



Daily Report

Thursday, 26 November 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 26 November 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 26 November 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

Darren Henry:

[\[119414\]](#)

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

Paul Scully:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been in place since March 2020 and has now been extended to March 2021. This extension will support businesses during the latest national restrictions by paying up to 80% of wages for furloughed employees.

Up until 15 November 2020 the scheme has helped 1.2 million employers and 9.6 million employees.

■ **Energy: Meters**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[119252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the use of smart meters on (a) domestic household energy bills and (b) the level of domestic energy switching in (i) Coventry, (ii) the West Midlands and (iii) England.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Smart meters provide households accurate, near real-time information about energy consumption in pounds and pence via an In-Home Display, so consumers can easily understand how to use less and save money on their bills.

Consumers with smart meters are making energy and bill savings. Smart Energy GB has found that almost 7 in 10 customers with smart meters are more conscious of their energy use, while British Gas has reported that its dual-fuel customers with smart meters are making sustained annual energy savings of more than 3%. A dual-fuel household that has smart meters installed in 2020 is expected to realise average bill savings of £290 over the remainder of the rollout.

Research from Ofgem shows that households with smart meters are no less likely to switch energy supplier to receive a better deal than those with traditional meters.

The Department holds data on the impact of smart meters on household energy bills and switching for Great Britain; we do not collect it at a local level or for England.

■ Environment Protection: Job Creation

Alexander Stafford:

[\[909296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase the number of green jobs.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has set out its ambitious Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution – an innovative and ambitious programme of job creation that will support levelling up and up to 250,000 jobs across the country.

Spanning clean energy, buildings, transport, nature and innovative technologies, the plan will mobilise £12 billion of government investment to unlock three times as much private sector investment by 2030.

It presents a vision for the UK that is greener, more prosperous and at the forefront of industries for the future, taking advantage of export opportunities in new, global emerging markets in low carbon technologies and services, while reinvigorating our industrial heartlands, including in the North East, North West, the Midlands, Scotland and Wales.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Sarah Olney:

[\[119331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the Answer of 10 November 2020 to Question 908549 on the Green Homes Grant Scheme states that the expected number of jobs supported through the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme was over 80,000 and Point 7 of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published in November 2020, states that developing greener buildings could deliver support for around 50,000 jobs by 2030.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Further to the response on 10 November to Question 908549, the 80,000 jobs supported by the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme relates to the £1.5 billion funding allocated for 2020/21.

The 50,000 jobs supported by 2030 are as a result of the package of measures for 'Point 7: Green Buildings' outlined in my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan. This figure relates to energy efficiency work done by 2030.

■ Housing: Heating

Matt Western:

[\[119334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households have applied for a free heat pump as part of the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project; and how many of those heat pumps have been installed to date.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of the Department's £505 million Energy Innovation Programme, the £14.6 million Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project will showcase the feasibility of installing heat pumps in a range of homes across the UK.

The Project has attracted over 4,500 expressions of interest since the three regional delivery partners were announced in Summer 2020. Installations have only recently begun – following delays caused by coronavirus – but as of Thursday 19 November 2020, 19 installations had been completed.

Matt Western:[\[119335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the biggest factor has been in households not installing a heat pump under the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of the Department's £505 million Energy Innovation Programme, the £14.6 million Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project will showcase the feasibility of installing heat pumps in a range of homes across the UK. Installations have only recently begun – following delays caused by coronavirus – so it is too early to draw definitive conclusions.

As part of the project we will assess the reasons given by households for not progressing from survey to installation. We are also exploring where innovation can overcome any challenges through the Demonstration Project.

Matt Western:[\[119336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the estimated cost is of the energy efficiency retrofit requirements for households wishing to install a heat pump under the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of the Department's £505 million Energy Innovation Programme, the £14.6 million Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project will showcase the feasibility of installing heat pumps in a range of homes across the UK. Installations have only recently begun – following delays caused by coronavirus – so it is too early to provide robust evidence on the cost of the energy efficiency retrofit requirements for households participating in the Project.

Under the Project, if any building upgrade measures are required then they are capped at £5,000 per property, except in exceptional circumstances, and this has not been a major impediment to homes participating in the Project to date. However, it is acknowledged that some homes with high heat demand and poor insulation, may require significant investment in energy efficiency measures to make them suitable for a heat pump. We are exploring where innovation can overcome this challenge through the Demonstration Project.

Matt Western:

[119337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many heat pumps have been installed in off gas grid homes under the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of the Department's £505 million Energy Innovation Programme, the £14.6 million Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project will showcase the feasibility of installing heat pumps in a range of homes across the UK, but will focus largely on homes connected to the gas network.

The Project has a target that at least 85 per cent of heat pumps installed under this project will be in homes that currently use gas as their primary heating fuel.

Installations have only recently begun – following delays caused by coronavirus – but as of Thursday 19 November 2020, 19 installations had been completed, all of which were in homes that previously used gas as their primary heating fuel.

Matt Western:

[119338]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of types of homes least suitable to having a heat pump installed as part of the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

As part of the Department's £505 million Energy Innovation Programme, the Electrification of Heat Demonstration Project will showcase the feasibility of installing heat pumps in a range of homes across the UK. Installations have only recently begun – following delays caused by coronavirus – so it is too early to draw definitive conclusions, however, early evidence indicates that a large proportion of homes are suitable for heat pumps.

We acknowledge that some housing archetypes may pose specific challenges to the deployment of heat pumps. For example, some terraced houses and flats may have limited space for an air-source heat pump outdoor unit. While homes with high heat demand and poor insulation, may require significant investment in energy efficiency measures to make them suitable. We are exploring where innovation can overcome some of these challenges through the Demonstration Project.

■ **Hydrogen: Urban Areas**

Fiona Bruce:

[119220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution published on 18 November 2020, what the process is for communities to express an interest in becoming a hydrogen town.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We will be looking to the gas industry together with local authorities and communities to put forward proposals for hydrogen heating trials, and a possible hydrogen town. We will be publishing details on this in due course.

■ Local Restrictions Support Grant

Matt Rodda:

[119357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the funding available under the (a) Local Restrictions Support Grant and (b) Additional Restrictions Grant has been allocated to local authorities but not yet distributed to businesses.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is working closely with local authorities in England to distribute funding available under the Local Restrictions Support Grant and the Additional Restrictions Grant to businesses as quickly as possible. Local authority guidance was published on 3rd November and grant offer letters were sent to local authorities on 6th November. Payments to local authorities have been made since 13th November.

We are working closely with local authorities to monitor the ongoing implementation of the grant schemes.

■ Supermarkets: Coronavirus

Andrea Leadsom:

[119230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that supermarket purchasing restrictions are (a) fair and (b) flexible during the covid-19 outbreak for parents with newborn babies.

Paul Scully:

The Government welcomes efforts by supermarkets to ensure vulnerable groups, including parents with newborn babies, can shop safely and access the goods they need. However, decisions on restricting the number of items consumers can purchase are best made by individual businesses, who understand their operations and customer base.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has created a COVID-19 taskforce to address excessive pricing practices and has set up this online form so that consumers and businesses can report any issues via: <https://www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/>.

The CMA will consider any evidence that companies may have broken competition or consumer protection law and it will take direct enforcement action where appropriate.

■ Travel: Repayments

Fleur Anderson:

[119406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will temporarily suspend the requirement of a 14-day refund period stipulated in travel packages regulations for small travel companies unable to process refunds.

Paul Scully:

The Government has no plans to suspend consumers' right to a refund within 14 days for package holidays. The Government recognises the challenges some businesses are experiencing in processing refunds for cancelled travel arrangements, and travel businesses are encouraged to utilise the generous and comprehensive financial support packages put in place by the Government to help minimise the disruption caused by COVID-19, which includes two business interruption loan guarantee schemes, grant funding, tax deferrals and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Many travel businesses are already offering consumers credit notes or alternative dates, which consumers are able to accept if they choose to. However, the Government has always been clear that consumers must be offered a genuine choice between a refund or a credit note and be able to choose a refund if that is their preference.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Civil Servants: Location****Dan Jarvis:**[\[119245\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the announcement in the March 2020 Budget on the relocation of civil servants, what recent progress his Department has made on relocating civil servants; and if he will publish the criteria used to select potential sites for relocations.

Dan Jarvis:[\[119246\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of relocating civil service roles from London on regional inequality.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given [by myself](#) and the [Minister without Portfolio](#) to questions on 12 November.

DEFENCE■ **Army: Finance****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[118498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what meetings he has held with the Chief of the General Staff to discuss reductions in level of funding to the Army.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence, as part of the integrated review and spending review, consulted widely to create the Defence proposition. In particular, the Secretary of State was in regular contact with all of the Service Chiefs and representatives from across Defence. The review was never about reducing funding to specific Services; it

is about the defence of the UK being led by the threats we must deter and defeat. The generous settlement we have received will set our Armed Forces up for the next decade. However, we will still have to take hard decisions to ensure we're spending our defence budget in the most effective way.

The Defence Secretary will set out further details in due course.

■ **Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

Luke Pollard:

[\[118581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what guidance his Department has provided to defence contractors on whether their employees should (a) install, (b) use or (c) remove the NHS covid-19 app on their mobile phones.

James Heappey:

We have not provided specific advice to contractors relating to the NHS COVID-19 app, but we are encouraging contractors to adhere to all Government advice, and we continue to signpost all relevant guidance to our suppliers.

■ **Defence: Procurement**

Grahame Morris:

[\[119224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral statement of the Prime Minister on 19 November 2020, Official Report, column 487 on Integrated Review, if he will make it his policy to prioritise UK (a) research and development, (b) engineering and (c) manufacturing in defence procurement

Jeremy Quin:

The Prime Minister has announced a once in a generation modernisation of the Armed Forces. This includes investment of approximately £16.5 billion above existing commitments over the next four years creating up to 10,000 jobs a year. We are committed to using this investment in our research and development pipeline, revitalising our ship building industry by funding the expansion of the Royal Navy into the biggest surface fleet of modern warships in Europe, developing the next generation of combat air capability to replace the RAF Typhoon and establishing a Space Command.

Promoting and incentivising UK commercial excellence in research and development, engineering, and manufacturing will be vital to our ambitions and we will continue to work closely with UK companies where possible. The ongoing Defence and Security Industrial Strategy review aims to create an environment that supports competitive, innovative and world class defence and security industries that drive investment and prosperity across the Union. This investment will promote the UK as a centre for science and technology, promote foreign investment, and create thousands of new, high skilled jobs in addition to the over 400,000 already supported by Defence. That includes securing and growing shipbuilding jobs across the UK as well as in aerospace and other industries.

■ Military Bases: Brecon**Fay Jones:** [\[119392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for the future of The Barracks, Brecon.

Jeremy Quin:

The intent remains to dispose of The Barracks, Brecon subject to further assessment work. Units currently based at the barracks, including Headquarters 160th (Welsh) Brigade, will be relocated within Wales. The MOD will work closely with Local Authorities to determine the impact of any decisions on local communities.

■ Navy**Luke Pollard:** [\[118587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made the total number of personnel required for the Royal Navy to crew the new ships announced by the Prime Minister in his statement of 19 November 2020 on the Integrated Review and to fulfil all other Royal Navy duties.

James Heappey:

Under current planning models, the required workforce numbers for the future capability changes fit within the current limits, therefore no increase in personnel will be required.

Work on the new platforms and programmes are still in the early planning phases and the workforce requirements will become clearer as planning matures.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Children's Play: Coronavirus****Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[116519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions on (a) the guidance for children's soft play centres to safely reopen in a covid-secure way, and (b) the limitations on maximum occupancy at soft play centres due to needing a minimum of 100 sq ft per person.

Nigel Huddleston:

Officials in DCMS have been working closely with the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions (BALPPA) and public health officials on the guidance for children's indoor play centres, including soft play. Government officials supported BALPPA to develop COVID-secure guidance to enable the sector to safely reopen on 15 August. As part of this guidance, a series of robust measures have been put in place - including a regular enhanced cleaning schedule, removal of 'clutter' and systems to enable test and trace.

The guidance currently states that there is a maximum capacity of 40% for soft play frames based on the total number of users, including parents or guardian supervising. This measure was recommended by public health officials to ensure that venues are COVID-secure, which is necessary to help avoid the transmission of COVID-19.

The reference to 100sqft has since been removed from the guidance following conversations with BALPPA and other industry leaders.

■ **Events Industry: Coronavirus**

Laura Farris:

[\[118605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to prepare the events industry to hold large scale events again, once covid-19 testing at scale becomes available.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are aware that many in the sector seek clarity on when the events industry will be able to hold larger scale events.

From 2 December, we will return to a regional, tiered approach to COVID-19 restrictions. In tiers 1 and 2, spectator sport and business events can now resume inside and outside with tight capacity limits and social distancing, providing more consistency with indoor performances in theatres and concert halls.

In tier 3, there should be no public attendance at spectator sport or indoor performances and large business events should not be taking place.

The Government will also introduce spectator capacity limits for sports stadia, business events and live performances in tiers where these are permitted. These limits will vary depending on whether the event is held indoors or out. At tier 1 these will be 50% capacity or 4,000 outdoors and 1,000 indoors, whichever is lower and at tier 2 these will be 50% capacity or 2,000 outdoors and 1,000 indoors, whichever is lower.

We continue to engage with stakeholders - including through the Tourism Industry Council and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Panel - to assess how we can best support the sector's safe reopening.

The business events pilots we carried out in September will ensure that the correct advice and guidance is put in place to help larger events reopen when it is safe to do so.

■ **Football: Clubs**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[119233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the fan-led review of football governance and the takeover of Manchester City Football Club and proposed takeover of Newcastle United Football Club, what discussions he has had with the Premier League on the importance of transparency and consistency in the approval of takeovers of Premier League football clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many possess a great history. It is vital they are protected.

The Premier League considers takeovers in line with the published criteria of their Owners' and Directors' Test. The same process is set out for all ownership changes in the Premier League.

