



## Daily Report

Tuesday, 1 December 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 December 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 01 December 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Poaching: Prosecutions

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[120068\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, for what reason a record of the species involved is not collated when recording prosecutions of poaching offences.

**Michael Ellis:**

Offences of poaching are usually charged under one of the following:

- Section 1 of the Night Poaching Act 1828,
- section 30 of the Game Act 1831 or
- section 2 of the Poaching Prevention Act 1862.

There is no requirement to specify in an offence which type of animal the defendant was seeking to take or had taken, and in many cases it is not specified.

Therefore, the CPS is not able to keep any records of which species are involved in its prosecutions for poaching.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Additional Restrictions Grant

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[119218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure funds available via the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme are adequate to meet local demand; if he will make it his policy to (a) amend the terms of the that grant scheme to cover 5 November to 2 December 2020 and (b) allocate new funding through business support grants during local covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

We have been clear that the Additional Restrictions Grant is a one-off payment to local authorities, providing them with funding to provide discretionary support to businesses.

Local authorities have the discretion to use their Additional Restrictions Grant allocation as they see fit, at any point up to the end of financial year 2021/22. We will continue to monitor the support needs of businesses and the local economy.

During the recent period of national lockdown in England, local authorities have also been provided with funding to support closed businesses, with grants of up to £3000 via the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed).

This support for closed businesses will continue when the local restrictions start on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Local authorities in Tiers 2 and 3 will be provided funding to allow them to continue their support to closed businesses.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) will provide further discretionary funding to local authorities in Tiers 2 and 3 after the period of national restrictions to allow them to support businesses that are not required to close, but which will have their trade affected by the restrictions.

## ■ Carbon Emissions

**Matthew Pennycook:**

[\[119322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution announced on 18 November 2020, if he will publish the (a) terms of reference and (b) membership of Task Force Net Zero; and how much funding has been allocated to facilitate its work.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Ten Point Plan will mobilise £12 billion of government investment to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs in the UK, and unlock three times as much private sector investment by 2030.

The Task Force Net Zero announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be tasked with helping government take a 'whole system' approach to Net Zero. Further details will be announced in due course.

## ■ Ceramics: Retail Trade

**Alberto Costa:**

[\[121290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department has issued to tile retailers on their continued operation during (a) the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown and (b) all tiers of the localised covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister addressed the nation on Monday 23 November setting out the Government's COVID-19 [Winter Plan](#). The COVID-19 Winter Plan sets out that the current national restrictions will be lifted on 2 December.

The [Safer Working guidance](#) was updated to reflect the national restrictions and again on 26 November to reflect the Prime Minister's announcement of the new tiering regime.

## ■ Chemicals

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[119369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the chemical industry on potential chemicals stockpiling before the end of the transition period.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Ministers and officials are engaging regularly with representatives across the chemicals industry on all areas relating to the end of the transition period.

**■ Complementary Medicine: Coronavirus****Tom Tugendhat:**[\[119290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will issue guidance to encourage the safe practice of reflexology during periods of national covid-19 restrictions.

**Paul Scully:**

Businesses should carry out COVID-19 risk assessments and consult the current guidance. If reflexology businesses interpret that they can remain open during the national COVID-19 restrictions, they should refer to the [Close Contact Services guidance](#).

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Dawn Butler:**[\[119179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether any of the covid-19 vaccines purchased by the Government for use in the UK have been tested on people with sickle cell and thalassemia blood disorders.

**Amanda Solloway:**

We expect safety data from all trials to set out how the COVID-19 vaccines work in different types of people.

The NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry, developed in partnership with NHS Digital, will help facilitate the rapid recruitment of large numbers of people into trials. The government has been encouraging a diverse pool of people to volunteer to help researchers better understand the effectiveness of each vaccine candidate

Specific questions on individual vaccines are for vaccine developers.

**■ Energy Supply****Ben Lake:**[\[119339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take to assess the potential merits of local electricity supply.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The issue is being considered. For example, Ofgem are reviewing the use of supply licences that are restricted by geographic location, and Ofgem's Access & Forward-Looking Charges Review aims to improve the signals sent to all network users, which could support more localised supply.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[121113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with Ofgem on (a) energy losses in the transmission and distribution system and (b) how those energy losses can be reduced.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

For electricity, the network companies have specific licence obligations placed on them by Ofgem to ensure that losses are as low as reasonably practicable, and are set incentives under the network price control framework. It is now widespread practice across Great Britain to replace 'high-loss' cables with newer 'low-loss' substitutes, where this is efficient. Distribution Network Operators are also undertaking a program of replacing pre-1960s transformers with newer more efficient types.

For Gas, the Health and Safety Executive's Iron Mains Risk Reduction Programme (IMRRP) is the biggest contributor to reducing losses on the gas network. This involves replacing old, corroded iron pipes with polyethylene (plastic) pipes. In order to support this work, Ofgem are consulting on allowing gas network companies over £8.5bn to invest and run their networks over the next 5 years and to help meet our net zero target. Through the IMRRP, the proportion of iron pipes has fallen from 80% of the distribution network in the mid-1970s to around 20% today, and is forecast to fall further to around 10% by 2026 and 5% by 2032.

**Debbie Abrahams:**

[\[121257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) potential for and (b) benefits of local electricity generation.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

There can be many benefits from local electricity generation, including greater consumer engagement with electricity and how it is generated.

In 2019, we generated record levels of solar and wind energy and continue to be the world's leader for offshore wind.

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Kent

**Tom Tugendhat:**

[\[119287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many approved installers for the Green Homes Grant operate within Kent.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Green Homes Grant Scheme launched for applications on 30 September and as announced on 18 November will run until 31 March 2022. Our installer data is at Local Authority rather than regional level. As of 23 November, the number of TrustMark registered installer businesses available in each of the Local Authorities within Kent are as follows:

- Dartford Borough Council - 70
- Gravesham Borough Council - 57
- Sevenoaks District Council - 70
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council - 66
- Maidstone Borough Council - 70
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - 75
- Swale District Council - 60
- Ashford Borough Council - 71
- Canterbury City Council - 69
- Thanet District Council - 64
- Folkestone and Hythe District Council - 62
- Dover District Council - 65.

#### ■ **Holiday Accommodation: Local Restrictions Support Grant**

**Fay Jones:**

**[119391]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether owners of self-catering holiday accommodation will be eligible for support from the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) of up to £3,000 per four-week period is available to all businesses in England that have been required to close due to local and national restrictions.

In order to qualify for this grant, businesses must be part of the business rate system. Therefore, businesses that manage accommodation remotely must be the eligible business rate payer for that hereditament in order to receive a grant through the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) scheme.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) is a discretionary fund and local authorities are free to determine which businesses to support.

The Devolved Administrations are responsible for the administration of support schemes in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

#### ■ **Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[119176]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the curfew on hospitality venues until 2am on new year's day.

**Paul Scully:**

On the 2nd December, the current national measures will end and we will move to a more localised intervention based on three tiers. Under the new tiers, the 10pm closing time for hospitality has been modified to last orders at 10pm and closing time at 11pm. This allows customers to depart gradually and provides greater flexibility.

**■ Life Sciences: Capital Investment****Anne Marie Morris:**[\[121261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to improve the UK's intellectual property regime to attract investment in life sciences.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The life sciences sector is crucial to our success as a science superpower. It has consistently been the largest investor in research and development in the UK, investing over £4.5 billion in 2018.

The Government has pledged to increase UK investment in research and development, with the goal being to reach 2.4% of GDP by 2027. The Government's R&D Roadmap puts science and technology at the forefront of our economic and social recovery.

Intellectual property is a crucial part of that effort, so that great research and ideas can be turned into great businesses.

Consequently, as we reach the end of the transition period, we aim to provide maximum certainty and clarity in the patent framework, giving the life science sector the confidence to invest. Going forward, we will have the flexibility to make changes to the intellectual property system to best meet the evolving needs of the UK and our ambition for innovation.

