seriously and recognise that it is always difficult for individuals to come forward and raise concerns. I am grateful to those who have done so. I am also grateful to Sir Alex for his advice and considered his conclusions carefully.

It was clear from Sir Alex's advice that at times there have been difficult working relationships all round. Sir Alex's advice found that the Home Secretary had become – justifiably in many instances – frustrated by the Home Office leadership's lack of responsiveness and the lack of support she felt in DfID three years ago. He also found, however, that the Home Secretary had not always treated her civil servants with the consideration and respect that would be expected, and her approach on occasion has

amounted to behaviour that can be described as bullying in terms of the impact felt by individuals.

He went on to advise, therefore, that the Home Secretary had not consistently met the high standards expected of her under the Ministerial Code.

I have noted Sir Alex's advice that many of the concerns now raised were not raised at the time and that the Home Secretary was unaware of the impact that she had. I am reassured that the Home Secretary is sorry for inadvertently upsetting those with whom she was working. I am also reassured that relationships, practices and culture in the Home Office are much improved. As the arbiter of the code, having considered Sir Alex's advice and weighing up all the factors, my judgement is that the Ministerial Code was not breached.

Together with the Cabinet Secretary, I have this morning written to all Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. This letter sets out the paramount importance of relationships of mutual trust and respect between politicians and their officials. This includes keeping internal conversations private, feeling able to speak freely and honestly about matters of state and to speak constructively about things that are not working so that we can fix them together promptly. I am clear that there is a particular duty on Ministers and Permanent Secretaries to create jointly across government a culture which is professional, respectful, focused and ambitious for change and in which there is no place for bullying.

The Cabinet Secretary and I are enormously grateful to civil servants for the commitment they have shown as we navigate through these challenging times. We are also immensely proud of the fantastic work that is going on across Government, and know that this work would not have been possible without strong relationships between Ministers and their officials.

I have full confidence in the Home Secretary and consider this matter now closed.

I am placing a copy of Sir Alex Allan's findings in the library of the House. A copy of the letter to Cabinet Ministers and Heads of Department will be made available on . [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).