The Government has committed to a fan led review of football governance, which will include consideration of the Owners' and Directors' test. The Secretary of State recently met with the Premier League and EFL to discuss the future of the national game, including governance, and will continue to work with them as we scope out the review.

■ Football: Maternity Leave**Julie Elliott:****[118527]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the recommendations made by FIFA and FIFpro on maternity arrangements for professional women footballers.

Nigel Huddleston:

Government welcomes the introduction of new regulations by FIFA, agreed with FIFPRO, that protect the rights of female professional footballers who want to have children. We want to see the popularity of women's sport continue to thrive and having regulations such as these in place is key to that. It is important that women in sport have the opportunity to progress their career and reach their full potential.

■ Golf: Coronavirus**Joy Morrissey:****[119377]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the scientific basis is for closing golf courses during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England; and when he plans to reopen those courses.

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 the first period of enhanced national restrictions 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. The National Restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions. We have not introduced further exemptions because when you unpick at one activity the effectiveness of the whole package is compromised.

However, as the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions will end on Wednesday 2 December and gyms and the wider leisure sector including golf courses can reopen across all tiers.

■ Metal Detectors: Coronavirus

Mohammad Yasin:

[118070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Government's guidance on searching for archaeological finds in England during COVID-19, what evidence basis his Department used to determine that metal detecting could continue in public outdoor spaces but not on privately owned land during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Guidance on searching for archaeological finds in England during Covid-19 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-searching-for-archaeological-finds-in-england-during-covid-19>) on the gov.uk website explains how the legal restrictions in force in England from 5 November under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions)(England) (No. 4) Regulations 2020 impact the activity of metal detecting. In particular, the guidance outlines the effect of the restriction on leaving home without reasonable excuse (under regulation 5), and the exception to that restriction (in regulation 6(2)(d)) which permits a person to visit a "public outdoor place" for the purposes of open air recreation." The definition of a "public outdoor place" for this purpose does not include privately owned land to which the general public does not have access.

■ Outdoor Recreation

Robert Halfon:

[118513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government provides support to Parkrun.

Nigel Huddleston:

Initiatives such as parkrun have had an important impact in driving participation in physical activity and in helping people, particularly those from under-represented groups such as women, disabled people and people from some lower socio-economic groups, to be more physically active.

Sport England, the lead organisation with responsibility for grassroots sport in England, awarded parkrun £3 million in December 2018 over a three-year period (2018-21) to increase participation in sport and physical activity.

An additional £60,000 was provided in March this year, to encourage more women to take part in parkrun events as part of International Women's Day. Sport England have also supported parkrun across the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a flexible use of funding to support them through the crisis and have worked with them on the safe return of grassroots sport.

■ Sports: Coronavirus**Sajid Javid:****[114137]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the rate of transmission of covid-19 of the public health requirement that (a) golf courses and (b) tennis clubs must temporarily close during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

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 the first period of enhanced national restrictions and why we opened up grassroots sport and leisure facilities as soon as it was safe to do so.

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However, as the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions will end on Wednesday 2 December and gyms and the wider leisure sector including golf courses and tennis clubs can reopen across all tiers.

Ruth Cadbury:**[116511]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) tennis, (b) golf and (c) other outdoor single sports can resume safely after the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Nigel Huddleston:

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However, as the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions will end on Wednesday 2 December and gyms and the wider leisure sector including golf courses and tennis clubs can reopen across all tiers.

Julie Elliott:

[119234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to support the safe return of (a) badminton, (b) table tennis, (c) squash, (d) basketball, (e) netball, (f) volleyball and (g) other indoor sports after the end of the national covid-19 lockdown restrictions that commenced in November 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sport and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus. As the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions will end on Wednesday 2 December and grassroots sport can resume in all tiers. This is providing social distancing remains in place, although there will be some restrictions on highest-risk activity in tier three areas.

In tier one areas indoor sports can take place within the rule of six. This will mean people from different households could play 3 on 3 volleyball, or four people from different households could play doubles tennis or badminton. Group activities such as training sessions and exercise classes can take place in larger numbers, provided that people are in separate groups (up to 6 people) which do not mix.

In tier two areas, indoor sport can take place within households, and people can take part in group activity like exercise classes as long as there is no mixing between households. People can play certain sports which do not involve close proximity or physical contact against one person from another household, such as a singles tennis match or badminton match.

In tier three areas, indoor sport will be restricted to within your household only, and there should be no group activity such as exercise classes.

Further details are to be announced imminently.

Jo Stevens:

[119268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the Sport Winter Survival Package will be provided as (a) grants and (b) loans.

Nigel Huddleston:

The mix of loans and grants will be driven by need and the ability to repay. The allocations announced on Tuesday 19 November 2020 were preliminary allocations made on a needs based assessment process, and reflect the submissions made from the individual sports. According to these initial allocations, we expect about £250m of the £300m funding to be loans, with the rest being grants. The funding process will be overseen by an independent decision-making board and supported by Sport England: the proportion of grants to loans will only be finalised once that decision-making process is complete.

Jo Stevens:[\[119270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional funding his Department has received from the Treasury to fund the Sport Winter Survival Package.

Nigel Huddleston:

The £300m Sport Winter Survival Package announced by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will be fully funded by the Treasury.

■ Sports: Females

Fay Jones:[\[119390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he will take to maintain levels of women's participation in exercise during further covid-19 lockdowns.

Nigel Huddleston:

I am keen that we continue to maintain the focus on women's sport and build on the fantastic progress made in recent years. We recognise that Covid-19 has brought new challenges to the way people are able to engage in physical activity. We welcome initiatives like Sport England's This Girl Can campaign which has inspired 3.9 million women to take part since its launch in 2015 and their "Join the Movement" campaign which is encouraging everyone to stay active during the lockdown.

We are determined to get more women and girls active. That is why in June I met with sports bodies and Women in Sport to ask about their plans for promoting women's sport including increasing women and girls participation. I'm happy to say there was a real shared commitment amongst sports to protect investment in women's sport and promote its growth. The new local restriction tier arrangements coming into force from 2 December in England should also mean that there will be greater options for how people can be physically active, from going to the gym to using sports facilities, to taking part in organised sport.

■ Tennis: Coronavirus

Ruth Cadbury:[\[116510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support tennis clubs during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support, which many sport clubs have benefited from. An income scheme announced in July by the Secretary of State for Local Government, aims to support local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of

income from sales, fees and charge which they had reasonably budgeted for. On 22 October, the Government announced a £100m support fund for local authority leisure centres. In addition, Sport England have provided over £220million as a package of support to help the sport and physical activity sector through this crisis. Part of this figure is the Community Emergency Fund of £35 million specifically to help community clubs and local physical activity organisations through the pandemic.

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

■ Youth Investment Fund

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[117944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his timeframe is for making available funding from the Youth Investment Fund; and what discussions he has had with the Prime Minister on that timeframe.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[117945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for (a) young people and (b) the youth sector of not allocating Youth Investment funding in the next three to six months.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[117946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress he has made on the timeframe for allocating Youth Investment funding; and if he will publish that timeframe.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[117947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Prime Minister on the approval and allocation of the £500 million Youth Investment Fund.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[117948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to include the Youth Investment Fund in his November 2020 spending review; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on (a) young people and (b) the youth sector of excluding that fund from his spending plans.

Mr John Whittingdale:

In the recently announced Spending Review £30m of capital investment was committed for 2021-22 as the first tranche of the Youth Investment Fund. This will provide a transformational investment in new and refurbished safe spaces for young people, so they can access support youth workers, and positive activities out of school, including sport and culture. Further details of the timetable for allocation will be announced in due course.

Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and the youth services that support them. A £16.5m

Youth Covid-19 Support Fund has been announced which will protect the immediate future of grassroots and national youth organisations across the country.

The funding will be allocated from the Government's unprecedented £750 million package of support which is benefiting tens of thousands of frontline charities, so they can continue their vital work. More than £60 million of this package has already been provided to organisations working with vulnerable children and young people.

EDUCATION

■ Adult Education

Colleen Fletcher:

[119257]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding from the public purse has been made available for adult education courses in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last ten years.

Gillian Keegan:

The adult education budget (AEB) is not allocated to specific geographies. The department allocates the AEB to individual providers who, under the current freedoms and flexibility policy, are able to use their funds to support any English learners in line with the funding rules set each year.

We publish our allocations by training provider. These can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/19-funding-allocations#supporting-documents>. This data relates to training providers and is therefore not a measure of allocation to residents within Coventry or the West Midlands.

From 1 August 2019, part of the AEB was devolved to 6 mayoral combined authorities and the Greater London Authority. These authorities are now responsible for funding and allocating adult education provision for learners who are resident in their areas.

■ Adult Education: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson:

[118104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that people have access to flexible adult learning courses during the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department wants to ensure that a wide range of opportunities are available to adults to meet their future skills needs.

We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), worth £1.34 billion in the 2020-21 financial year. The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship, or further learning. Our funding rules allow for flexibility in course delivery, and providers already offer shorter/more flexible courses. More information

about the AEB is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2019-to-2020>.

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee recently announced by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, the department is launching skills bootcamps, which will be available in 6 areas across the country. The bootcamp training courses will provide valuable skills based on employer demand and are linked to real job opportunities, helping participants to get jobs, and employers to fill much-needed vacancies. The department is planning to expand the bootcamps to more of the country from spring 2021, and we want to extend this model to include other technical skills training. More information about the launch of skills bootcamps is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-expansion-of-post-18-education-and-training-to-level-up-and-prepare-workers-for-post-covid-economy>.

In April 2020, the department introduced the Skills Toolkit, an online platform providing free courses to help individuals build the skills that are most sought after by employers. We have recently expanded the platform so that people can now choose from over 70 courses, covering digital, adult numeracy, employability, and work readiness skills, which have been identified as the skills employers need the most. These courses will help people stay in work, or take up new jobs and opportunities. More information about the Skills Toolkit is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-free-online-learning-platform-to-boost-workplace-skills>.

Through our lifelong loan entitlement, the department will also make it easier for adults and young people to study more flexibly. This will allow people to space out their studies across their lifetimes, transfer credits between colleges and universities, and enable more part-time study.

■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Layla Moran:

[119360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2020 to Question 909081, how many education settings in the lateral flow covid-19 testing pilot for schools are in (a) Oxford West and Abingdon constituency, (b) Oxfordshire and (c) England; and in which schools those pilots are planned to take place.

Nick Gibb:

Pilots have begun in a small number of schools and colleges using new Lateral Flow Devices that deliver a fast, on-site result. This will help us better understand how this new technology can be operationalised to protect those at high risk, find COVID-19 cases, and help enable us to go back to as normal a way of life as possible.

Schools currently involved in the pilots are located in: Poole, Lewisham, Salisbury, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kent, Blackburn with Darwen, Newcastle upon Tyne, Manchester, Birmingham, and West Sussex. There are currently no pilots taking place in educational settings in Oxfordshire.

■ Nurseries: Finance

Theresa Villiers: [\[119183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to extend supplementary funding for maintained nursery schools to cover the 2021-22 financial year.

Theresa Villiers: [\[119184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to include in his next tranche of supplementary funding maintained nursery schools in boroughs that were not included in his Department's most recent supplementary funding for early years settlement.

Theresa Villiers: [\[119185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to include maintained nursery schools in boroughs which were not included in his Department's supplementary funding for such schools in a long term funding settlement for maintained nursery schools.

Vicky Ford:

Maintained nursery schools (MNS) are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services, especially in disadvantaged areas. The government announced on 24 August that up to £23 million of supplementary funding will be provided to local authorities, to enable them to continue protecting the funding of MNS during the summer term in 2021.

This government remains committed to the long-term funding of MNS, and any reform to the way they are funded will be accompanied by appropriate funding protections.

The department has secured a continuation of around £60 million of supplementary funding for MNS in the 2021-22 financial year, as part of this Spending Review. The department continues to consider what is required to ensure a clear, long-term picture of funding for all MNS, including those in Barnet. We will say more about this soon.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [\[119320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact on early years providers of his Department's plans to base early years entitlement funding for the spring term 2021 on the January 2021 census.

Vicky Ford:

I refer the hon. Member for Hampstead and Kilburn to the answer I gave on 5 October 2020, to question [97657](#).

Further details of our plans for funding in the spring term 2021 will be announced as soon as possible.

■ Pupils: Disability**Vicky Foxcroft:****[117305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many disabled pupils are being educated in mainstream schools in England; and whether his Department holds data on the (a) impairment, (b) age, (c) sex and (d) ethnic background of those pupils.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[117306]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many disabled pupils are being educated in non-mainstream schools in England; and whether his Department holds data on the (a) impairment, (b) age, (c) sex and (d) ethnic background of those pupils.

Vicky Ford:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The department collects and publishes information on the numbers of children with special educational needs (SEN), which covers all types of SEN. Data can be broken down by type of school (including special), type of primary need, age, sex and ethnicity. The information is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>.

We do not collect data on which pupils have a disability. SEN is the main focus of our data collection and dissemination in relation to children and young people, as our policy is to focus efforts on the impact of conditions (some of which are disabilities) on the educational experience of the individual and how barriers to their learning and participation in education can be removed.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[117307]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the educational outcomes of disabled pupils leaving mainstream schools in England.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[117308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the educational outcomes of disabled pupils leaving non-mainstream schools in England.

Vicky Ford:

We do not collect data on which pupils have a disability. Special Educational Needs (SEN) is the main focus of our data collection and dissemination in relation to children and young people, as our policy is to focus efforts on the impact of conditions (some of which are disabilities) on the educational experience of the individual and how barriers to their learning and participation in education can be removed.

The department publishes data on attainment outcomes of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in state-funded schools. The national characteristics tables contain breakdowns by type of SEN which includes breakdowns for pupils with certain types of disability. This information is in the summary tables in the national characteristics tables: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-4-performance-2019-revised>.

The department publishes data on post key stage 4 destination outcomes of pupils leaving state-funded special schools and state-funded mainstream schools. The data contains additional breakdowns by type of SEN.

The latest statistical release can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-destination-measures>.