**■ Local Growth Deals****Nia Griffith:**[\[121202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total allocation of funding is for local growth deals in 2020-21.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Levelling up is central to the Government's agenda and we are working with local leaders to ensure that every region, city, and town will effectively recover from Covid-19.

As part of this, £1,243,604,030 is being allocated through the Local Growth Fund for local growth deals in 2020 to 2021.

## ■ Medicine: Research

**Dr Philippa Whitford:**

[\[121276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he will take in response to the 2020 Spending Review to support the research undertaken by medical research charities.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is aware of the challenges, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, that medical research charities are currently facing.

The Government already provides significant funding to charities' research, for example through Research England's Quality Related (QR) charity support funding. This year charity QR will amount to £204m, to support charity funded research in universities in England and equivalent support is provided in Scotland through devolved funding arrangements.

Additionally, the Government supports this research through investments in the necessary infrastructure, through collaborations with UKRI and through the tax system. In 2018-19 over £1.3bn in tax relief on donations was received through Gift Aid benefitting all charities, including those carrying out vital medical research.

BEIS has been working with the Association of Medical Research Charities to develop an appropriate approach to supporting the important research that their members fund.

**Dr James Davies:**

[\[121305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether charities conducting medical research will be able to access the funding for research and development announced in the 2020 Spending Review.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is aware of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the funding of medical research charities.

The Government already provides significant direct funding to charities' research through Research England's Quality Related (QR) charity support funding. This year charity QR will amount to £204m, to support charity funded research in universities in England.

Additionally, the Government supports this research through investments in the necessary infrastructure, through collaborations with UKRI and through the tax system. In 2018-19 over £1.3bn in tax relief on donations was received through Gift Aid benefitting all charities, including those carrying out vital medical research.

BEIS officials have also been meeting regularly with the Association of Medical Research Charities to develop an appropriate approach to supporting the important research that their members fund through the challenges they are currently facing.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Diesel Fuel and Petrol**

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[119207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations he has received from the UK oil refining industry on the ban on new petrol and diesel vehicle sales from 2030.

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[119208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the economic effect on the UK oil refining sector of the ban on new petrol and diesel vehicle sales from 2030.

**Stephen Crabb:** [\[119209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with UK oil refiners on the provision of additional support for the industry to adapt their operations ahead of the ban on new petrol and diesel vehicle sales from 2030.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Department has regular contact with the UK Petroleum Industry Association and individual refineries on the role of the downstream oil sector in meeting the UK's target of net zero emissions by 2050. Most recently discussions focused on the UK Petroleum Industry Association's October report "Transition, Transformation and Innovation: Our Role in the Net-Zero Challenge", including the potential for the sector to make a contribution in the areas of low carbon liquid fuels, hydrogen, CCUS, and other innovative technologies.

As regards the Government's announcement to end the sale of new diesel and petrol cars in the UK by 2030, all sectors had the opportunity to make representations in the consultation led by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries**

**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[121274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people in (a) the West Midlands, (b) Coventry and (c) Coventry North East constituency are employed in the automotive industry.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

According to the latest available data from Business Registers and Employment Survey, which is part of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in 2018 there were 54,000 people employed in the automotive sector in the West Midlands region.

Employment data by sector is not available at constituency level. However, according to the latest available data from Nomis, a service provided by the ONS, in 2018 the number of manufacturing jobs, including automotive, was 10,000 in the North East Coventry constituency and 11,000 in the South Coventry constituency. Similarly, the

wholesale, retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles industry employed 5,000 people in each of the constituencies in 2018.

## ■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus

**Nickie Aiken:** [\[119371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether hair, beauty and wellness services in (a) salon and (b) mobile settings will be allowed to reopen in Tier 3 areas after the national lockdown ends on 2 December.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister addressed the nation on Monday 23 November setting out Government's COVID-19 [Winter Plan](#). The COVID-19 Winter Plan sets out that the current national restrictions will be lifted on 2 December. Close Contact Services can open in all tiers.

**Nickie Aiken:** [\[119372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect of the extended closure of hair, beauty and wellness services beyond the end of the national lockdown on 2 December would have on (a) businesses and (b) jobs in that sector.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister addressed the nation on Monday 23 November setting out Government's COVID-19 [Winter Plan](#). The COVID-19 Winter Plan sets out that the current national restrictions will be lifted on 2 December. Close Contact Services can open in all tiers.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[121299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, on what date and at what time hairdressing salons in tier 2 covid-19 areas are allowed to re-open after the November 2020 lockdown restrictions come to an end.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister addressed the nation on Monday 23 November setting out Government's COVID-19 [Winter Plan](#). The COVID-19 Winter Plan sets out that the current national restrictions will be lifted on 2 December. Close Contact Services, including hairdressing salons, can open in all tiers from 2 December at 00:01.

Our [Safer Working guidance](#) has been updated ahead of the new tiering regime.

## ■ Post Offices: Finance

**Marion Fellows:** [\[121291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the £50 million announced in the 2020 Spending Review for Post Office

subsidy and restructuring has been allocated for (a) subsidising and (b) restructuring the branch network.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government will provide £227 million of funding through the Spending Review to the Post Office. This extends the £50 million network subsidy and provides Post Office with £177 million to invest in the future of the network.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Energy**

**Fay Jones:**

**[119395]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to encourage landlords of privately rented homes to increase the energy efficiency of their properties.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Since April 2020, all privately rented homes in England and Wales are required to meet a minimum energy efficiency standard of EPC band E. The Department is currently consulting on raising the minimum energy efficiency standards for privately rented homes in England and Wales to EPC band C. Under the Government's recommended option, landlords would be required to reach EPC Band C for new tenancies from 1 April 2025 and all tenancies by 1 April 2028.

Landlords in England are encouraged to make use of the £2 billion Green Homes Grant funding scheme to improve their property stock to EPC Band C. Under this scheme, homeowners and landlords can receive at least two thirds of the cost of upgrading the energy performance of their homes up to a contribution of £5,000.

The consultation on improving the energy performance of privately rented homes can be accessed on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-energy-performance-of-privately-rented-homes> and will remain open until 30 December 2020.

■ **Royal Mail**

**Ben Lake:**

**[121336]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the economic effect on Royal Mail of (a) Amazon and (b) other private delivery companies.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government's aim in relation to post is to secure a sustainable, efficient and affordable universal postal service. The UK has one of the most competitive postal services markets in the world.

On 26 November 2020, Ofcom, the independent regulator for the postal services sector, published a review of postal users' needs and an annual monitoring update on postal services. The Government is reviewing both reports.

## ■ Weddings: Coronavirus

**Fay Jones:**

[\[119387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what financial support is available for the wedding venue industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

Wedding venues are able to access a wide package of support to help them through the current crisis. This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, government-backed loans, and the Local Restrictions Support Grants.

## CABINET OFFICE

## ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Darren Henry:**

[\[119409\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring businesses and citizens are prepared for the end of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in England.

**Darren Henry:**

[\[119410\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Government will publish guidance to businesses on any new regulations that may be imposed following the end of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown in advance of the end of that lockdown period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The Cabinet Office has been in discussion with other Departments regarding COVID-19 guidance for England after 2 December. The Government is publishing new guidance or updating existing guidance ahead of 2 December.

## ■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information

**Justin Madders:**

[\[121278\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his Department's policy is on which matters are considered sensitive by the FOI clearing house.

**Justin Madders:**

[\[121279\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many responses to FOI requests submitted to other Government Departments have been subject to approval by his Department prior to release.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 120771](#) on 30 November.

**■ Cabinet Office: Senior Civil Servants****Christian Matheson:** [\[119265\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the recent appointments process for the position of Cabinet Secretary, how many expressions of interest for that position were received from (a) women applicants and (b) applicants from a BAME background.

**Julia Lopez:**

I refer the hon. Member to my answer to [PQ116528](#) on 23 November.

**■ Customs: EU Countries****Tom Tugendhat:** [\[119286\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what paperwork will be required from household removal companies travelling to the EU after the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

These arrangements are subject to the outcome of negotiations.