■ Remote Education: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes: [119308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 113607 on Remote Education: Coronavirus, what estimate his Department has made of (a) the number of devices reallocated from London schools to schools outside of London and (b) the number of students affected by that decision.

Helen Hayes: [119309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to next publish detailed data, by (a) region and (b) local authority, on the allocation of (i) devices and (ii) 4G broadband provided to schools to support students who are required to learn remotely during the covid-19 outbreak.

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, over 100,000 of these have been delivered to schools.

Laptops and tablets are owned by the local authority, trust or school who can lend unused laptops and tablets to children and young people who need them most. Once pupils who have been self-isolating return to school, schools can choose to reallocate devices if other pupils experience disruption to face-to-face education due to COVID-19.

In the context of significant global demand, the Department has updated its allocation process to more accurately align orders with the number of disadvantaged pupils schools typically have self-isolating, ensuring as many children as possible benefit from receiving a device this term.

The Department recognises that levels of self-isolation may be higher in different areas of the country and that face-to-face education is being prioritised in all eventualities. Where schools need additional devices, they should contact the Department's service team at: covid.technology@education.gov.uk.

This more targeted approach will mean that as many schools and disadvantaged children as possible benefit from receiving a device in the event that their face-to-face

education is disrupted. Further data on the number of devices distributed will be released this term.

■ Schools: Computers

Hilary Benn:

[119172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason the allocation of laptops to St Patrick's Catholic Primary School in Leeds in response to the covid-19 outbreak was reduced from 19 to four; and if he will make a statement on how the allocation of such laptops relates to the needs of pupils in individual schools.

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

In the context of significant global demand, the Department has updated its allocation process to more accurately align orders with the number of pupils schools typically have self-isolating, ensuring as many pupils as possible benefit from receiving a device this term. We recognise that levels of self-isolation may be higher in different areas of the country and that face to face education is being prioritised in all eventualities.

This more targeted approach will mean as many schools and disadvantaged pupils as possible benefit from receiving a device in the event that their face to face education is disrupted.

Where schools need additional devices for disadvantaged pupils, they should contact the Department's service team at covid.technology@education.gov.uk.

These laptops and tablets are an injection of support to help local authorities, academy trusts and schools to provide access to remote education and online social care. Local authorities, academy trusts and schools are responsible for distributing the laptops and tablets and are best placed to know which pupils need access to a device.

The laptops and tablets are owned by the local authority, trust or school, who can lend unused laptops and tablets to pupils who need them most if they experience disruption to face to face education due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Schools: Coronavirus**Kate Green:** [119231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information his Department holds on the number of clinically extremely vulnerable (a) teachers and (b) support staff.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The annual school workforce census provides data on school staff characteristics and although we collect sickness absence data, it does not record their health status. The latest school workforce census data can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england#dataBlock-465b74eb-234a-418d-b240-b678afa06e66-tables>.

Schools: Transport**Colleen Fletcher:** [119258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department provides to help children with disabilities travel to and from school.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 508B of the Education Act 1996 to make travel arrangements to enable all eligible children of compulsory school age to attend their nearest suitable school. This includes those who live beyond the statutory walking distance (2 miles for children under the age of 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over) and those whose special educational needs, disability or mobility problem mean they could not reasonably be expected to walk to the school. Local authorities spend more than £600 million every year on transport for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Department has allocated more than £70 million to local transport authorities (LTA), enabling them to increase dedicated home to school and college transport capacity over the autumn term. LTAs have flexibility in how they use this funding to meet the needs of local families.

The Government has provided £4.6 billion of funding to support councils through the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding is un-ringfenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major COVID-19 service pressures in their local area.

Students: Coronavirus**Emma Hardy:** [119344]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to publish a plan for a managed student return to universities at the start of 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

Following the end of term break, our top priority for January 2021 will be the welfare of students, staff, and the communities around higher education providers. We are looking to utilise mass testing to make the return to higher education as safe as possible, and will provide further guidance in due course, considering future developments and the relevant scientific advice.

■ Union Learning Fund**Dan Jarvis:**[\[119247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the ending of the Union Learning Fund from April 2021 on (a) workers affected by covid-19 and (b) the Government's policy on reducing regional inequality.

Gillian Keegan:

The main impact COVID-19 has had on the economy and workforce has been a rise in unemployment. We need to help these people reskill where necessary and re-enter into employment. The Union Learning Fund operates mostly through larger employers within unionised parts of the economy and is not designed to help those out of work – only 11% of people supported via the Union Learning Fund are unemployed.

The decision to no longer support the Union Learning Fund after 31 March 2021 was taken as part of the wider Spending Review discussions and in light of our expanded commitment to skills development through the £2.5 million National Skills Fund, and Lifetime Skills Guarantee. This national fund will support individuals to get the training and qualifications they need wherever they are located and regardless of whether they are able to access the Unionlearn network.

As part of this expanded commitment, I can confirm all the money will be invested in skills and retraining that will be accessible to all.

■ Universities: Coronavirus**Barbara Keeley:**[\[117969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Office for Students on (a) the level of in-person teaching provided by universities and (b) the value for money for student of university teaching during the covid-19 outbreak.

Marco Longhi:[\[118118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that university students receive high-quality teaching following the reduction in their average direct contact time and limited online teaching.

Michelle Donelan:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State of Education, and I hold regular meetings with the Office for Students (OfS) leadership. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, these meetings have also involved regularly reviewing and monitoring the

impact of COVID-19 on teaching and assessment, including the level of in-person teaching provided by universities and the value for money that students are receiving. I have consistently made it clear to the OfS that quality and standards must be maintained.

As I set out in a letter to MPs on 9 October and in a letter to Vice-Chancellors on 2 November, the government's clear and stated expectation is that, whether higher education providers are delivering face-to-face, online or blended provision, they must continue delivering a high quality academic experience that helps all students achieve qualifications that they and employers value. If there are concerns, the OfS has the powers to act. The OfS has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected.

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

The OfS has published information for HE providers, providing practical guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high quality academic experience. The OfS will keep this guidance under review to ensure it remains relevant to the developing circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has also published a series of guides to support providers to secure academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The OfS is taking very seriously the potential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on teaching and learning and is regularly engaging with all registered HE providers. It is actively monitoring those providers which have moved provision predominantly online due to COVID-19 restrictions to ensure that they maintain the quality of their provision, that it is accessible for all and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change throughout the year.

The OfS is also following up directly with HE providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of teaching on offer. The OfS is also requiring HE providers to report to them when they are not able to deliver a course or award a qualification. If the OfS has concerns, it will investigate further.

Students have rights under consumer law that they can rely on if they are dissatisfied with their HE provider's response to COVID-19. In the first instance, students should speak to their provider to see if they can resolve their issue. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns. If a student at a provider in

England or Wales is not satisfied with their provider's final response, they should go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, which has published guidance on this issue.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[909312\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure that farmers continue to receive financial support after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

In our 2019 manifesto we promised to maintain the current annual budget to farmers for the lifetime of this parliament. When we made this commitment in 2019, the total farm support provided to Welsh farmers that year was £337 million. For 2021/22, the UK government have therefore provided new exchequer funding on top of the remaining £95 million of EU funding to ensure that £337 million of support continues to go to Welsh farmers this year.

Rob Roberts:

[\[909314\]](#)

What steps he is taking to support farmers.

Victoria Prentis:

The Agriculture Act will enable us to transform the way we support farmers. Our new policy will be centred around support aimed at incentivising sustainable farming practices. We will support farmers to produce high quality and nutritious food in a more sustainable way, improve transparency in the supply chain and help farmers to reduce their costs and improve their profitability. We will also help those who want to retire or leave the industry to do so with dignity and create new opportunities and support for new entrants coming into the industry.

In our 2019 manifesto we promised to maintain the current annual budget to farmers for the lifetime of this parliament. When we made this commitment in 2019, the total farm support provided to Welsh farmers that year was £337 million. For 2021/22, the UK government have therefore provided new exchequer funding on top of the remaining £95 million of EU funding to ensure that £337 million of support continues to go to Welsh farmers this year.

■ Floods: Insurance

Emma Hardy:

[\[909307\]](#)

What recent steps he has taken to increase the (a) affordability and (b) accessibility of flood insurance.

Rebecca Pow:

The Flood Re scheme has helped thousands of householders affected by flooding, increasing availability of insurance from 9% to 99%. Our Flood and Coastal Erosion

Risk Management Policy Statement sets out our intention to publish a consultation on some changes to improve Flood Re's efficiency and effectiveness. The independent review of flood insurance in Doncaster, commissioned by Government, was published on 5 November. We are considering the 12 recommendations and will respond in due course.

■ **Incinerators: Wales**

Stephen Doughty: [\[909309\]](#)

What assessment he has made of recent trends in the volume of (a) residential and (b) commercial waste transported from other parts of the UK to Wales for incineration.

Rebecca Pow:

Waste is a devolved matter. The data on waste treated in Wales by incineration would be held by the Welsh Government. No such assessment has been made by this Department.

■ **Peat Bogs: Special Protection Areas**

Sarah Olney: [\[119328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the proposed timescale is for bringing forward legislation to phase out the burning of peatland in protected areas.

Sarah Olney: [\[119329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the planned timescale is for the complete phase-out of the burning of peatland in protected areas.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has always been clear of the need to phase out burning of protected blanket bogs to conserve these vulnerable habitats. We are currently looking at how legislation could achieve this and considering the next steps. Real progress is being made in promoting sustainable alternatives. We have urged landowners to adopt these and continue to work with them constructively.

The Government is committed to phasing out rotational burning. We recognise the debate on both sides, and we are considering all the evidence to ensure that any legislation is effective. The considerations are complex and it is important that we take the right steps to restore and protect this valuable habitat. We will set out further plans for peatland restoration and protection in the England Peat Strategy which will be published in due course.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Azerbaijan: Football****Jonathan Edwards:****[119219]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the (a) Football Association of Wales and (b) UEFA on the (i) suitability of Baku as a host location for the European Football Championships in summer 2021 and (b) safety of the Welsh (A) team and (B) fans whilst in Azerbaijan.

Wendy Morton:

The safety of sports teams and fans travelling is paramount and for this reason we keep our travel advice under constant review. We urge anyone considering travel to consult our advice before doing so. We are also in regular contact with the Football Association of Wales (FAW) and with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan, including in preparation for last year's successful visit of the Welsh National Team to Baku for a Euro qualifier. However, it is for the Football Association of Wales to make the decision about whether the Welsh Team play in Baku.

■ Belarus: Sanctions**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:****[118596]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is taking steps to extend the sanctions list to (a) people responsible for violence in Belarus and (b) institutions which are assisting or funding the Belarusian regime.

Wendy Morton:

On 29 September, the UK, with Canada, implemented sanctions on Alexander Lukashenko, his son and six other members of the Belarusian senior leadership under the Global Human Rights sanctions regime for serious human rights violations linked to the presidential election in August. We welcomed the EU's decision to impose sanctions on other linked officials and will transfer the existing EU Belarus sanctions regime into an autonomous UK sanctions regime at the end of the Transition Period. We remain concerned by the situation in Belarus and will consider future designations carefully, guided by the evidence and objectives of the sanctions regime.

■ Egypt: Detainees**Mr David Jones:****[119190]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Egyptian authorities on the detention of Mohamed Bashir, Karim Ennarah and Gasser Abdel-Razek.

James Cleverly:

The UK is deeply concerned about the arrest of Gasser Abdel Razek, Mohammed Basheer and Karim Ennarah. We continue to raise our concerns with the Egyptian

authorities both in London and in Cairo. All human rights defenders should be able to work without fear of arrest or reprisals. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue directly with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November. We are working closely with partners in the international community who share our concerns.

■ **Harry Dunn**

Lisa Nandy:

[\[115626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he held discussions with President-elect of the US Joe Biden on the death of Harry Dunn on 10 November 2020.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 19 November 2020]: Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have repeatedly raised this case with the US Administration and the UK will continue to press the US to ensure justice is done on behalf of Harry's family. We will raise it with the new administration when they are in office.

■ **Hussien Amaadour**

Alex Sobel:

[\[119361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Moroccan counterpart on the attendance of (a) family, (b) Sahrawi people and (c) international human rights activists at the appearance of the Saharawi prisoner, Houssien Bachir Brahim Amaadour, before the Court of Appeal in Marrakesh on 21 October 2020.

James Cleverly:

Support for human rights and human rights activists is a priority around the world, including in Morocco, and we raise human rights issues with the Moroccan Government accordingly.

■ **Iran: Terrorism**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[119182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the Sunday Times report of 15 November 2020 on the Belgium's security authorities' allegations that the Iranian Government were involved in a bomb plot to attack a conference of Iranian dissidents in 2018.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the trial of four Iranians in Belgium in relation to the 2018 plot against a conference in Paris. We are deeply concerned about the plot, and particularly that an Iranian diplomat may be involved with the incident. While the legal process is ongoing, however, it would be inappropriate to comment further and we have not made specific representations to the Iranian Government. The UK strongly condemns the targeting of civilians and welcomes steps taken to hold those

responsible to account. We continue to work closely with our European partners on security and counter-terrorism issues. We are not aware at this stage of a link to the UK.

■ Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

Layla Moran:

[\[119358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK's licensing of arms sales to Saudi Arabia on the (a) peace process and (b) humanitarian situation in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and every licence application is rigorously assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export licensing Criteria. We will not issue any export licences where to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria. We will not issue any export licences when there is a clear risk of a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law.

We fully support the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, and urge the parties to engage constructively with him. A political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian situation is dire, especially given the risk of famine. The UK has shown extensive leadership in response, committing £200 million in aid this financial year, which takes our total commitment to over £1 billion since the conflict began in 2015.

■ Turks and Caicos Islands: Nature Conservation

Alicia Kearns:

[\[117386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps are being taken to protect the (a) barking gecko and (b) other species endemic to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is providing technical advice and support to the Overseas Territories, including the Turks and Caicos Islands, to increase their capacity in dealing with the very real threats posed by invasive non-native species affecting biodiversity and endemic species such as the barking gecko and Turks and Caicos rock iguana.

Through the Darwin Plus funding scheme, UK funding has been used to support a project protecting the critically endangered Turks and Caicos rock iguana. This project addresses the need for effective biosecurity plans for two offshore islands in the Turks and Caicos Islands where there is an urgent need to protect threatened native wildlife, particularly globally important reptile populations, against invasive species. One of the project's key achievements is the stabilisation of the iguana population, leading to the reptile being downlisted on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List from Critically Endangered to Endangered in 2019.

■ Yahya Iaaza**Alex Sobel:**[\[119362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Moroccan counterpart on the treatment of the Sahrawi prisoner, Yahya Mohamed Elhafed Iaaza, in Bouzairkarn Prison in Southern Morocco.

James Cleverly:

Support for human rights is a priority around the world, including in Morocco, and we raise human rights issues with the Moroccan Government accordingly.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Cancer: Coronavirus****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[100907\]](#)

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

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 13 October 2020]: 'We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/2021 – action for us all' sets out actions to support transformation across the whole National Health Service, including the following commitment on the cancer workforce:

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

■ Contact Tracing: Contracts for Services**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[114070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will list the private companies that tendered for the contract to run the Government's covid-19 contact-tracing system in England.

Helen Whately:

The contracts awarded to Serco and Sitel to provide non-National Health Service call handling services for the contact tracing initiative were direct awards under Lot 2 of Crown Commercial Service's Contact Centre Services framework. Serco and Sitel are approved suppliers on this framework contract having gained their places through fair and open competition via an Official Journal of the European Union procurement.

All suppliers on Lot 2 were engaged in order to ascertain capabilities to meet the contract output specifications. The contracts were awarded based on consideration of

available capacity; mobilisation and set up time; the ability to work jointly with other suppliers to provide a solution of this scale; and ensuring value for money.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Julian Sturdy:

[113077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on public health of the November 2020 lockdown restrictions in England.

Julian Sturdy:

[113078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on public health of any extension of the November 2020 lockdown restrictions in England beyond 2 December 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Nationwide restrictions came into force in England on 5 November. A typical new infection takes in the region of five days to produce symptoms and time is then required for them to request and take a test, and for the results to be processed. There is a further delay before changes in infection numbers become apparent in hospitalisation and death statistics. It is therefore too early to measure the impact of the new restrictions on COVID-19 levels in England, as current data will be reflective of infections occurring before those restrictions came into force.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre is developing methodology to measure the effectiveness of these restrictions once sufficient time has elapsed for any impact to be apparent in data sources.

Emma Hardy:

[96176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to publish updated guidance for (a) Narcotics Anonymous and (b) other mutual aid groups on holding face-to-face meetings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

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

The revised guidance is available at the following link:

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

The Government keeps the situation under review and will amend the guidance as necessary to reflect the latest position.

■ Coronavirus: Laboratories**Darren Henry:** [91165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to use (a) universities, (b) businesses and (c) other private laboratories to increase covid-19 testing and lab capacity; and whether he has fast-tracked private medical laboratory accreditation for that purpose.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: Pillar 2 uses Lighthouse laboratories and has partnership arrangements with public, private and academic sector laboratories. The United Kingdom's daily COVID-19 testing capacity passed the 500,000 mark on 31 October. Testing capacity in the UK across all pillars between 29 October and 4 November was at 4,367,049 tests, an increase of 21% compared to the previous week.

■ Coronavirus: Newcastle upon Tyne**Chi Onwurah:** [102802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 12 October 2020, official report, column 55, on covid-19 update, what proportion of transmissions in Newcastle he estimates have taken place among (a) university students and (b) the rest of the community in each week for which data is available; and on which data that estimate is based.

Helen Whately:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Caroline Lucas:** [86628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will deliver a national communication message on the availability of Pillar 2 testing for covid-19 with (a) clear and (b) comprehensive lines to enable local Strategic Coordinating Groups to promote that testing; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The statistics for National Health Service Test and Trace in England and coronavirus testing in the United Kingdom are publicly available each week at the following link:

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

Daily reports are sent to regional convenors and local authorities which cover the booking capacity of all local, regional and mobile test units. Additionally, from 12 October, we will include the utilisation of each test site. Local authorities and strategic partners also receive up to date messaging from the Department to promote testing locally, encouraging those with symptoms to book a test.

John Spellar:

[\[92627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of supplies of reagents for covid-19 testing; and what steps he is taking to secure supplies of those reagents.

Helen Whately:

Thanks to our world-leading scientists and clinicians, we have now been able to fast-track a new biological reagent to help the United Kingdom and countries across the globe carry out even more tests and develop ever more accurate ways of diagnosing the virus.

Sir Alan Campbell:

[\[92704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for a follow up test for people testing positive for covid-19 in PCR tests in Pillar 2 settings.

Helen Whately:

For standard PCR tests for symptomatic people, there is no need or requirement to have a follow up test.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[114794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of (a) moving high risk and vulnerable adults under the age of 65 higher up the list of priority groups for covid-19 vaccination and (b) undertaking individual assessments for people who are extremely vulnerable to determine whether they could benefit from early vaccination.

Jo Churchill:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who provide advice to Government on which vaccine(s) the UK should use, and which groups within the population to prioritise. The JCVI and the JCVI sub-committee are currently reviewing evidence on clinical risk factors associated with serious disease and mortality from COVID-19. Following a review of the evidence, the Committee will develop advice on risk groups for any future COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Olivia Blake:

[\[115849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will reassess the groups of people on the covid-19 vaccine priority list to give higher priority to people who are shielding but for whom the vaccine would not put them at a higher additional risk as determined by a consultant.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 November 2020]: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who provide advice to the Government on which vaccine(s) the United Kingdom should use and which groups to prioritise.

The Committee, in their interim advice - have advised that the vaccine first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 years old and health and social care workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and clinical risk factors in the initial phase. The prioritisation could change substantially if the first available vaccines were not considered suitable for, or effective in, older adults.

The JCVI and the JCVI sub-committee are currently reviewing evidence on clinical risk factors associated with serious disease and mortality from COVID-19. Following a review of the evidence, the Committee will develop advice on risk groups for any future COVID-19 vaccination programme.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Alison Thewliss:

[\[116545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the value of healthy start vouchers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 November 2020]: The Government announced on 8 November 2020 that the Healthy Start voucher value will increase from £3.10 to £4.25 in England from April 2021. This will provide additional support to pregnant women and families on lower incomes to make healthy food choices.

The Scottish Government has its own devolved Best Start Food Scheme which was launched on 12 August 2019 to replace Healthy Start for people living in Scotland. The devolution and transition to the Scottish Best Start Foods Scheme was completed on the 31 March 2020.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[116589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, will he make an assessment of the potential merits of standardising the number of in vitro fertilization cycles funded by English clinical commissioning groups for each fertility patient.

Helen Whately:

The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment, is a matter for local healthcare commissioners. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services including fertility services that meet the needs of their whole population.

In respect of National Health Service fertility services, the Government have been consistently clear that we expect CCGs to commission fertility services in line with recommendations in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) fertility guidelines, so that there is equal access across England. The NICE fertility guidelines are evidence-based and represent national best-practice for clinicians to achieve the most effective treatment.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation: LGBT People

Ian Mearns:

[\[117978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his speech at the PinkNews summer reception on 4 July 2019, when his Department intends to (a) complete and (b) publish the review into IVF treatment equality for all, including the LGBT community.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 24 November 2020]: The internal review of National Health Service fertility services has been delayed due to prioritisation issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. We expect the review to be commissioned and report in 2021.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Derek Twigg:

[\[109171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent advice the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation provided to his Department on the expansion of eligibility for flu vaccination to people aged over 50.

Jo Churchill:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) considered the expansion of the flu vaccination programme at a meeting on 6 July 2020. The JCVI was supportive of extending vaccination to adults aged between 50 and 64 years of age, starting at the oldest age groups as a temporary measure for the 2020/21 influenza season.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[114132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of flu vaccines to community pharmacies; when he plans to contact people in the 50 to 64 age group on getting a flu vaccination; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

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. Community pharmacists who have exhausted their own supply are now able to order from this central stock.

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.

Fifty to 64 year olds who do not fall within an at-risk eligible cohort will be invited to receive a free vaccination from 1st December.

■ NHS: Coronavirus**Ian Lavery:** [\[51982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of NHS frontline staff have (a) been tested for covid-19, (b) tested positive for covid-19 and (c) died from covid-19.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold data in the format requested.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Housing****Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[118022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 November 2020 to Question 110853, on the rapid review of initial accommodation for asylum seekers, if (a) all information and data collected on asylum seekers is treated as confidential and will be anonymised before handed to the Home Office, and (b) participants are given access to legal advice and representation throughout the process.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[118023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 November 2020 to Question 110853 on the internal review on initial accommodation for asylum seekers, if her Department will publish (a) the report in full, (b) the date at the end of the month when the summary of recommendations will be publicly available, and (c) the sites chosen for the review.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office is reviewing the recommendations of the rapid review and, as previously stated, will seek to publish a summary of the recommendations. We will also hold round tables with stakeholders to discuss the recommendations, actions taken and proposed next steps.

Asylum seekers' views were sought as part of the review process. Participation was entirely voluntary and confidential. These views fed into the overall findings and recommendations. No identifying or confidential information was shared with the Home Office.

■ Asylum: Penally**Liz Saville Roberts:** [\[119323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has discussed with the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Penally training camp in Pembrokeshire had been regularly used as accommodation continuously during the winter months prior to its conversion as a temporary site for accommodating asylum seekers.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[119324]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what type of heating facilities are in place at the Penally training camp in Pembrokeshire; and what assessment her Department has made of their adequacy.

Chris Philp:

All accommodation provided is required to be safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped, and to comply with relevant national or local housing legislation. These standards apply to all accommodation used by the Home Office including the Ministry of Defence site in Pembrokeshire.

There are electric wall heaters in place in all accommodation blocks and communal areas within Penally.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[119327]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of (a) the health of asylum seekers housed at the Penally training camp site and (b) the effect of that site on their health; and what steps she will take with the Welsh Government to protect and maintain the health and safety of the people housed in that camp.

Chris Philp:

All asylum seekers are subject to an initial screening process by UK Visas and Immigration, which includes health and safeguarding checks. Further checks are also made, to confirm suitability for transfer to the accommodation. On site, accommodation provider staff are available at all times should health concerns arise, with healthcare arrangements in place, linked to local NHS provision.

Additionally, all asylum seekers have access to the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility (AIRE) 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.

We remain in regular contact and committed to working with the Welsh Government and relevant health bodies in respect of the accommodation of asylum seekers at Penally.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[119217]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations her Department has received on the suitability of powers granted to local authorities in order to enforce covid-19 regulations.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not grant powers to local authorities to enforce the covid-19 regulations. The department continues to work across Government and with other partners to ensure the regulations are proportionate and appropriate in the response to the pandemic.

■ Demonstrations: Coronavirus**Sir Charles Walker:**[\[117954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 18 December 2020 to Question 91956, whether people speaking and attending peaceful protests against the (a) autumn 2020 covid-19 lockdown restrictions and (b) Government's use of powers attached to that lockdown can be (i) arrested and (ii) charged with provisions under in the Serious Crime Act 2007 around the commissioning of an offence and incitement; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

Decisions regarding whether to arrest and charge individuals is a matter for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

■ Detainees: Syria**Adam Holloway:**[\[110290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) British citizens and (b) British citizens who had their citizenship revoked are known to have escaped from detention in camps or prisons in northeast Syria since Baghouz fell in March 2019.

James Brokenshire:

The safety and security of Internally Displaced Persons camps and detention centres in northeast Syria is the responsibility of the detaining authority.

The UK's aim is to see that justice and accountability are achieved for all parties and that those who have committed crimes in the name of Daesh are prosecuted for their crimes, in a manner consistent with relevant domestic and international standards.

■ Immigration Controls: Offenders**Karen Bradley:**[\[R\] \[117995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to intercept criminals at the point of entry ahead of the implementation of the Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office takes the issue of preventing foreign criminals entering the UK extremely seriously.

Using advance passenger information Border Force operates an Authority to Carry "No Fly" Scheme. Foreign national offenders previously deported from the UK and individuals excluded from the UK on the grounds that their presence would be non-

conducive to the public good due to their involvement in serious criminality are among those who carriers are refused authority to carry to UK. This action is disrupting criminals from even arriving into UK ports of entry.

In addition to our pre-travel checks every passenger arriving in the UK at passport control is checked in order to identify criminal, security and immigration concerns.. Where we are aware of individuals who pose a risk, Border Force officers can, and do, refuse them entry.

■ Immigration Rules: Religion

Alexander Stafford: [\[117406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with faith leaders in the UK on immigration rules.

Alexander Stafford: [\[117407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to review immigration rules for clergy and other religious people.

Alexander Stafford: [\[117408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of recent changes to Tier 2 and Tier 5 visa rules in relation to clergy and other religious people on the ability of people of religion to enter the UK.

Alexander Stafford: [\[117409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with representatives of the Catholic Church on immigration routes for members of the clergy.

Kevin Foster:

This Government recognises the importance of faith across our communities in the UK and welcomes the value added by members of religious institutions from across the world. This is reflected in the two dedicated immigration arrangements which exist for Ministers of Religion and Religious Workers. These provisions will continue in the future immigration system and be opened to EEA and Swiss nationals.

Faith leaders have a dedicated point of contact within the Department, who regularly engage on such topics to ensure the future immigration system works for the whole of the UK. I have also met with senior figures from the Roman Catholic Church to discuss their thoughts on the migration system.

All immigration routes, including the two dedicated routes for religious organisations, are subject to regular review.

■ Immigration Rules: Sleeping Rough

David Simmonds: [\[92027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to release guidance on the new Immigration Rules that make rough sleeping grounds for

cancelling or refusing permission to be in the UK which are due to be enforced from 1 December 2020.