Commercial drivers and hauliers who move goods between Great Britain and the European Union will require new documentation from 1 January 2021. Hauliers should not attempt to cross the border unless they have all the right documentation.

The Government has produced an easy-to-use checker tool which can be accessed via [gov.uk/transition](https://gov.uk/transition) for businesses and citizens to find out exactly what they need to do to prepare.

**■ Ministers: Offshore Funds****Christian Matheson:** [\[119266\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Government ministers have (a) personal financial accounts and (b) holdings in offshore territories.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to [PQ 8404](#), answered on the 3 February 2020.

**■ Overseas Trade: Morocco****Patrick Grady:** [\[121282\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value of goods (a) imported from and (b) exported to Morocco was in 2019.

**Patrick Grady:** [\[121283\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value of goods (a) imported from and (b) exported to the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara was in 2019.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response PQ121282,3 [PQs121282,3.pdf]

**■ Procurement Transformation Advisory Panel****Dan Carden:**[\[121344\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps were taken to (a) identify and (b) tackle potential conflicts of interest during the appointment process to the Procurement Transformation Advisory Panel.

**Julia Lopez:**

Further to the [answer](#) of 4 November, the Cabinet Office has undertaken an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement over many months to gather a range of views to shape our proposals on procurement reform. The Procurement Transformation Advisory Panel was designed to draw together experts from each part of the procurement community – suppliers, lawyers, academics and international experts.

**■ Trade Agreements: Japan****Emily Thornberry:**[\[119203\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has promoted any external communications for traders on the updated rules of origin between the UK and Japan taking effect after the transition period.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[119204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has promoted any external communications for traders on updated rules of origin arising from continuity trade agreements taking effect after the transition period.

**Julia Lopez:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to PQs [119201](#) and [119202](#).

The Government is ensuring that businesses and traders are ready for the end of the transition period through an intense programme of communication and engagement, including the national public information campaign launched in July.

**■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland****Nia Griffith:**[\[121206\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether safety and security declarations will be required for each post and parcel consignment travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland after the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

As set out in the Command Paper published in May, the UK is committed to implementing the Protocol in a pragmatic and practical way that minimises the impact on both businesses and consumers. Further guidance will be set out in due course on post and parcel movements from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[121259\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what IT system will be used to handle sanitary and phytosanitary checks on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland after the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Details of the systems for handling sanitary and phytosanitary checks on relevant goods movement between Great Britain to Northern Ireland are set out in published guidance on gov.uk.

**Louise Haigh:**[\[121303\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the process of transiting goods from Northern Ireland to Great Britain via the Republic of Ireland will be subject to any additional processes.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

As set out in our Command Paper, the Government is delivering the commitment of unfettered access for goods from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK. From 1 January 2021, goods moving directly from Northern Ireland to Great Britain will continue to do so as they do today.

We recognise that the priority is also to extend as many of the benefits of unfettered access as possible to goods moving indirectly via Ireland. That is why from 1 January, customs duties will not be due on qualifying Northern Ireland goods moved indirectly from NI to GB.

**■ Veterans: Mental Health Services****Fay Jones:**[\[119385\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Office of Veteran Affairs is taking to ensure that veterans can access mental health support.

**Johnny Mercer:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to PQ [906285](#) and [111603](#). The majority of veterans successfully access mental health support through mainstream services such as the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) in NHS England. For those who need more specialised support, they can access bespoke services through the NHS, such as the Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS) and the Complex Treatment Services (CTS). Most recently, the new NHS Veterans Mental Health High Intensity Service has started to be introduced across England, with services in London, the Midlands and the North now live.

The Office of Veteran Affairs works closely with NHS, the Department for Health and Social Care, and the Devolved Administrations, who deliver mental health support to veterans, including exploring making access to this growing range of high quality mental health services as easy as possible.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Aircraft Carriers

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[120814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days each aircraft carrier was at sea in each of the years since each such carrier was launched.

**James Heappey:**

The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes and Departmental planning requirements. Newly commissioned ships also conduct periods of trials alongside in preparation for trials at sea.

The Royal Navy are currently modernising and digitising the system that holds this information, therefore I will write to the hon. Member with the number of days each aircraft carrier was at sea since being launched in the coming days. The new system will be in place in January.

### ■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

**Steve Reed:**

[\[121263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether areas subject to tier 3 covid-19 restrictions will receive support from armed forces personnel to assist with mass testing.

**James Heappey:**

Military support is provided at the request of other Government Departments and the civil authorities through the Military Aid to Civil Authority (MACA) process. Any further assistance to mass testing will be at the request of the local authority in consultation with DHSC and the devolved administrations where appropriate. Defence remains ready to contribute where required.

Defence continues to assist with mass testing across the UK, notably in support of the Liverpool mass testing pilot.

### ■ Armed Forces: Food

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[121345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of food provided to service personnel since outsourcing to private companies.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The quality of food provision for Service Personnel is monitored and assured constantly.

The standards of food quality are set out in Joint Services Publication (JSP) 456, Defence Food Quality Standards (DFQS), and mandated by Government Buying Standards and supporting publications such as Defence Food Based Standards.

There are several levels of assessment, from daily onsite Orderly Officer checks to the assessment of the food standards by military catering experts. This is to ensure the correct nutritional content of core meals served.

Where breaches in standards do occur, which cannot be rectified at the point of delivery, the assurance processes will lead to financial consequences for the Industry Partner.

### ■ **Cybercrime: Finance**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[120804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much will be allocated to the UK's National Cyber Force.

**James Heappey:**

For reasons of safeguarding national security the Ministry of Defence does not ordinarily comment on matters relating to the security bodies.

### ■ **Shipbuilding: Procurement**

**Alan Brown:** [\[120902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions his Department has had with representatives from the shipbuilding industry on the prioritisation of UK shipyards for bids for domestic ship or boat building orders.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Government procurements are currently governed by the Public Contracts Regulation (PCR) and the Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations (DSPCR). The Ministry of Defence makes use of exemptions, such as those based on the national security requirement to build warships in the UK.

However the regulations in certain circumstances require open competition as the normal approach. As we approach the end of the Transition Period, the UK Government is exploring opportunities to better tailor procurement regulations to meet our needs.

In his role as Shipbuilding Tsar, the Defence Secretary is working to maximise opportunity for the UK shipbuilding industry through a coherent, cross-Government approach and the Ministry of Defence holds regular meetings with industry through forums such as the Maritime Enterprise Working Group.

### ■ **Trident**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[120787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the projected cost for the renewal of Trident.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence co-ordinates a range of interdependent programmes to support, maintain and renew the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent, as detailed in the National Audit Office report 'The Defence Nuclear Enterprise: a landscape review', published in 2018.

In the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Dreadnought Class submarine build programme was estimated to be likely to cost a total of £31 billion with an additional £10 billion contingency. The programme remains on track to deliver within this budget. It is too early to provide cost estimates for the Replacement Warhead Programme as much will depend on the eventual design requirements, and information relating to the programme may be subject to commercial and national security constraints.

**■ Trident Submarines: Decommissioning****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[120805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the retirement date of the UK's Vanguard-class submarines.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Future out-of-service dates for Royal Navy submarines are withheld as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

**■ Type 32 Frigates****John Healey:**[\[121142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will set out the timescale for the Type 32 programme.

**John Healey:**[\[121143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where the Type 32 will be built.

**John Healey:**[\[121144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned budget is for the Type 32 programme.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The programme and procurement strategy for the Type 32 frigate will be decided following the concept phase, which has not yet been launched. It is too early to determine costs.

**John Healey:**[\[121145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what tasks the Type 32 will undertake.

**James Heappey:**

The roles and capabilities for the Type 32 frigate will be decided following the concept phase, which has not yet been launched.

**■ Type 45 Destroyers****John Healey:****[121141]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days each of the Type-45 Destroyers have spent at sea in each of the last five years.

**James Heappey:**

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin) on 2 June 2020 to Question 49606 to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones).