Chris Philp:

The new Immigration Rules make provision for the refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK on the basis of rough sleeping. The new rule will apply on a discretionary basis to non-EEA nationals from 1 December 2020 and to newly arriving EEA nationals from 1 January 2021. The provision will be used sparingly and only where individuals have repeatedly refused support offers, such as accommodation, and are engaged in persistent anti-social behaviour.

Guidance will be provided for decision-makers to make clear the circumstances in which permission may be cancelled or refused, and this will also be available on GOV.UK when the new provision comes into force.

■ **Immigration: Au Pairs**

Paul Girvan:

[\[117346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what immigration route will apply to au pairs seeking to enter the UK from the EU after January 2021.

Chris Philp:

As has been the case since 2008, the UK's immigration system will not offer a dedicated route for au pairs. However, au pairs are able to use the Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS).

The UK currently operates eight YMS arrangements which are principally designed for cultural exchange. We have indicated our desire to negotiate a Youth Mobility arrangement with the EU, or with individual countries within it, if a collective agreement is not possible.

■ **Military Bases: Folkestone**

Drew Hendry:

[\[119296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on operational transparency of the use of confidentiality agreements issued to volunteers by the contractors running immigration detention operations at the Napier Barracks in Folkestone on behalf of her Department.

Chris Philp:

We have worked closely with our accommodation provider Clearsprings Ready Homes and stakeholders to ensure the Napier site is safe and secure.

Asylum seekers are not being detained at Napier Barracks; it is temporary contingency initial asylum accommodation.

There is no secrecy about our use of Napier as asylum accommodation, but privacy of individuals must be maintained. The accommodation itself is entirely adequate for its purpose, with the same standards applied as for other asylum accommodation. We are taking great care to ensure that we provide safe, secure accommodation and

that everyone has access to the support they need. This includes providing asylum seekers with privacy and confidentiality as would be expected for those seeking sanctuary in the UK where it would be damaging for their identities to be revealed.

■ **Military Bases: Folkestone and Penally**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[119325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of accommodation at (a) Napier Barracks in Folkestone and (b) Penally Training Camp in Pembrokeshire.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[119326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the conditions at Penally training camp on the potential for an outbreak of covid-19 in that facility.

Chris Philp:

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

Risk mitigations include limiting occupancy in dormitories ensuring a minimum distance between beds of at least 2 metres. This is complemented by a range of additional safety measures including increased cleaning of surfaces, availability of hand sanitisers, a track and trace system and communications with residents around covid-19 control measures. Asylum seekers will have the same access to testing as the general population.

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

The Government demands the highest standards from contractors and their accommodation and monitor them closely to ensure this is maintained. All accommodation provided is required to be safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped, and to comply with relevant national or local housing legislation. These standards apply to all accommodation used by the Home Office including the Ministry of Defence sites in Pembrokeshire and Folkestone.

■ **Nitrous Oxide: Misuse**

Jim Shannon:

[\[117256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to prevent the use of nitrous oxide by young people.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government takes the supply of substances for their psychoactive effect very seriously. There are legitimate uses for nitrous oxide, such as in medicine, dentistry and as a propellant for whipped cream canisters, but those who supply nitrous oxide for its recreational use, or who are reckless as to whether it is used for its

psychoactive effect, will be subject to an offence under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. This includes a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment.

The Government has published guidance for retailers to satisfy themselves that they comply with the law, available on the gov.uk website. The guidance recommends that retailers, including those operating online, should pay particular attention to the potential for abuse of nitrous oxide, especially where customers seek to buy in bulk or large volumes, and suggests that retailers may wish to carry out age checks to prevent those at highest risk from gaining access to psychoactive substances.

With regard to the online sale of nitrous oxide, in the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019, the Government committed to develop legislation to improve internet safety for all. This will build on the proposals in last year's Online Harms White Paper, which set out the Government's plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. The Government intends to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems in place to deal with harmful content on their internet services and keep users safe. We are working on a full Government response, which will include more detailed proposals on online harms regulation. The Government will follow the full response by introducing Online Harms legislation when parliamentary time allows.

Schools play a key role in enabling young people to make positive choices about their wellbeing, including resisting drug use. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) became a compulsory subject in schools from September 2020. However, in light of school closures the Department for Education recognises that some schools may not be able to begin teaching the new content until the start of the summer term 2021. Schools have the freedom to ensure the curriculum meets the need of their pupils. This flexibility allows schools to respond to local public health and community issues such as nitrous oxide misuse and adapt material and programmes to suit the needs of pupils.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Independent Expert Panel for the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme: Pay

John Spellar:

[\[119164\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the salary will be for members of the Independent Experts Panel.

Pete Wishart:

Members of the Independent Expert Panel will be paid, monthly in arrears, a fee of £350 (excluding VAT) for each half-day spent by the Panel member in the provision of their services.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing****Danny Kruger:**[\[117397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department provides to community-led housing groups.

Christopher Pincher:

The principal way in which the Government has supported the community-led housebuilding sector in England in recent years was through the Community Housing Fund, making available £163 million in grants over 2018/19 and 2019/20. The Community Housing Fund closed at the end of March. Departmental budgets for 2021/22 have been confirmed at the recent Comprehensive Spending Review and my department will now undertake a process of allocation of budgets to individual programmes. The needs of the community-led housing sector will be taken into consideration alongside the full range of the department's priorities. The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector offers significant potential for helping to meet housing need across England. In addition to helping increase the rate of delivery of new housing, it will help deliver a range of benefits including diversifying the housebuilding sector, improving design and construction quality, and sustaining local communities and local economies. The support and close involvement of the local community enables the community-led approach to secure planning permission and deliver housing that could not be brought forward through mainstream development.

■ Buildings: Insulation**Catherine West:**[\[117328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of his Department having a role in supporting the timely settlement of disputes and claims between building developers and insurance or warranty providers where building safety remediation works are required.

Christopher Pincher:

Matters of liability and any related action are specific to individual buildings and/or claims and the department cannot comment or intervene in any disputes on these. If the dispute is over an unsuccessful warranty claim then an owner may make a complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[119216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations his Department has received on the suitability of powers granted to local authorities in order to enforce covid-19 regulations.

Christopher Pincher:

My department has been working closely with local authorities throughout the coronavirus response and will continue to do so for the winter period. Ministers and officials have been in regular dialogue with local authorities including to discuss enforcement, for example, holding Ministerial Webinars and through an official-level Compliance Working Group.

Joy Morrissey:[\[119378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) golf courses and (b) other naturally covid secure environments will be accessible under the tier system after the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown ends.

Christopher Pincher:

As the Prime Minister set out on 23 November, the current national restrictions are due to end on Wednesday 2 December and gyms and the wider leisure sector, including golf courses and tennis clubs, can reopen across all tiers.

Parks, sports courses and gardens will be open, and organised outdoor sport and physical activity will be allowed under all tiers. For areas in Tier 3 contact activities should be avoided.

Government has produced guidance for owners or operators on managing such facilities.

There are different restrictions with respect to meeting others in an indoor or outdoor setting dependent on which tier an area is in. Owners, operators and the public should consult the latest information on gatherings.

■ Energy Performance Certificates: Private Rented Housing**Sarah Olney:**[\[119332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what reports he has received from the Office for Product Safety and Standards on the role of letting agents in ensuring renters receive energy performance certificates.

Christopher Pincher:

My department has not received any reports from the Office for Product Safety and Standards regarding the role of letting agents in ensuring new tenants are given a copy of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when renting a property.

The responsibility for enforcement of the requirement to provide an EPC when a property is offered for let is set out in the Energy Performance of Buildings (England & Wales) Regulations 2012 ('the Regulations') and is placed on Local Weights and Measures Authorities (LWMAs) in England and Wales.

Government is currently consulting on whether it should seek primary powers to place a requirement on letting agents and online property platforms to only advertise and let domestic properties compliant with the Private Rented Sector Regulations.

■ Green Belt

Joy Morrissey: [\[119383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to guarantee protection of Green Belt land in future legislation.

Joy Morrissey: [\[119384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to protect (a) Beaconsfield and (b) similarly located constituencies from encroachment and urban sprawl.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government continues to prioritise protection for Green Belt. The reforms put forward in our White Paper *Planning for the Future* made clear that local authorities would need to categorise Green Belt as a protected area in the proposed new planning system.

The protections for the Green Belt set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and the strong encouragement to prioritise re-use of suitable brownfield land, will remain in place, in line with our manifesto commitments.

The White Paper consultation closed on 29 October 2020 and we are currently considering the responses received. The Government will publish a response which will set out any decisions and associated proposed implementation.

■ High Rise Flats: Bolton

Emma Hardy: [\[117352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to publish the report on the causes of the fire at the Cube building in Bolton on 15 November 2019.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN 117360 on 23 November 2020.

■ Housing: Construction

Rachel Hopkins: [\[117414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many micro or small to medium-sized house building firms have accessed developer finance through the Homes England and Invest & Fund partnership.

Christopher Pincher:

Homes England's partnership with Invest & Fund supports small builders with construction loans of between £400,000 and £2.5 million, funding schemes of two homes and upwards. The partnership with Invest & Fund launched in September 2020.

Due diligence is currently being undertaken before agreements are made and funds provided. Invest & Fund continue to engage with potential borrowers to assess whether they meet the partnership lending criteria.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[117415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to remove barriers to small to medium-sized firms accessing developer finance in order to assist those firms in building new homes.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government fully recognises the key role small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play in building new homes in this country. My department has put in place a package of funding initiatives, including the £2.5 billion Home Building Fund, which received a £450 million boost in June, and the £1 billion ENABLE Build guarantee scheme. This investment in the sector will help create skilled jobs and drive economic growth whilst our ongoing planning reforms will reduce burdens on SMEs.

■ Local Government: Reorganisation

Tim Farron: [\[119211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimates he has made of the amount of local government (a) time and (b) other resources that will be required to implement the local government reorganisations planned for 2021.

Luke Hall:

Government has invited unitarisation proposals from Cumbria, Somerset and North Yorkshire; councils in these areas have been developing ideas about restructuring local government in their areas for some time, and had requested such invitations. It is right that they should now have the opportunity to make proposals for new unitary councils. If Parliament approves the implementation of any such proposal, it is likely that the new unitary councils would be established from 1 April 2023, and hence most of the implementation work councils will be undertaking will be in 2022/23.

Any reform of an area's local government is most effectively achieved through locally led proposals, put forward by those who best know the area and who are best placed to assess the benefits, including savings as well as resource and implementation requirements.

■ Planning Permission: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney: [\[119330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will extend beyond the 31 December 2020 the deadline as permitted under the Business and Planning Act 2020 for making a meaningful start on projects with planning permission in response to the national covid-19 lockdown which commenced on 5 November 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

The Business and Planning Act 2020, in recognition of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the housebuilding sector, has made provision to extend the duration of unimplemented planning permissions which have lapsed or are due to lapse between 23 March and 31 December 2020. This extension will be to 1 May 2021. The legislation allows for certain dates to be amended by regulations, such as the date for eligible permissions and the extension. The use of these powers is being kept under review.

■ Planning Permission: Local Press**Helen Hayes:**[\[119306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Planning White Paper's proposals to end the statutory requirement to advertise planning notices in local newspapers on the income generated by those local publications.

Christopher Pincher:

The Planning for the Future Consultation was published on 6 August and sets out proposals for comprehensive reform to the English planning system. This package proposes significant changes to both the focus and processes of planning – to secure better outcomes in terms of land for homes, beauty and environmental quality, as well as processes which give greater certainty and speed for communities, councils and developers. At the heart of these reforms is a need to make the planning system simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people.

The use of digital tools is important to be able to standardise and improve the user interface where local people seek to engage in the planning system. It is not a replacement for engagement but is a tool to make this engagement more transparent and more accessible to all parts of communities across England. This is particularly the case for publicity of planning applications where we want to see greater digital coverage, and we will be exploring the best way of doing that as we develop our proposals over the next year. In doing so, we recognise the importance of local newspapers to communities and that there will continue to be a need to reach out to people who cannot digitally access information.

Helen Hayes:[\[119307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of ending the statutory requirement to advertise planning notices in local newspapers on the transparency of the planning system; and what steps he is taking to ensure people who are not digitally literate are informed of planning applications which will affect them.

Christopher Pincher:

The planning reforms set out in the *Planning for the Future White paper* will make it simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with the planning system. The use of digital tools is important to be able to standardise and improve the

user interface where local people seek to engage in the planning system. This is a tool to make community engagement more transparent and more accessible to all communities across England. This is particularly the case for publicity of planning applications where we want to see greater digital coverage, and we will be exploring the best way of doing that as we develop our proposals over the next year. In doing so, we recognise the importance of local newspapers to communities and that there will continue to be a need to reach out to people who cannot digitally access information.

■ Private Roads

Mike Amesbury:

[113218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the need to support residents on unadopted roads who do not have the funds to bring those roads up to the required statutory standard.

Christopher Pincher:

The department has not made an assessment of the need to support for residents on unadopted roads who do not have the funds to bring those roads up to the required statutory standard. Policy decisions regarding the process for local authorities adopting roads are a matter for the Department for Transport.

The Government has no direct role in decisions on whether or not a road will be adopted, however in 2017 the Department for Transport issued an Advice Note covering the means by which a road can be adopted by the highway authority. The Advice Note can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-of-roads-by-highway-authorities.

Under Sections 205-218 of the Highways Act 1980 (known as the 'private street works code'), the highway authority can resolve to make up a private street at any time. However, the cost of doing so is usually met by owners of the properties that front the street concerned. The street may then be adopted by the highway authority. Most local authorities do not make the decision to use the powers in Section 205 to 218 of the 1980 Act unless a high proportion of residents have approached them seeking adoption of the private street and that they understand their obligation to fund all the works necessary.