**Attachments:**

1. 49606 - Type 45 Destroyers [Hansard Extract 49606.docx]

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Broadband****James Wild:****[121372]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of premises in (a) England, (b) East of England and (c) North West Norfolk constituency have access to superfast broadband.

**Matt Warman:**

According to Thinkbroadband, currently 97.3% of premises in England now have access to superfast broadband (>24 Mbps) - up from 61% from 2012

(<http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/england>).

The East of England region currently has 97% of premises with the ability to connect to superfast speeds (>24 Mbps) ( <http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/east-england> ).

95% of premises in the North West Norfolk constituency currently can access Superfast broadband (>24 Mbps). This is up from 7% in 2012 (

<http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E14000859> ).

**■ Broadband: Norfolk****James Wild:****[121371]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate Building Digital UK has made of the proportion of premises in the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council area which are not considered as commercially viable for gigabit-capable broadband rollout.

**Matt Warman:**

We estimate that over 35% of the premises in King's Lynn and West Norfolk are not commercially viable for gigabit-capable broadband rollout (as shown in the map of page 32 in the [National Infrastructure Strategy](#)) This is an indicative estimate, and likely to change over time.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Holiday Accommodation**

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[120158]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision by booking.com, Expedia and other providers to continue to promote bookings for holiday accommodation in England during the period covered by the covid-19 restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Under the current national restrictions, accommodation providers must close, whether in: a hotel, hostel, B&B, holiday apartment, home, cottage or bungalow, campsite, caravan park or boarding house, canal boat or any other vessel. However, there are a limited number of exemptions to this set out in law. As such, accommodation providers have not been required to stop advertising their services.

When travel is necessary and staying in hotels and other guest accommodation required, we expect people to act responsibly, in line with government regulations and guidance.

Accommodation providers should take all reasonable steps to encourage guests to adhere to government restrictions, including informing guests of restrictions when taking bookings and communicating to all customers, including those with existing bookings, reminding them not to travel unless it is essential (such as for work purposes or attending a funeral).

Accommodation providers should not intentionally facilitate bookings that do not adhere to government restrictions. Those not complying with these responsibilities may be at risk of the premises being closed.

## ■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: International Men's Day**

**Philip Davies:**

**[120004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight where we need to do more to improve outcomes for men and boys and to talk about some of the work across Government to tackle those issues.

This work ranges from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities looking at outcomes for the whole population - including ethnic minorities and White British people; preparation for an Employment Bill which, subject to further consultation, will make flexible working the default unless employers have good reason not to; delivering the Suicide Prevention Workplan, which sets out action that is being taken across Government departments and the NHS to reduce suicides, including amongst men.

This Government is committed to levelling up opportunity and ensuring fairness for all - regardless of gender or background.

**■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Procurement****Dan Carden:****[120987]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2020 to Question 116638 on Government Departments: Procurement, what steps he is taking to (a) identify and (b) tackle potential (i) conflicts of interest and (ii) bias in his Department's procurement process.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The department takes all possible steps to identify and tackle conflict of interest and potential bias, including the embedment of fair and open tender processes, overseen by multiple officials from different areas of the department. Other measures include regular review of our policies, ensuring they are relevant to current contexts and adhere to central government guidelines.

**Dan Carden:****[120989]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many covid-19 procurement contracts were awarded by his Department retrospectively after work had already been carried out.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

No COVID-19 contracts were awarded by the Department retrospectively after work had already been carried out.

**■ Exercise: Congleton****Fiona Bruce:****[120843]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether group exercise classes will be permitted to take place indoors from the end of the November 2020 lockdown period in Congleton constituency provided that social distancing is enforced.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As announced on Thursday 26 November, Cheshire will be placed into Tier 2 of coronavirus restrictions when the national lockdown ends on 2 December. Under Tier 2 you must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place.

Organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue. However, organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing.

Further guidance will be published shortly.

## ■ Fairgrounds: Coronavirus

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[118501]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will issue guidance to local authorities on (a) how and (b) when travelling fairgrounds can re-open during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Whilst outdoor events are not currently able to proceed due to national restrictions, the guidance on which we have worked with the Events Industry Forum will support outdoor events to operate safely when we move to the local tier system on 2 December.

From 2 December, as set out in the COVID Winter Plan we will return to a tiered approach to COVID-19 restrictions. Funfairs and fairgrounds - which will be permitted to reopen in all three tiers as they were prior to this period of national restrictions - will need to go through the normal process of requesting permission and any relevant licences from the relevant authority and have the relevant health and safety protocols in place, including a Covid-19 risk assessment. Local Authorities are responsible for deciding whether to permit outdoor events in their area. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to both the risks and the mitigations in place.

In the government's Covid-19 Secure guidance for the Visitor Economy, we have provided guidance for Local Authorities on how to assess applications for outdoor events and how Local Authorities should support event organisers to hold outdoor events safely. We will continue to work closely with Local Authorities and the sector to get outdoor events running safely and successfully once they are permitted.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) holds regular engagement calls with local government sector groups to highlight significant policy updates and holds regular Ministerial calls with local authority leaders and chief executives.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[118502]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will introduce a grant specifically to (a) support and (b) reimburse lost income for for designed to support showmen during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Government has introduced a number of support measures to support the tourism and outdoor events sector through COVID-19, which funfair businesses and showmen can access.

In response to the current national restrictions, the Chancellor has confirmed how the government will support businesses and individuals during this period. For instance, self-employed workers in the funfairs industry can explore the extended Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Further to this, the Additional Restrictions Grant discretionary fund will allow Local Authorities to help businesses more broadly. It supports businesses that are not covered by other grant schemes, such as the Local Restrictions Support Grant, or where additional funding is needed. Local Authorities have the freedom to determine the eligibility criteria for this grant scheme. However, we expect the funding to help those businesses which - while not legally forced to close - are nonetheless severely impacted by the restrictions.

We recognise that Covid-19 has significantly impacted the culture sector and that these are extremely difficult times for organisations such as travelling funfairs and showmen. We continue to meet with representatives of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain to assess how we can most effectively support the industry through this period.

## ■ Football Association Premier League

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[120044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his response on fan engagement to the petition on Premier League process transparency presented by the hon Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central on 9 September 2020, Official Report, col 737, what his policy is on the (a) level and (b) type of engagement with the Premier League that should be available for fans who perceive potential discrimination in the treatment of their clubs by the Premier League.

**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 and fans' voices heard.

The Premier League has clear procedures for member clubs following their decision making processes. Fans can contact the Independent Football Ombudsman (IFO) which was created in July 2008 by the football authorities, including the Premier League, with the agreement of the Government. The IFO was established to receive and adjudicate on complaints which have failed to be resolved by football clubs or the football authorities.

## ■ Gambling: Reviews

**Carolyn Harris:**

[\[118541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which stakeholders he has met with to discuss the gambling review since September 2020.

**Carolyn Harris:**

[\[118542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has met families and people who have been harmed by gambling ahead of the gambling review.

**Carolyn Harris:**

[118543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has met people who have been bereaved due to gambling addiction ahead of the gambling review.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Secretary of State and I have met a number of stakeholder groups ahead of the Gambling Act Review. This includes a meeting with the Gambling Commission's Interim Experts by Experience forum, a group of people who have suffered a wide range of gambling harms, including recovering gambling addicts, family and partners of addicts, and those who have lost children to gambling suicides. The Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage also met the founders of Gambling With Lives in the summer. Ministers have additionally met parliamentary groups such as the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group, the Parliamentary All-Party Betting & Gaming Group, and Peers for Gambling Reform, as well as with representatives of the gambling industry. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the government's website at: [https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?content\\_store\\_document\\_type=transparency&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport](https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?content_store_document_type=transparency&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport).

The government committed to a review of the Gambling Act 2005 in the 2019 manifesto to ensure that it is fit for the digital age and further details will be announced in due course, including on how we will gather evidence and consult.

■ **Lord Alfred Douglas**

**Tim Loughton:**

[120768]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 November 2020 to Question 114761, if he will release ownership of the original manuscript of the work of Lord Alfred Douglas entitled *In Excelsis*, written during his time in jail and held in the Public Records Office to the estate of the late Lord Alfred Douglas.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The notebook which contains "*In Excelsis*" was issued by the Governor of Wormwood Scrubs prison to Lord Alfred Douglas while he was in custody there in 1924. As such the notebook was then, and is now, property of the Crown. As a Public Record in line with the provisions of the Public Records Act 1958, it is permanently preserved as a public record at The National Archives and it would not be appropriate to de-accession it.

**■ Mass Media: Down's Syndrome****Stephen Morgan:** [\[119354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the perpetuation of negative stereotypes about people with Down syndrome in broadcast media on the quality of life of those people.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Government recognises the editorial and operational independence of broadcasters but believes the broadcasting sector should reflect and represent all parts of society.

Ofcom, as the UK's independent TV and radio regulator, sets rules in its Broadcasting Code to ensure broadcasters provide adequate protection to members of the public from the inclusion of harmful and offensive material in programmes. Ofcom can investigate and determine whether a breach of the Code has occurred, for example if the broadcast of negative stereotypes of people with Down's syndrome is so severe that there is the potential for harm to be caused to viewers.

**■ Motor Sports: Saudi Arabia****Caroline Nokes:** [\[114844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to hold discussions with British motorsport organisations on their commitments to women's rights in advance of the 2021 Saudi Arabian grand prix.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Participation in international sports events is a matter for the relevant international sports federations, and the national representatives to these federations.

Our sport strategy "Sporting Future" sets out our commitment to increasing the participation of women in all aspects of sport and physical activity, whether taking part, working or volunteering. Sport England provides support to organisations, including the National Governing Bodies, on how to increase the participation of women.

The UK has consistently called for women in Saudi Arabia to be able to participate fully in society. We welcome positive developments, including reforms to the guardianship system. The World Bank's "Women, Business, and the Law 2020" report recognises Saudi Arabia's efforts to advance women's economic participation within the Kingdom. However, women's rights still fall short of international standards. We will continue to raise the issue with Saudi Arabia, and work to promote and support further progress.

**■ Planning Permission: Local Press****Stephen Morgan:** [\[119355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) effect on transparency and local democracy of the

statutory requirement to publicise planning applications in local newspapers and (b) potential effect on local newspaper revenue of discontinuing that requirement.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Local planning authorities are required to publicise certain types of planning applications in local newspapers as set out in Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

We are mindful of the potential impact that any changes to the requirements might have on transparency and local democracy, as well as the potential effect on local newspaper revenue. Indeed the independent Cairncross Review into the future of journalism found that statutory notices, including planning notices, provide an important strand of revenue for many local publishers and that their withdrawal would do serious damage to parts of the sector.

Proposals to reform publicity requirements are being considered through the “Planning for the Future” White Paper which aims to make it simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with the planning system using digital tools. We recognise the importance of local newspapers to communities and the continued need to reach out to people who cannot digitally access information. MHCLG is considering consultation responses and will publish a response in due course, and the impact on transparency and local democracy, as well as on local newspaper revenue will be considered before any decisions are taken.

■ **Rugby: Wales**

**Ben Lake:**

[\[120109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the (a) Barnett formula funding for Wales deriving from the Sport Winter Survival Package and (b) the projected £35 million loss that Welsh Rugby Union has estimated this financial year, whether he has plans to provide further financial support for Welsh Rugby Union.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Barnett formula will apply in the normal way for the devolved administrations, as set out in the Statement of Funding Policy, and it will be for the Welsh Government to decide how to allocate any additional funding it receives as a result.

■ **Sports: Facilities**

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[121275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of accessible sports facilities in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses through tax reliefs, cash grants and employee wage support, which many sports clubs have benefited from. Sport England has also made available over £220 million to support

the sport and physical activity sector. This includes £35m for a Community Emergency Fund (CEF) directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic.

Sport England is investing £16.5 million of National Lottery funding to support community sports organisations return to play using small grants, facilities funding and crowdfund matching that will help to support groups and organisations who help people needing the most help to stay active.

In the last 5 years, Sport England has invested over £111m in National Lottery and Exchequer funding to improve or build sports facilities through its Community Asset and Strategic Facilities Funds in England including £17.58 million in the West Midlands.

£6 million of funding from Sport England has been invested to support community sports clubs and programmes in Coventry since 2015.

## ■ Sports: Wales

**Ben Lake:**

[\[120107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what level of Barnett consequential funding the Welsh Government will receive in respect to the Sports Winter Survival Package for England.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The Barnett formula will apply in the normal way for the devolved administrations, as set out in the Statement of Funding Policy.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[120108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Welsh Government's covid-19 funding guarantee will be revised as a result of the £300 million Sports Winter Survival Package fund for sports in England.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The devolved administrations have been provided with an upfront guarantee this year of £16 billion above their Spring Budget 2020 funding to support their response to Covid-19. There are no plans to revise the Welsh Government's covid-19 funding guarantee as a result of the £300 million Sports Winter Survival Package fund for sports in England.

## ■ Television Licences

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[120793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people have cancelled their TV licence since 2010.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The BBC is responsible for administration of TV licences and, therefore, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport does not hold this information.

The TV Licensing website has some information on the number of cancelled licences for 2018/19 and 2019/20: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/about/foi-licences-facts-and-figures-AB18>

More information may be held by the BBC.

## ■ **Television: Disability**

**Fay Jones:**

**[119393]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage television networks to increase their accessibility to people with visual or hearing impairments.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government recognises that as part of a digitally inclusive society, television content should be accessible for all UK audiences. Under the Communications Act 2003 and Broadcasting Acts of 1990 and 1996, broadcasters are required to meet accessibility requirements for their linear TV services. Statutory targets on subtitling, sign language and audio description are also set by Ofcom, the UK's independent broadcasting regulator.

The government also asked Ofcom to provide recommendations on how legislation could make on demand services more accessible. Ofcom published this report in December 2018, and has since completed a further targeted consultation looking at how a legislative framework should work in practice. This consultation closed on 16 September 2020. Once Ofcom has reported back to DCMS, we will review their recommendations and set out next steps.

## ■ **Tourism: Wales**

**Fay Jones:**

**[119388]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government has taken to provide financial support to the tourism sector in Wales during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As tourism is devolved, the Welsh Government is responsible for any targeted financial initiatives to support the sector in Wales.

Welsh tourism businesses can continue to access the Government's UK-wide support package, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, as well as various government-backed loans. We have also extended the UK-wide reduced VAT rate for tourism and hospitality activities until March 2021.

I remain in regular contact with my Devolved counterpart in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We will continue to work together to assess how we can most effectively support the tourism sector's recovery.

**■ Youth Investment Fund****Emma Hardy:****[119343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if it remains his policy to create a £500 million Youth Investment Fund; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and on 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.

The Youth Investment Fund remains a manifesto commitment for transformative levelling up across the country over the course of the parliament. In the recent announced Spending Review £30m of this was committed as capital investment for 2021-22. 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.

**Alexander Stafford:****[119433]**

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.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and on 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.

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**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[120823]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to allocate the £500 million funding from the Youth Investment Fund to local authorities.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

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**Alexander Stafford:**

**[121047]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Youth Investment Fund will be available within the next six months.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, particularly the most vulnerable, and on 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.

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**EDUCATION****■ Apprentices and Training: Young People****Darren Henry:****[119412]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support young people into apprenticeships and training during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We recognise the particular impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on the employment prospects of young people and the disproportionate effect that the economic impact of COVID-19 is likely to have on this group. We have introduced a number of interventions to support young people into employment and training.

Apprenticeships will be more important than ever in helping businesses to recruit the right people and develop the skills they need to recover and grow. In the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years, we are making available £2.5 billion for apprenticeships, double that spent in 2010-11. As my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in the Spending Review, we are extending the incentive payments available to employers taking on new apprentices until the end of this financial year, boosting job creation and supporting employers to invest in skills as the economy recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Employers are now able to claim £2,000 for every new apprentice they hire under the age of 25, and £1,500 for new apprentices aged 25 and over, before 31 March 2021. We are working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to enable Kickstart placements to turn into apprenticeships, where that is the right thing for the employer and the individual.