■ Rented Housing: Coronavirus

Dr Matthew Offord:

[117981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that protections afforded under the Coronavirus Act (2020) to tenants in the private and social rented sectors are not removed without impact assessments being undertaken when covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes legislating through the Coronavirus Act 2020 to delay when landlords can evict tenants, a six month stay on possession proceedings in court and a range of financial support to enable renters to continue paying their living costs, including rental payments. To further protect renters over winter, we legislated in August to increase notice periods to six months in all but the most serious circumstances. This means that most tenants served notice now would not be asked to leave until at least May 2021. These increased notice period requirements will be in place until at least 31 March 2021. Alongside this, the Government has changed the law in England to ensure bailiffs do not enforce evictions over this period of national restrictions or the Christmas period. This means no eviction notices are to be served until 11 January 2021 at the earliest and, given the 14 day notice period required, no evictions are expected until 25 January 2021 at the earliest. The only exceptions to this are the most serious circumstances: illegal occupation, false statement, anti-social behaviour, perpetrators of domestic abuse, where a property is unoccupied following the death of a tenant in relation to housing association tenancies, and extreme rent arrears equivalent to 9 months' rent with any arrears accrued since 23 March discounted. We believe this strikes the right balance between prioritising public health, supporting the most vulnerable renters and ensuring landlords can access and exercise their right to justice. We will continue to keep the need for emergency measures introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020 under review, and will be informed by the latest public health situation and the effect on both tenants and landlords.

■ Social Rented Housing: Construction**Colleen Fletcher:****[119254]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many social housing units have been built in each of the last ten years.

Christopher Pincher:

The number of new build affordable housing by tenure and year can be found in live table 1009, which is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply> .

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Bicycles: Antidumping Duties****Kerry McCarthy:****[119180]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the criteria for determining the application of anti-dumping duties on imported bicycles at the end of the transition period.

Graham Stuart:

In preparation for the end of the transition period, the Department for International Trade assessed whether the EU anti-dumping measure on bicycles should continue to apply after the transition period. This was done through a Call for Evidence process, which was a technical exercise based on objective evidence from businesses, validated through reputable, publicly available sources.

The criteria for the assessment as to whether an existing EU measure, such as the measure on bicycles, should be maintained in the UK were as follows:

- An application for measures to be maintained was received from UK businesses which produce, in the UK, products subject to trade remedies measures.
- The application was supported by UK businesses which produced a sufficient proportion of those products.
- The market share of the UK-based producers of those products was above 1%.

■ Department for International Trade: Email and Telephone Services**Emily Thornberry:****[119199]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, to which unit in her Department hon. Members should refer telephone calls and email messages from companies in their constituencies with problems or queries relating to their UK import and export business from 1 January 2021; and what the (a) contact details and (b) available hours are of that unit.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) provides a wide range of support services to UK exporters and Investors. Where companies have an established relationship with the Department, they should utilise the support of their named account manager.

For generic international trade support, Members should direct constituents to enquiries@trade.gov.uk and +44 (0) 20 7215 5000.

For queries relating to the UK's departure from the EU, constituents should use our Transition Period Enquiry Service. This service can be accessed via – <https://www.great.gov.uk/transition-period/contact/>

Our enquiry services operate from 9am to 5pm (UK Time) with the Transition Period Enquiry Service planning to extend these operating hours as we approach the end of the year.

■ Department for International Trade: Internet and Telephone Services**Emily Thornberry:****[119200]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has to establish a dedicated (a) telephone helpline and (b) online support chat service for individuals and

companies facing logistical problems or tariff rates queries relating to their UK imports and exports from 1 January 2021.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has a telephone helpline for businesses to ask trade-related queries. In December 2018, we established an online support service to help traders to understand the EU Exit and Transition processes and answer questions on DIT policy, including tariffs. Companies should continue to use these resources now and post-1st January 2021 for support to prepare for changes as we leave the Single Market and Customs Union.

This Department is working with Cabinet Office and other departments to ensure traders and hauliers have the right support. In addition to Departmental helplines, Cabinet Office has set up the EU Transition Trader and Industry Forum, which traders and logistics companies can use to ask questions from government officials - <https://transition-forum.service.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>

For logistics companies, the Department for Transport has set up 45 information and advice sites across the country which hauliers can visit if they need advice and support. A list of those sites can be found here- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/haulier-advice-site-locations>

■ **Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees**

Matthew Pennycook:

[119321]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy to place a moratorium on all new support for fossil fuel infrastructure projects through UK Export Finance.

Graham Stuart:

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

■ **Iron and Steel: UK Trade with EU**

Jessica Morden:

[117958]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure an exemption for UK steel producers from the EU's current steel safeguarding quotas.

Graham Stuart:

[Holding answer 24 November 2020]: The Government's priority is to ensure that, at the end of the transition period, domestic industry retains appropriate trade remedy protections. The Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy have engaged closely with the European Commission to secure tariff-free quota allocations for UK steel exports into the EU from 1 January 2021.

■ Trade and Agriculture Commission: Public Appointments**Martyn Day:**[\[909303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the devolved Administrations on the future composition of the Trade and Agriculture Commission.

Greg Hands:

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade is in contact with relevant Cabinet colleagues with regard to the Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC). The Government also works closely with the devolved administrations on all aspects of our trade policy and I have written to my counterparts seeking their views on the Commission.

The TAC will ensure that public and industry interests are protected in Britain's agriculture trade policy.

JUSTICE**■ Members: Correspondence****Justin Madders:**[\[118019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he will respond to my correspondence of (i) 26 October and (ii) 12 November on exemptions to the ban on the enforcement of residential possession orders for empty properties following the death of a tenant; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending that practice to other empty properties.

Chris Philp:

A response has now been sent to your correspondence on exemptions to the ban on the enforcement of residential possession orders for empty properties following the death of a tenant.

On 16 November the Government laid the Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction and Taking Control of Goods) (England) Regulations 2020. From 17 November until 11 January, the Regulations will prevent enforcement agents from enforcing evictions, other than in limited circumstances, in order to protect public health.

It is important that there is a clear, uniform and transparent process for establishing whether one of the exemptions applies. The exemption for unoccupied properties is limited to orders made on the grounds of death of the tenant. This relates to a specific ground for possession under the Housing Act 1988. There is no equivalent ground for abandonment which would give rise to orders for possession and warrants of execution. However, the regulations do not interfere with the landlord's existing right to take back possession without a court order for empty properties where there has been a surrender of the tenancy.

■ Prison Officers: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[119223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether (a) directly and (b) non-directly employed prison staff are entitled to full pay if they have to (i) self-isolate as a result of track and trace and (ii) shield.

Lucy Frazer:

Directly employed prison staff who are instructed to self-isolate or shield will receive special leave with full pay. This is consistent with the approach taken for all Ministry of Justice employees.

There are two main types of non-directly employed prison staff - agency workers and sessional workers.

Agency workers are employees of their respective agency, therefore there is no entitlement to HMPPS occupational sick pay or paid special leave. This is consistent with Agency Worker Regulations 2010. Where an agency worker is shielding in line with public health guidance, they will be able to access the Job Retention Scheme through their employer, the agency. Agency workers required to self-isolate in response to track and trace are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay.

Where someone is classed as a sessional worker, there is no obligation to provide them with work, or for them to accept it. Typically, these workers will be in prisons, in roles such as chaplains. A decision by HMPPS was taken early on to pay sessional workers who were unable to work during the first wave of Covid-19, either due to shielding, self-isolating or where work had temporarily ceased.

This approach ensures parity across all types of non-directly employed prison staff.

■ Prisons: Mobile Phones

Grahame Morris:

[\[119222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2020 to Question 100350, Prisons: Mobile Phones, how many and what proportion of prisoners in the (a) adult public, (b) adult private and (c) youth estate have access to in-cell technology; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 November 2020 to Question 114121 to the hon. Member for West Ham (Ms Brown).

In addition, all of the adult private estate in England and Wales has in-cell telephony installed.

Rape: Scotland**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[118514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has received representations on the potential merits of the Scottish Government bringing forward legislative proposals to ensure the anonymity of rape victims in Scotland.

Alex Chalk:

Whether to bring forward legislation to ensure the anonymity of rape victims in Scotland would be a matter for the Scottish Government, which has not made representations on the subject to the Ministry of Justice.

PRIME MINISTER**Prime Ministers Questions: Public Participation****Justin Madders:**[\[119267\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he next plans to hold another People's PMQs session.

Boris Johnson:

People's PMQs are an opportunity for members of the public to ask me about issues that affect their lives. I hope to hold another one shortly.

TRANSPORT**Motor Vehicles: Diesel Fuel and Petrol****Fleur Anderson:**[\[119408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government's plans to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030 includes (a) motorcycles, (b) scooters and (c) mopeds.

Rachel Maclean:

The government's plans to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030 does not include motorcycles, scooters or mopeds. Recognising that the market for plug-in motorcycles is still at an early stage of development, grant funding for zero emission two wheelers is available until 2023 alongside other plug in vehicle grants. Purchasers of eligible mopeds and motorcycles can receive a grant of 20% up to a maximum of £1,500 to reduce the up-front purchase price and take advantage of the lower running costs.

Motorcycles: Greater London**Fleur Anderson:**[\[119407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) motorcycles, (b) scooters and (c) mopeds were registered in Putney, Roehampton and Southfields in (i) 2019 and (ii) 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

The following table shows the number of motorcycles, scooters, and mopeds registered to an address in the constituency of Putney at the end of June in both 2019 and 2020.

LICENSED VEHICLES	END JUNE 2019	END JUNE 2020
Motorcycle (incl. those with sidecar)	1,396	1,412
Scooter	350	355
Moped	119	102

Public Transport: Information Services**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[118095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 73950, what recent progress his Department has made increasing the visibility and promotion of the Zipabout Passenger Connect service.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES) has sent around 3 million messages to rail customers since June via the *Alert Me* service provided by Zipabout. The Rail Delivery Group is currently preparing for a wider roll out of *Alert Me* to include the train operators' own digital platforms.

Alert Me is currently delivered via the Facebook Messenger platform and should also be live on WhatsApp very shortly, extending its reach further.

Railways: Concessions**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[119341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps has he taken to help ensure that domestic abuse victims are made aware of the Rail to Refuge scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Rail to Refuge scheme was rolled out on a national basis in March 2020. The Department has worked closely with the Rail Delivery Group to promote the scheme, including through extensive media and social media coverage.

Railways: Suicide**Robert Halfon:**[\[117977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have died by suicide on the railways in 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

There have been 157 suspected suicides on the rail network during period 2020/21 (182 during corresponding period 2019/20).

■ **Transport for London: Uber Boat****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[117949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the competitive advantages of the operating relationship between Transport for London and Uber Thames Clippers.

Rachel Maclean:

The responsibility for transport in London, including passenger boat services on the River Thames, is devolved to the Mayor of London and Transport for London.

TREASURY■ **Bounce Back Loan Scheme****Joy Morrissey:**[\[119379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government plans to extend the Bounce Back Loan Scheme in response to the additional time businesses have been subject to covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

John Glen:

The Government launched the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) to ensure that the smallest businesses could access loans of up to £50,000 in a matter of just days. As of 15 November, the scheme had supported nearly 1.4 million businesses with facilities totaling over £42 billion.

Originally, the scheme was due to close to new loan applications on 4 November. However, this end date has already been extended twice; initially to 30 November and subsequently to the existing scheme end date of 31 January 2021. This extension ensures that businesses have more time to make loan applications, supporting them through the pandemic.

Furthermore, the Government is continuing to work with lenders and business representatives to introduce a new, successor loan guarantee scheme, set to begin once the existing guarantee schemes (BBLs, along with the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme) close to new applications. More details around this new scheme will be released in due course.

■ Carbon Emissions: Infrastructure

Alexander Stafford:

[117401]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the National Infrastructure Strategy; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that the infrastructure selected for investment aligns with the Government's net zero emissions target.

Kemi Badenoch:

The UK was the first major economy in the world to legislate our 2050 Net Zero commitment last year and transforming the UK's infrastructure will be vital to meeting this target. The National Infrastructure Strategy has set out the UK's long-term ambitions on economic infrastructure, including on decarbonisation, building on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan.

■ Carbon Emissions: Taxation

Alexander Stafford:

[117402]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using carbon taxes to incentivise (a) carbon capture and storage, (b) hydrogen and (c) other Net Zero-focussed innovation fuel technologies to decarbonise (i) industry and (ii) transport.

Kemi Badenoch:

The UK is committed to carbon pricing as a tool to drive decarbonisation to support our transition to a Net Zero economy by 2050.

The Government will implement an ambitious and effective carbon pricing regime to replace our membership of the EU Emissions Trading System following the Transition Period and is legislating to establish potential negotiated and alternative options to support this.

A linked UK Emissions Trading System (UK ETS) remains the Government's preferred option, provided that any link negotiated suits both sides' interests. As outlined in a Government Consultation Document published in July 2020, a Carbon Emissions Tax is being explored as an alternative option.

As part of its consultation on the Carbon Emissions Tax this summer, the government set out proposals to incentivise decarbonisation of industry and other sectors through taxation. A summary of responses will be issued shortly.

More broadly, the government agrees that technologies such as hydrogen and Carbon Capture and Storage are important in helping the UK reach its climate targets. With this in mind, the government recently committed to £12bn of investment in the Green Industrial Revolution as part of the recently published 10 Point Plan. The aim of this investment is to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK, spurring over three times as much private sector investment by 2030 and ultimately accelerating the UK's path to Net Zero.

■ Child Benefit

Justin Madders: [118018]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have been required to pay the High Income Child Benefit Charge since it was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The Government introduced the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC) from January 2013 in order to ensure that support is targeted at those who most need it. It applies to anyone with an individual income over £50,000, who receives Child Benefit or whose partner receives it. The charge increases gradually for taxpayers with incomes between £50,000 and £60,000.

The numbers of those with a High Income Child Benefit Charge liability in each year are published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-income-child-benefit-charge-data/high-income-child-benefit-charge>.

A cumulative total of the number of those paying the charge since it was introduced could only be made available at disproportionate cost.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Dan Jarvis: [119243]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to reform the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to ensure its alignment with real time wage calculations.

Daisy Cooper: [119402]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of calculating furlough payments for employees whose entitlement is being extended based on the higher of (a) the calculation from March 2020 and (b) the average of the last 12 weeks prior to the November 2020 lockdown.