We are also tripling the scale of traineeships, providing an additional 30,000 places in the 2020/21 academic year, to ensure that more young people have access to high-quality training. To encourage employers to create new traineeship work placements, we have introduced incentive payments of £1,000 per learner for the 2020/21 academic year.

For the 2020/2021 academic year, we are investing £101 million in a brand-new offer to give 18 and 19-year-old school and college leavers the opportunity to study high-value level 2 and 3 courses when there are no employment opportunities available to them.

To help young people understand the options available to them, we have reformed and improved careers advice in schools. Schools are now under a duty to enable providers to speak to pupils about the apprenticeships and technical education qualifications they offer.

## ■ Children in Care: Missing Persons

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[119319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of looked after children have gone missing or away from their placement without authorisation (a) in the year ending 31 March 2020 and (b) in each of the previous four years.

**Vicky Ford:**

The latest figures on the numbers of looked after children going missing or away from their placement in England are published in the statistical release “Children Looked after in England including adoptions 2018-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>”. Figures for the reporting year ending 31 March 2020 will be published in December 2020.

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Chris Elmore:** [\[120958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his policy is on funding childcare infrastructure in the (a) short and (b) long term.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government continues to support families with their childcare costs. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced on 25 November an extra £44 million in the 2021-22 financial year for local authorities in England to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government’s free childcare entitlement offers. This is an above inflation average hourly funding rate uplift for 3-4 year-olds and 2 year-olds, compared to the 2020-21 financial year. Further information on how this will be distributed will be made available as soon as possible.

Funding beyond the 2021-22 financial year will be considered in the round at future Spending Reviews.

Education in Wales is a matter for the devolved administration.

## ■ Children's Centres

**Jon Trickett:** [\[120784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Sure Start centres are (a) open and (b) operational as at 25 November 2020.

**Vicky Ford:**

Based on information supplied by local authorities, there were 2302 Sure Start children’s centres and 699 linked sites open as at 25 November 2020.[1]

The decision to keep children’s centres operational in response to the COVID-19 outbreak is one for local authorities. Data on the number of children’s centres that are currently operational is held at a local level.[2]

[1] Source: Downloaded from 'Get Information about Schools' (GIAS) database: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk> on 26 November 2020.

[2] Local authorities are required to update their children's centre records on a regular basis to reflect any permanent changes that they make to their children's centre provision. However, the GIAS does not provide a facility to report temporary closures.

## ■ Education: Coronavirus

**Margaret Greenwood:**

**[118010]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the tiered levels of covid-19 restrictions for (a) education and (b) childcare.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has made it a national priority that schools and nurseries should continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak. This remains the default position for all areas in all local restriction tiers.

On 27 November the Department published a simple and clear contingency framework for the rare circumstances in which schools and/or colleges might need to revise their delivery models for a short period of time to help contain COVID-19 transmission within a community.

Such measures will be implemented in the fewest number of schools required, for the shortest time. Given the considerable benefits to children of continued face to face teaching, the threshold for moving to any restrictions will remain exceptionally high.

Any decision to initiate local restrictions to any schools or nurseries will not be taken lightly and will be made by central government on a case by case basis in the light of local and national circumstances.

The education contingency framework can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings>.

## ■ Environment Protection: Vocational Education

**Sir John Hayes:**

**[119170]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to work with the (a) oil and gas industry and (b) other parts of the private sector to support the technical and vocational skills training required to meet the commitments in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The oil and gas sector has a key role to play as we move to a net zero economy, and this Government has committed to supporting this energy transition with a transformational North Sea Transition Deal. The focus of this deal will be on ensuring the sector can support the energy transition to anchor the supply chain across the

UK. This also includes a focus on skills, supporting high-quality jobs in new energy technologies that will help to decarbonise our economy.

Private sector engagement through employers is also key to our work in helping shape future policies and programmes. The new Green Jobs Taskforce, launched on 12 November 2020, has been set up to help the UK build back greener and deliver the skilled workforce needed to reach net zero emissions by 2050. This is a joint initiative between the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department for Education.

Working with employers and relevant stakeholders, such as the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), the Taskforce will develop an action plan to support 2 million good quality, green jobs and the skills needed by 2030. This will support the UK in transitioning to a net zero economy and deliver a green recovery.

One key aim of the Taskforce is to identify the support needed for workers transitioning from high carbon industries such as oil and gas and how to best mobilise their skills for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Taskforce members will represent views of businesses, employees, and the skills sector. Involvement in this work will not be limited only to Taskforce members, and there will be opportunities for a wider set of stakeholders, including the private sector, to contribute.

Further details on the Taskforce, including a full list members, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-launches-taskforce-to-support-drive-for-2-million-green-jobs-by-2030>.

The ECITB grant also supports a wide range of training in the oil and gas sector, from craft, apprenticeships, and technical training to project management. The ECITB's recently announced COVID-19 support package is directly focused on the oil and gas sector. This includes the 'Train to Retain' initiative, which will support the retention and development of graduates and apprentices, ensuring that vital engineering skills are secured in the industry.

## ■ Free School Meals: Immigrants

**Jo Gideon:**

**[119416]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the temporary provision of Free School Meals to children with No Recourse to Public Funds on a permanent basis.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are working with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the extension of eligibility will continue with the current income threshold until a decision on long-term eligibility is made.

**Jo Gideon:**[\[119417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals are assessed as children subject to No Recourse to Public Funds conditions in (a) Stoke-on-Trent Central constituency, (b) the West Midlands and (c) the UK.

**Jo Gideon:**[\[119418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children currently receiving Free School Meals are assessed as children subject to No Recourse to Public Funds conditions in (a) Stoke-on-Trent Central constituency, (b) the West Midlands and (c) the UK.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department collects and publishes information on the number of children eligible for free school meals and the number who claim a meal on school census day, but does not collect information on the proportion of them who are subject to 'No recourse to public funds' conditions. We are currently working with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the extension of eligibility for free school meals will continue with the current temporary income threshold, until a decision on long-term eligibility is made.

## ■ **Holiday Play Schemes: Free School Meals**

**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[119316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish further details on the expanded Holiday Activities and Food programme.

**Vicky Ford:**

From 2021, the Holiday Activities and Food programme will cover the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays at a cost of up to £220 million. It will be available to children in every local authority in England, building on previous programmes – including this summer, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

On 23 November, we wrote to all local authorities to provide further information on the programme. We will continue to work closely with them over the coming months and we will be sharing case studies and best practice from the first 3 years of our programme.

## ■ **Private Tutors: Coronavirus**

**Tom Tugendhat:**[\[119288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the evidence basis was for the Government's decision not to enable students to visit tutors for informal tuition during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**Nick Gibb:**

On Saturday 31 October 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced New National Restrictions from Thursday 5 November until Wednesday 2 December to control the spread of COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>.

On Wednesday 4 November, the Department for Education published guidance for education and childcare settings on the impact of these restrictions. The guidance can be found through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020>.

Schools that provide a full-time education continue to remain open for all children and young people, as they have since the start of the autumn term, for the duration of the New National Restrictions.

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

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

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

**■ Pupils: Coronavirus****Daisy Cooper:****[119397]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish, by each local authority area in England, the number of primary school pupils who were absent from school as a result of either testing positive for covid-19 or being required to self-isolate during the period from 1 September 2020 to the start of the 2020 autumn half-term.

**Daisy Cooper:****[119398]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish, by each local authority area in England, the number of secondary school pupils who were absent from school as a result of either testing positive for covid-19 or being required to self-isolate during the period from 1 September 2020 to the start of the 2020 autumn half-term; and if he will publish those statistics by year group.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department intends to publish local authority level data on 15 December. This data will be included as part of the publication 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak'.

The frequency of the publication 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' will be reviewed in the new year.