Jesse Norman:

In order to give people and businesses more security during the winter and to make life easier for employers rather than transitioning to the new Job Support Scheme as planned, the Government has extended the CJRS to provide necessary support to the wage costs of employers.

The scheme has been extended from 1 November until 31 March 2021 and for claim periods running to 31 January 2021 employees will receive 80 per cent of their current salary for hours not worked up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The £2,500 cap is proportional to the hours not worked.

The default reference period for CJRS grants is for the pre-COVID period. This means that for the greatest number of employees and employers, it is not necessary to recalculate the basis of the claim. It also reflects the fact that the original policy design was to sustain individuals at 80 per cent of their pre-COVID income, up to a maximum grant of £2,500 per month.

The Chancellor has always been clear that the Government would keep the situation under review, adapting its approach as the context evolved. In January, the Government will review the CJRS policy, taking into account economic circumstances across the UK.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[119396\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether people who have been furloughed during the covid-19 outbreak who were earning the minimum wage and who have turned 21 since being part of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will receive an uplift in their furlough rate to the minimum wage rate for people over 21 years of age.

Jesse Norman:

The original policy design of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme aimed to sustain individuals at 80 per cent of their pre-COVID income, up to a maximum grant of £2,500 per month, and the default reference period for the CJRS is that of the pre-COVID period. For the majority of employees and employers, this means that it is not necessary to recalculate the basis of the claim. For newer employees under the extended scheme, it has simply not been possible to extend this default option, hence the reference period is necessarily different for this group. As with all decisions under the CJRS, the Government is balancing the need to support as many employers and individuals as fully as it possibly can, with the need to get the CJRS running quickly and make it easy to use.

The National Minimum Wage is calculated on the basis of hours worked and/or time spent training. Under flexible furloughing, furloughed workers will be paid National Minimum Wage for any hours the individual spends working. For hours where the employee is furloughed under the CJRS, workers will be paid the lower of 80 per cent of their reference salary, or £2,500. The terms of the scheme do allow for employers to make a top-up payment should they deem this affordable and appropriate.

If workers are required to complete training courses during the hours they are furloughed, then they must be paid at least the appropriate 2020/21 National Minimum Wage for the time spent training, even if this is more than the 80 per cent of their monthly earnings that will be subsidised.

The Chancellor has always been clear that the Government would keep the situation under review, adapting its approach as the context evolved. In January, the Government will review the CJRS policy, taking into account economic circumstances across the UK.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Dan Carden:

[\[119347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish his Department's September 2020 modelling on the economic effect of (a) introducing the covid-19 circuit-breaker recommended by SAGE and (b) the November 2020 lockdown in England.

John Glen:

Throughout the pandemic, economic analysis has been a key part of the advice that ministers use to inform decisions taken in this fast-moving health environment.

The Treasury continues to provide economic analysis to ministers on an ongoing basis as part of policy making and design. The Treasury does not produce formal forecasts for the UK economy. Economic and fiscal forecasting is the responsibility of the independent OBR who updated their forecasts on 25 November 2020.

Debts and Poverty: Coronavirus**Dan Carden:**[\[119348\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has plans to commission an independent assessment of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of (a) poverty and (b) household debt experienced by (i) groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, (ii) different regions of the UK and (iii) people (A) on zero-hours contracts, (B) who are self-employed and (C) with other types of employment status.

Jesse Norman:

The Government continues to monitor and publish trends in households' circumstances across the UK, using a range of sources.

The Government already publishes data on people in low income households by various protected characteristics, region and economic status through its Household Below Average Income (HBAI) publication.

However, in order to illustrate the challenge faced by households during COVID-19, and how Government interventions have supported households of different income levels, HM Treasury published a distributional analysis alongside the Summer Economic Update: Plan for Jobs showing estimates of the change in household net incomes between February and May 2020. The Government will consider updating this analysis at an appropriate point in the future. Given the economic and fiscal significance of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) as responses to the COVID-19 outbreak, HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have committed to evaluating the two schemes and their impacts.

The Office for National Statistics routinely publishes data on financial debt through the Wealth and Assets Survey, which includes breakdowns by age and region. The Government works closely with the Money and Pensions Service to monitor financial difficulty through an annual survey of 22,000 people. The latest data will be published next month. The Government also monitors information coming from the Financial Conduct Authority's biennial Financial Lives Survey, which provides a comprehensive insight into the finances of 16,000 adults and has data by characteristics such as gender, age and working status. The latest survey will be published in early 2021. This is in addition to Government engagement with other stakeholders to monitor and

understand the current and future impact of COVID-19 on people's finances, including on the demand for debt advice and debt solutions.

In respect of assessing the impacts of policy decisions on people with protected characteristics, HM Treasury carefully considers the equalities impacts of the individual policy decisions taken on all policies that are likely to affect those sharing protected characteristics, in line with both its legal obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 and with its strong commitment to equality issues.

■ Employee Ownership and Save as You Earn: Scotland

Neil Gray: [\[119249\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in (a) Scotland and (b) Airdrie and Shotts constituency participated in the (a) save as you earn scheme and (b) share incentive plan in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Neil Gray: [\[119250\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average (a) value of savings held in save as you earn schemes is at the point that the options are exercised and (b) growth in value of save as you earn schemes at the point of maturity in (i) England, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales.

Neil Gray: [\[119251\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the average contribution of (a) save as you earn and (b) share incentive plan schemes to the lifetime savings of people that use those schemes.

Jesse Norman:

The Save As You Earn (SAYE) and Share Incentive Plan (SIP) schemes are tax-advantaged employee share schemes offered by the Government.

On point (b) of UIN 119250, the value of gain for the whole of the UK for SAYE schemes is provided in the Employee Share Scheme national statistics. A breakdown by country could only be provided at a disproportionate cost. The data for the past three years (whole UK) is provided in the table below:

YEAR	VALUE OF GAIN ON EXERCISED OPTIONS (£M)
2018/19	420
2017/18	350
2016/17	360

On UIN 119249, point (a) of UIN 119250, and UIN 119251, the information requested is not readily available and would require analysis of multiple data sources and therefore could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

■ Employment: Environment Protection

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[117265\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to provide fiscal support for jobs that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources through the forthcoming Spending Review.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government remains committed to pursuing a green recovery, with concern for our environment at its heart. The £40m Green Recovery Challenge Fund opened to applications in September and will provide funding for projects across England to restore nature while creating and safeguarding jobs. A further £40m for a second round of the Fund was recently announced in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

■ Job Support Scheme

Dan Jarvis:

[\[119244\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure the Job Support Scheme takes account of employees with an increase in their worked hours.

Steve Barclay:

To support the wage costs of employers, on 5 November the Government extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), and the Job Support Scheme has been postponed.

CJRS has been extended from 1 November 2020 until 31 March 2021 and for claim periods running to 31 January 2021, employees will receive 80% of their current salary for hours not worked up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The £2,500 cap is proportional to the hours not worked. The Government will review the policy in January, taking into account economic circumstances across the UK.

For the extension period employers can furlough employees for any amount of time and any shift pattern, claiming the CJRS grant for the hours not worked.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Christchurch

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[119163\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) instruct the Valuation Office Agency to complete its work on the allocation of rateable values to the individual business premises at Aerodrome Studios, Airfield Way, Christchurch and (b) compensate businesses affected by the original decision not to allow the premises to be split for rating purposes following the reversal of that decision on appeal.

Jesse Norman:

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has a statutory duty to maintain the Rating List by assessing the rateable value (RV) of all non-domestic properties in line with the appropriate legislation. The VOA carries out its valuations independently of ministers

and is currently meeting its statutory deadlines in relation to its Check, Challenge, Appeal service.

■ **Plastics: Taxation**

Ian Murray:

[119221]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate has he made of the proportion of (a) producers and (b) importers of plastic packaging that would be liable for the plastic tax that deal with (i) bio-based and (ii) compostable plastics.

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 bio-based and compostable packaging. The proportion of those liable for Plastic Packaging Tax that handle bio-based and compostable packaging will depend on business decisions. 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>

■ **Public Expenditure: Midlands**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[117263]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to provide fiscal support to the Midlands in the forthcoming Spending Review.

Kemi Badenoch:

This government is committed to levelling up opportunity so that everyone benefits from economic growth - including people and places across the Midlands. That is why we have supported the Midlands throughout the Covid-19 crisis, including protecting around 1,563,100 jobs through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and providing for 299,000 claims through the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Furthermore, the Chancellor announced at the Spending Review over £75m for Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham in 21/22 through the Transforming Cities Fund, to improve public transport, boost connectivity and reduce congestion.

■ **Revenue and Customs: Debt Collection**

Alyn Smith:

[117367]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which debt collection agencies are being used to send final opportunity letters on his Department's behalf.

Alyn Smith: [\[117368\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has spent on debt collection agencies in each of the last three years.

Alyn Smith: [\[117369\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to review his Department's use of debt collection agencies to send final opportunity letters.

Alyn Smith: [\[117370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much his Department has spent on instructing debt collection agencies to send final opportunity letters in each of the last three years.

Jesse Norman:

As part of their overall collections strategy, debt collection agencies (DCAs) provide HMRC with additional capacity. The department keeps under review the cost effectiveness and value for money that using DCAs provides to the Exchequer and UK citizens. There are no current plans to move away from using agencies to send final opportunity letters.

The table below sets out the total expenditure on DCAs by HMRC and the amount spent instructing them to issue final opportunity letters.

	TOTAL SPEND	FINAL OPPORTUNITY LETTER SPEND
2017/18	£ 32,099,756.77	£1,714,901.62
2018/19	£ 26,021,351.78	£1,302,490.63
2019/20	£ 26,163,245.08	£1,242,984.66

Final opportunity letters are sent on HMRC's behalf by some of the debt collection agencies that the department works with. These are:

- Advantis Credit Ltd
- Bluestone Credit Management
- 1st Locate (UK) Ltd
- Past Due Credit Solutions

The full list of debt collection agencies that HMRC work with can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/if-you-dont-pay-your-tax-bill/debt-collection-agencies>.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[117385\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to assess earnings from the tax year 2019-20 when assessing eligibility for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant extension, to allow new applicants to apply.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises that many taxpayers have faced extremely difficult circumstances throughout this crisis.

Unfortunately, the practical issues that prevented the Government from being able to include the newly self-employed in 2019-20 in the original Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), namely that HMRC will not have access to their self-assessment returns in order to be able to verify their eligibility, still remain.

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

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support and other business support grants. The Government has also temporarily increased the Universal Credit standard allowance for 2020-21 by £20 per week and relaxed the Minimum Income Floor meaning that where self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly fallen, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings.

■ Sole Traders: Coronavirus

Darren Henry:

[\[119411\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what grant support is available to one-person limited companies trading from the director's home that are affected by covid-19 restrictions.

Jesse Norman:

The Winter Economy Plan set out a package of targeted measures in response to the current economic context that will enable businesses to protect jobs and manage their finances in the face of reduced or uncertain demand. These include extending the temporary VAT reduced rate for hospitality and tourism, extending the application window of the access to finance schemes, and providing further support for employees and the self-employed.

Following the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), company directors who pay themselves a salary through a PAYE scheme are able to apply for CJRS support, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria of the scheme. In addition, company directors may be eligible for other elements of the package of financial support available. This includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support,

mortgage holidays, increased levels of Universal Credit, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Cancer: Fire and Rescue Services

Geraint Davies:

[119159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the implications for his policies of the University of Central Lancashire's report on Minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic fire effluents, published 23 November 2020, that showed exposure to high levels of toxic contaminants in indoor air pollution has increased cancer amongst firefighters.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is considering this report together with broader national and international research on occupational health issues. These findings will inform policy decisions on legislation, advice and guidance.

The overarching legal duty for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to prevent and control risks to their employees' health from exposure to hazardous substances remains unchanged. FRS are required to have measures in place to control exposure to contaminants that give rise to a risk to health.

HSE works proactively with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) to ensure that FRS use such information to identify and control risks to their employees.

■ Coronavirus: Employment

Rosie Cooper:

[117206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to support people in the workplace who have increased vulnerability to covid-19.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was involved in cross-government work, Safer Workplaces, coordinated by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), which produced guidance on the safety measures businesses will need to adopt. This includes advice for Vulnerable workers.

HSE guidance on practical steps to support workers in higher-risk groups, including those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and pregnant workers, can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/protect-people.htm>.

■ Immigrants: Coronavirus

Stephen Timms:

[119162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 114047 on Immigrants: Coronavirus, if she will issue

guidance to local authorities to clarify that families with No Recourse to Public Funds are eligible for help from Government funds provided for supporting disadvantaged families.

Will Quince:

Our £170 million Covid Winter Grant Scheme will enable local authorities to support children and vulnerable households this winter with food and key utilities.

We are in regular discussion with Local Authorities about how the Covid Winter Support Grant should be delivered. Detailed guidance, including on support for those with No Recourse to Public Funds, was published on gov.uk on 24 November:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-winter-grant-scheme>

■ **Kickstart Scheme**

Caroline Nokes:

[118515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, by what date registered gateway organisations will have received approval for the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Our aim is to process an application within a month, but this can take longer if we require additional information from bidders. As the scheme continues to roll-out we expect that the time taken to process applications will reduce. Turn-around times are already improving.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Chronic Illnesses**

Mick Whitley:

[118595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason people with long-term health conditions are required to undergo a review for personal independence payments every two years.

Justin Tomlinson:

Reviews of PIP are a key part of the benefit and ensure that awards remain correct and reflect changes in claimants' needs. The length of an award is based on an individual's functional needs and can vary from nine months to an on-going award, with a light touch review at the ten-year point for claimants with severe and ongoing needs or who have reached State Pension Age.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Hearing Impairment**

Mick Whitley:

[118593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the number and proportion of personal independence payment assessors who have undergone deaf awareness training.

Mick Whitley:

[118594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that all personal independence payment assessors have received

adequate training to communicate effectively with people who are (a) deaf or (b) hard of hearing.

Justin Tomlinson:

All Health Professionals carrying out Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments are clinically qualified and registered practitioners in their own field. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) requires all Health Professionals to have a broad training in disability analysis as well as awareness training in specific conditions, which includes deaf awareness training.

During the induction period for new Health Professionals, training is delivered which covers how to effectively communicate with individuals who are deaf or have impaired hearing. This training includes the use of a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, which is provided to individuals with such impairments, where requested. Additionally, Health Professionals have access to a suite of learning materials, which include condition insight reports on deafness, hearing impairments and factors to consider for PIP assessments.

■ **Schools: Industrial Health and Safety**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[117271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many spot checks in schools the Health and Safety Executive has carried out since March 2020.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 23 November 2020]: Since March 2020, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has carried out a total of 4508 spot-checks to assess COVID-secure control measures in schools.

To ensure all possible steps are taken to protect schools and continue providing education in the classroom, HSE planned a programme of spot checks and inspections at schools across England, Wales and Scotland.

The spot check and inspection programme enables advice and support to be given to individual schools and helps them manage any risk, keeping staff, pupils and others safe while providing confidence and reassurance to schools, staff, parents and pupils. Schools have been receptive and in the main HSE have found most of them are following the guidance to be COVID-secure. HSE has helped some schools by suggesting improvements, particularly in relation to social distancing, ventilation and frequency of cleaning regimes.

Note: Figures were extracted from HSE's live operational database and provide the picture on the date of extraction (25 November 2020) and are subject to change e.g. there can be a delay between the spot check and the information being recorded on the database.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Neil Gray:

[117275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total amount of reduction was for all benefit awards resulting from sanctions in (a) Airdrie and Shotts constituency, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland in the latest year for which data is available.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Benefit statistics for Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Department for Communities:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/benefits-statistics>

■ Social Security Benefits: Hearing Impairment

Mick Whitley:

[118591]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential barriers that deaf and hard of hearing people experience when attempting to access benefits during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

During the COVID-19 outbreak the Department identified the need to extend the Video Relay Service (VRS) across all benefits making it easier for deaf and hard of hearing customers to access services.

VRS uses a third party British Sign Language interpreter (BSL) to facilitate a conversation between DWP and a deaf customer and was already available to those accessing disability benefits. In April the Department began a phased roll out of this service commencing with Universal Credit and completed roll-out to all benefit lines in October 2020.

Where changes to benefits were implemented as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department communicated those changes through a variety of different channels, including the production of 20 BSL videos for deaf and hard of hearing customers via the Department's You Tube channel.

Mick Whitley:

[118592]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have access to a British Sign Language Interpreter during assessments for benefits.

Justin Tomlinson:

The department and our assessment providers are committed to providing a quality, sensitive and respectful service to everyone. Individuals are encouraged to alert their assessment provider of any additional requirements they may have, such as needing

a British Sign Language interpreter, and providers will endeavour to meet any such reasonable requests.

Face to face assessments for sickness and disability benefits are currently suspended in line with public health advice. However, we continue to make recommendations on paper-based evidence alone, where possible or paper-based evidence together with a telephone assessment, where appropriate to do so.

To enhance the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) telephony service, PIP providers have implemented a video relay service for claimants with British Sign Language requirements, to enable deaf or hard of hearing claimants to participate in an assessment; we are exploring whether this solution could support the Work Capability Assessment process.

■ Unemployment Benefits: Coronavirus

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[119284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her Department's policy to extend the time limit of the number of days for which a person can claim contribution-based benefits for those jobseekers affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[119285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the time limit of the number of days for which a person can claim contribution-based benefits on those jobseekers affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

A person's entitlement to contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance is limited to a maximum of 182 days in any period for which entitlement is established by reference to the person's National Insurance record in the same two income tax years relevant to the claim or claims. The time limit strikes a balance in providing support whilst keeping to the cost of this and other contributory benefits affordable based on the overall income to the National Insurance Fund each year.

People who are entitled to contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or whose entitlement ends before they find employment, may have access to income-related support through Universal Credit. Entitlement will depend on individual circumstances.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Departmental Contingent Liability Notification (Human Challenge Project)

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):
[\[HCWS605\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the contingent liabilities relating to the contract signed between the Government and Imperial College London for the Human Challenge Project.

This project was announced on 20 October and is aimed at supporting the search for a COVID-19 vaccine. A £33.6 million Government investment will back the project in partnership with Imperial College London, hVIVO and the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust.

In human challenge studies, a vaccine candidate that has proven to be safe in initial trials is given to a small number of carefully selected healthy, young adult volunteers who are then exposed to the virus in a safe and controlled environment. These studies offer the chance to accelerate development of promising vaccines against Covid-19, bringing them to people more quickly and potentially saving thousands of lives.

The first step of the project is the Virus Characterisation Study. This will begin in January 2021 and establish the smallest amount of virus needed to cause Covid-19 infection in the volunteers. Robust safety, ethics, and regulatory approvals will be put in place before the study begins. Imperial College is the academic study sponsor for the Characterisation Study. As study sponsor, Imperial will be liable for any negative side-effects volunteers may experience in this study. Imperial has therefore taken out its own insurance, up to the sum of £10m and for up to 36 months after completion of the study.

My Department has agreed to provide the excess for a Relief Claim that Imperial may make for a maximum of £15,000 per volunteer (to a maximum of the 90 volunteers involved in this Study). This is only applicable where the claim arises as the result of the study but not as the result of one of the parties' negligence. In addition to the agreed excess, my Department has agreed to provide unlimited indemnity beyond the £10 million.

My Department believes that this is a justifiable position given the very low risk of exceeding the maximum liability. In a reasonable worst-case scenario, our analysis estimates that liability would be under £1.5m. Therefore, we do not expect the maximum liability to be exceeded.

A full Departmental Minute will be laid in the House of Commons providing more detail on this contingent liability.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Covid-19 Update

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): [\[HCWS608\]](#)

On 23 November, the Prime Minister set out our COVID-19 Winter Plan in Parliament. Our COVID-19 Winter Plan puts forward the UK Government's programme for suppressing the virus, protecting the NHS and the vulnerable, keeping education and the economy going, and providing a route back to normality. Thanks to the shared sacrifice of everyone in recent weeks, in following the national restrictions, we have been able to start to bring the virus back under control and slow its growth, easing some of the pressure on the NHS. We will do this by returning to a regional tiered approach, saving the toughest measures for the parts of the country where prevalence remains too high.

The tiering approach provides a framework that, if used firmly, should prevent the need to introduce stricter national measures.

On 2 December we will lift the national restrictions across all of England and the following restrictions will be eased:

1. The stay-at-home requirement will end.
2. Non-essential retail, gyms, personal care will reopen. The wider leisure and entertainment sectors will also reopen, although to varying degrees.
3. Communal worship, weddings and outdoor sports can resume.
4. People will no longer be limited to seeing one other person in outdoor public spaces, where the rule of 6 will now apply.

The new regulations set out the restrictions applicable in each tier. We have taken into account advice from SAGE on the impact of the previous tiers to strengthen the measures in the tiers, and help enable areas to move more swiftly into lower tiers.

The changes to the tiers are as follows:

- In tier 1, the Government will reinforce the importance that, where people can work from home, they should do so.
- In tier 2, hospitality settings that serve alcohol must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals.
- In tier 3, hospitality will close except for delivery, drive-through and takeaway, hotels and other accommodation providers must close (except for specific exemptions, such as people staying for work purposes, where people are attending a funeral, or where they cannot return home) and indoor entertainment venues such as cinemas, theatres and bowling allies must also close. Elite sport will be played without spectators. Organised outdoor sport can resume, but the Government will advise against higher risk contact sports.

These are not easy decisions, but they have been made according to the best clinical advice, and the criteria that we set out in the Covid-19 Winter Plan.

These are:

1. Case detection rates in all age groups
2. Case detection rates in the over 60s
3. The rate at which cases are rising or falling
4. Positivity rate (the number of positive cases detected as a percentage of tests taken)
5. Pressure on the NHS.

The indicators have been designed to give the Government a picture of what is happening with the virus in any area so that suitable action can be taken. These key indicators need to be viewed in the context of how they interact with each other as well as the wider context but provide an important framework for decision making – assessing the underlying prevalence in addition to how the spread of the disease is changing in areas. Given these sensitivities, it is not possible to set rigid thresholds for these indicators

The regulations will require the Government to review the allocations every 14 days, with the first review complete by the end of 16 December

We have been able to announce UK-wide arrangements for Christmas, allowing friends and loved ones to reunite, and form a Christmas bubble of three households for five days over the Christmas period

We have increased funding through our Contain Outbreak Management Fund, which will provide monthly payments to local authorities facing higher restrictions

We are also launching a major community testing programme, honing in on the areas with the greatest rate of infection

This programme is open to local authorities in Tier 3 areas and offers help to get out of the toughest restrictions as fast as possible.

The attached areas will be in each tier from the 2 December. This list will also be published on gov.uk and a postcode tracker will be available for the public to check what rules apply in their local area.

Attachments:

1. Allocations list [List of Allocations.pdf]

■ **Public Health England: Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20**

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):

[\[HCWS606\]](#)

I wish to inform the House of the publication of Public Health England's Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year 2019/20. A copy of the Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 ('the Report') has been laid before both Houses.

Public Health England (PHE) is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, providing the evidence, support and advice needed locally, nationally and internationally. PHE is responsible for four critical functions: protecting the public's health;

improving the public's health, improving population health; and supporting the capacity and capability of the public health system in England.

The Report sets out the activity, performance and expenditure of PHE for key areas of its business for 2019-2020 financial year and reflects the position as at 31 March 2020. The report is based on activity in the 2019/20 financial year and notes that some performance in the final quarter was impacted because PHE rigorously reprioritised to free up significant internal resource for the COVID-19 response.

As referenced in the Report, on 18 August 2020, the Government announced the establishment of a new National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP), which will bring together the additional testing capacity at scale of NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre intelligence and analytical capability with the public health science and health protection expertise of PHE. NIHP will be formally and fully established in 2021.

NHS Test and Trace and PHE put in place integrated arrangements on the COVID-19 response and created a joint situational awareness team to provide analysis and insight into the progression of the virus, under single leadership.

Until further formal changes are made, PHE continues to operate and deliver its core functions in line with its Framework Agreement and continues to be held to account for delivery against the priorities set by Government in the annual strategic remit and priorities letter and agreed business plans through formal quarterly accountability meetings. PHE's governance boards and groups and PHE's Advisory Board also continue to operate. There will be a continued focus on responding to COVID-19, now and throughout the winter. Health improvement, preventing ill health and reducing inequalities will also remain priorities for PHE, prior to full transition to new arrangements.

Work is underway to determine the right future arrangements for PHE's vital non-health protection functions, including health improvement responsibilities, and we will engage widely on proposals before implementing new arrangements in 2021.

■ Publication of the Elizabeth Dixon Investigation Report

**Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health)
(Ms Nadine Dorries):**

[\[HCWS607\]](#)

Today we have published the report into the events surrounding the death of Elizabeth Dixon – a baby who sadly died in December 2001 from asphyxiation resulting from a blocked tracheostomy tube and while under the care of a private nursing agency.

I offer my heart-felt condolences to Elizabeth's family, to Anne and Graeme Dixon for their loss, compounded by the length of time – the passage of twenty years – before the facts of this case have been brought to light.

The investigation led by Dr Bill Kirkup was tasked with reviewing the care given to Elizabeth Dixon between her birth on 14 December 2000 and her death on 4 December 2001 - and the response of the health system to a catalogue of errors and serious failings in that care.

This report describes a harrowing and shocking series of mistakes associated with the care received by Elizabeth and a response to her death that was completely inadequate and at times inhumane. Elizabeth and her family were let down by a failure to diagnose or respond to her underlying condition, to put in place the care she required, to acknowledge the circumstances of her death or provide her parents with an honest account of these failings.

The investigation sheds light on what the report describes as a 'twenty year cover up'. It alleges that some individuals have been persistently dishonest in accounting for their actions or inaction.

Underlying all of this was the acceptance of a flawed prognosis that influenced the future course of events. It created a situation in which "facts were wilfully ignored, and alternatives fabricated". Shocking too is the implication in the report's recommendations that the presence of her physical and mental health needs may have been used to justify or excuse the inadequate care she had received.

On behalf of Government and the health system I would like to say I am truly sorry for the devastating impact this must have had upon the Dixon family.

Individuals made mistakes and acted unprofessionally, but the system allowed it. The report makes clear that "clinical error, openly disclosed, investigated and

learned from, should not result in blame or censure; equally, conscious choices to cover up or to be dishonest should not be tolerated".

It is also unacceptable for patients ever to be exposed to unsafe or poor care, and I remain fully committed to ensuring we provide the highest standards of quality and safe services to all patients.

I am grateful to my Right Honourable Friend the member for South West Surrey for commissioning this investigation in June 2017 when he was Secretary of State for Health and bringing these events into the open. I would also like to thank Dr Bill Kirkup and his team for the diligence and hard work that has informed their report.

Particularly, I would like to pay tribute to Anne and Graeme Dixon who have fought so hard for answers. I hope this report is the beginning of a process that will bring some closure for the family. They should not have had to wait for so long.

This report shines a light on a culture of denial and cover up 20 years ago that left a family with little choice but report their concerns to the police. Families should not have to fight a closed system for answers and I will not hesitate to expose this sort of behaviour whenever it appears today.

Indeed, Elizabeth's legacy should be that other families will always be told the truth.

Relevant organisations will need to consider and reflect carefully on the report's recommendations. There is no room for complacency. The continual appearance of shocking reports about patient safety – historic or more recent – implies there is much for the NHS to focus on. My Department will therefore have oversight of their responses and report back to the House. There needs to be learning and implementation, but above all I

want to be assured that we are doing all we can to make sure such events cannot happen again.

No other family should ever again have to go through the heartache and frustration experienced by the Dixon's and I apologise again for the failings set out in this report.

Copies of the report have been laid before the House.