The Department is constantly reviewing the content of its publications. Announcements about future content will be made through the official statistics release page which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>.

## ■ School Day

**Peter Gibson:**

[119376]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a later start time to the school day; and what research his Department holds on that matter.

**Nick Gibb:**

The decision on when to start the school day lies with individual schools.

The Government has given all schools the ability to set their own school hours. All schools have the autonomy to make decisions about the timetable and duration of their school day, including the flexibility to decide when their school day should start and finish. Guidance on the school day and the school year is available within the Department's guidance on school attendance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>.

The Department has not made an assessment of the decisions taken by individual schools. We trust schools to decide how best to structure their school day to support their pupils' education.

Schools should organise the school day and school week in the best interest of their pupil cohort, to provide them with a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and ability.

## ■ Schools: Bullying

**Ian Lavery:**

[119242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the Government will allocate funding to support the reintroduction of the Anti-bullying grant scheme.

**Vicky Ford:**

On 7 June 2020, the department announced an additional £750,000 in funding to 3 organisations (the Diana Award, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the Anne Frank Trust) to continue to support schools in their efforts to tackle bullying. This includes projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, pupils who are victims of hate-related bullying and pupils who identify as LGBT. These grants are due to end in March 2021.

The department will confirm what funding is available for 2021-22 in the light of the Spending Review outcome. We will also consider what more the department can do

to ensure that schools have the right support to prevent bullying of pupils with protected characteristics.

## ■ Schools: Computers

**Claudia Webbe:**

**[119425]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many laptops were (a) requested by and (b) provided to schools in Leicester East during the coronavirus pandemic.

**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 has published data about the delivery of laptops and tablets, in the summer term. The data includes delivery data for Leicester local authorities and trusts and can be viewed at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/912888/Devices\\_and\\_4G\\_wireless\\_routers\\_progress\\_data\\_as\\_of\\_27\\_August\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912888/Devices_and_4G_wireless_routers_progress_data_as_of_27_August_2020.pdf).

We are now supplementing this support by making available 340,000 additional laptops and tablets in the event of face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of COVID-19 restrictions and children become reliant on remote education. Since September over 100,000 of these have already been delivered to schools. More information is available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/929064/Ad-hoc\\_stats\\_note\\_shipped\\_data\\_231020\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929064/Ad-hoc_stats_note_shipped_data_231020_FINAL.pdf).

This represents an injection of over half a million laptops and tablets by the end of the year.

Laptops and tablets are owned by schools, trusts or local authorities who can lend these to children and young people who need them most and if they experience disruption to face-to-face education due to COVID-19.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[120194]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the needs of children with special needs and learning disabilities are being met in schools.

**Vicky Ford:**

The COVID-19 outbreak has been extremely challenging for many families, including for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Supporting pupils with SEND continues to be a priority for this government, and their wellbeing has been central to our response throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

That is why we have supported online educational resources, including specifically for children with SEND, and why we are providing £37.3 million for the Family Fund this year to help over 75,000 families raising children with disabilities or serious illnesses, which includes £10 million specifically in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have published comprehensive guidance throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, including for the full opening of all schools in July, with separate guidance on specialist settings. This guidance is updated regularly.

We have also started a programme of visits by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, working with local areas to understand the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to support local areas to prioritise and meet their needs.

### ■ Students: Coronavirus

**Joy Morrissey:**

**[119381]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that students receive value for money as their contact hours are reduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

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 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 Office for Students (OfS) has the powers to act. The OfS has made it clear that higher education (HE) providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected.

The OfS has published information on quality and standards for providers, providing practical guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high-quality academic experience. This guidance sets out that providers should make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching and support for students that is at least broadly equivalent to the provider's usual arrangements. 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.

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, providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

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 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 providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of teaching on offer, and requiring 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.

The OfS is also monitoring the position across the sector, for instance, through polling of student views. Where appropriate, and in response to issues raised through that monitoring, it will issue further advice to the sector.

Students have rights under consumer law that they may be able to rely on if they are dissatisfied with their provider's response to COVID-19 outbreak. 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.

#### ■ Teachers: First Aid

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[119256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of first-aid trained teachers in schools in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

**Nick Gibb:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Customs: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[121301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which aspect of SPS checks on goods travelling between Great Britain and Northern Ireland will be phased in.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Regarding trade from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), the NI Protocol will enter into force from 1 January 2021. At this point, new requirements will apply, in

particular to the movement of live animals, plants and agrifood goods. Guidance on these requirements has been published on GOV.UK at the link below, which continues to be updated.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/moving-goods-under-the-northern-ireland-protocol](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/moving-goods-under-the-northern-ireland-protocol)

The requirements that will apply on 1 January to particular types of trade continue to be subject to discussion with the EU. The Government intends to be in a position to provide guidance to traders, based on the outcome of these discussions, in the very near future.

Regarding trade from NI to GB, the draft Definition of Qualifying Northern Ireland Goods (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 are currently before Parliament. These draft regulations set out that, from the end of the transition period, all goods in free circulation in NI moving directly from NI ports to GB will qualify for unfettered market access.

For goods moving from NI to GB which qualify for unfettered market access from 1 January 2021, direct trade will continue as it does now. Any existing sanitary and phytosanitary checks will continue but there will be no new requirements to place these goods on the market. Appropriate authorities can continue to use existing powers after 1 January 2021 to manage and control the threat of disease and pest outbreaks in NI and GB where necessary. This will ensure that our high standards on food safety, plant and animal health, animal welfare and environmental protections can be maintained.

These regulations are part of a phased approach. This will be developed alongside NI business and the NI Executive and introduced during the course of 2021.

#### ■ Horticulture: Customs

**Sir John Hayes:** [119165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the end of the transition period on the ornamental horticultural industry's ability to contribute to the Government's green growth economic recovery strategy.

**Sir John Hayes:** [119166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the implementation of proposed import and export processes and procedures for plants and plant products after the end of the transition period on the British ornamental horticulture industry.

**Sir John Hayes:** [119167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support the Government plans to provide to the ornamental horticulture industry from the 1 January 2021 to 1 July 2021 on implementing the proposed import and export processes for plants and plant products after the end of the transition period.

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[119168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what consultation his Department has undertaken with ornamental horticultural industry representatives on the potential effects on plant health of the proposed import and export processes for plants and plant products after the end of the transition period.

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[119169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of the financial costs after the end of the transition period of import fees for plants applicable until the 1 July 2021 on the British ornamental horticultural industry.

**Victoria Prentis:**

From 1 January 2021, Great Britain (GB) is introducing a phased import regime for EU goods to maintain biosecurity and keep trade as frictionless as possible. The phased EU import regime will allow time for trade to adapt to the new import requirements for EU goods.

GB plant health authorities are undertaking significant recruitment to increase the number of plant health inspectors to service the demand for import and export checks and certification. We will have sufficient resources to meet demand from 1 January 2021 and ensure minimal disruption to trade. GB plant health services are currently reviewing their operating hours to make sure that biosecurity standards will continue to be met and strengthened in ways that support trade and the smooth the flow of goods while minimising the burden on businesses.

We have maintained regular engagement with the horticultural industry on post-transition period planning, both with individual operators and through key stakeholder groups. This includes fora such as the Plant Health Advisory Forum, the Tree Health Policy Group and the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group, as well as frequent bilateral engagement with key stakeholders such as the Horticultural Trade Association, Fresh Produce Consortium, the National Farmers Union and the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association. Most recently we have undertaken a series of end-to-end feasibility sessions with more than 300 participants, and equivalent export sessions. Alongside these feasibility sessions Defra is hosting a series of webinars open to all, on the new plant health requirements for imports, exports, and internal movement.

It is important that plant health services are properly financed to provide assurance for imports of plants and produce and to protect our nation's biosecurity. In line with HM Treasury rules, the Animal and Plant Health Agency recovers the cost of delivering these services from the businesses that use them. APHA regularly reviews its fees to ensure they are reflective of the cost of delivery and that they do not over-recover.

For goods imported from the EU, GB will be carrying out a phased implementation of import checks which will be aligned to the risks posed by different regulated

commodities. Lower risk goods will receive a lower frequency of checks. Fees therefore need to be adapted to ensure there is no over-recovery of costs. We will begin charging for import services, on goods arriving from the EU, from 1 April 2021. This will enable a more accurate calculation of the fees and will allow businesses and government to implement the change successfully.

## ■ Hunting

**Olivia Blake:**

**[121405]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to ban trail hunting following alleged comments on the use of multiple trails made in a Hunting Office webinar.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Hunting Act 2004 makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal with dogs except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions in the Act, and completely bans hare coursing. The full details of the Hunting Act 2004 exemptions are available online at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/37/schedule/1](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/37/schedule/1).

Those found guilty under the Act are subject to the full force of the law.

This Government will not amend the Hunting Act.

## ■ Plants: Imports

**Sammy Wilson:**

**[119214]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the arrangements for importing plants into Northern Ireland from Great Britain from 1 January 2021.

**Sammy Wilson:**

**[119215]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the arrangements for importing plants from the EU into Northern Ireland after 1 January 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra and DAERA are working together to ensure that both trade and the movement of goods will continue at the end of the Transition Period. Outcomes from this work, including the process by which controls are conducted and their frequency (including the level of physical checks required), are being discussed with the EU in the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee. Discussions are being taken forward in the context of the provision in the Protocol that both parties must use their “best endeavours” to avoid controls at Northern Ireland ports. Defra and DAERA continue to work with industry, traders, representative bodies and local authorities to ensure they are engaged, supported and properly prepared to continue trading from January 2021. This will include the publication of Q&As on the DAERA website that will be updated to reflect ongoing discussions and new arrangements.

EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary law will apply to Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland Protocol, upholding the longstanding status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit. This means there will be no change to the import arrangements for plants moving from the EU to Northern Ireland after the end of the Transition Period.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the introduction of import fees for plants on the ornamental horticultural industry after the end of the transition period.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the readiness of the IT systems required for the importing and exporting of plants from 1 January 2021.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the recommendation from the Horticultural Trades Association for the introduction of a trusted trader scheme for the import and export of plants after 1 July 2021.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will suspend all import inspections for plants and plant products until 1 July 2021 to allow sufficient time for the necessary infrastructure to be put in place.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential economic effect on garden retailers of proposals for place of destination registration.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of (a) the potential effect of the end of the transition period on the threat level to plant health in the UK and (b) whether the proposed changes to inspections regimes are adequate to mitigate those threats.

**Simon Baynes:** [\[121402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of (a) the end of the transition period and (b) proposed changes to the plant inspections regime on plant health.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK intends to ensure that its sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime remains appropriate to address the risks it faces. The plant health services already conduct risk-based checks at the border, determined according to an assessment of the risk

presented by the import of different plants and goods from different origins. This risk assessment and risk management approach will apply to SPS goods from the EU from 1 January 2021 and consequently, high-risk items will be subject to import checks to protect Great Britain's (GB) biosecurity. The highest-risk items (to be regulated from January) are those assessed as presenting a significant risk of introducing harmful pests and diseases from the EU. These risk-based checks will be in line with World Trade Organization SPS principles and consistent with our obligations under the EU Withdrawal Act, where we need to ensure that requirements and processes in retained EU law are corrected so that they are operable at a UK level and focused on UK risks.

For goods imported from the EU, GB will be carrying out a phased implementation of import checks which will be aligned to the risks posed by different regulated commodities. Lower-risk goods will receive a lower frequency of checks. Fees need to be adapted, therefore, to ensure there is no over-recovery of costs. We will begin charging for import services, on goods arriving from the EU, from 1 April 2021. This will enable a more accurate calculation of the fees and will allow businesses and government to implement the change successfully. The methodology used to calculate fees for plant health services was agreed with the trade following a fees review and consultation in 2017. We will consider the impact on SMEs again in our next fees review and subsequent consultation.

In arriving at the decision to delay the introduction of plant health import inspection fees for goods arriving from the EU, officials have had to balance the need to support affected businesses against legal considerations and the rules around managing public money. Delaying these fees until 1 April 2021 strikes the right balance between these competing demands.

In early 2021 the IT systems used to facilitate the import and export of plants and plant products will be changing, moving from the current PEACH and eDomero systems to new services building on IPAFFS and EHC Online technology. The timing and sequencing of this migration will ensure a smooth and orderly transfer between systems and will allow sufficient time for users to become familiar with the new service. We will be providing comprehensive training and support before, during and after migration.

All current and new IT systems have undergone intense scrutiny and stress testing to ensure they can cope with the volumes of plant imports we are anticipating.

We are committed to ensuring our border systems are fully operational after the end of the transition period. To meet this commitment the Government is investing an unprecedented £705 million package of investment for border infrastructure, staff and technology in GB, to ensure our border systems are fully operational after the end of the transition period. The Place of Destination scheme has been introduced as a temporary measure until July when Border Control Posts are functioning for all third-country trade. The Place of Destination scheme has been designed to provide flexibility to businesses, minimising any disruption to trade at the border. There are no fees associated with registration for the Place of Destination scheme.

Defra is pleased that the Horticultural Trade Association is considering a Trusted Trader scheme which may assist business without compromising the effective operation of our plant health import and export controls. As part of the risk-based regime we will review how regulations and processes can be adjusted to reflect the associated risks of specific activities. For instance, we will maintain a risk-based approach to the surveillance of individual business trading in regulated plant material and the frequency of checks on imported plant material will be determined according to the risk profile of such goods.

## ■ River Medway: Flood Control

**Tom Tugendhat:**

**[119291]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information he holds on the timetable for the local inquiry under section 17(3)(f)(i) of the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency has applied to enlarge the Leigh Flood Storage Area, via an amendment to the scheme made under the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976 ("the 1976 Act"). In making this application the Environment Agency has consulted interested parties, who have raised concerns, which remain.

Given these concerns remain, and some interested parties supported a local inquiry to examine the application and their concerns, a local inquiry is the appropriate next step.

The local inquiry will be held by a Planning Inspector and I am hopeful that it will begin in the first half of 2021. My officials are currently working with the Environment Agency and the Planning Inspectorate on the details of the specific timetable. This will ensure that the appropriate procedures are followed and that any proposed dates are convenient for all interested parties.

My officials will continue to keep all interested parties, including your Constituency Office, updated on progress and when the inquiry will begin.

## ■ Stoats: Pest Control

**Jim Shannon:**

**[119239]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what guidance his Department provides to gamekeepers on the trapping and pest control of stoats.

**Rebecca Pow:**

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The Government considers traps to be a practical and effective management tool which, if used in accordance with best practice, can be both targeted and humane.

Natural England has produced guidance on the humane trapping of stoats, which is available on the Gov.uk website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/badgers-beavers-otters-and-pine-martens-how-to-trap-humanely>.

Further information on the conditions and circumstances under which licenced trapping of stoats can occur – in relation to survey, research, or conservation work; or to prevent damage to livestock - and how the traps should be used can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/stoat-licences>.

## ■ Water Abstraction

**Sir Charles Walker:** [121196]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many abstraction licences have been (a) revoked and (b) altered by the Environment Agency since commencement of its powers under the Water Act 2014; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Since the Water Act 2014 provisions came into force the Environment Agency has (a) revoked 23 abstraction licences and (b) made changes to an additional 172 abstraction licences.

**Sir Charles Walker:** [121197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress has been made on the Environment Agency's Restoring Sustainable Abstraction Programme; how many potentially unsustainable licenses it is investigating; and if will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Restoring Sustainable Abstraction (RSA) programme is a key part of the Abstraction Plan (2017) and has changed 320 damaging abstraction licences, returning 47 billion litres of water a year to the environment.

85% of the RSA Programme was completed by 31 March 2020. The Environment Agency is currently investigating 55 remaining, complex licence changes.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## ■ Assadolah Assadi

**Martin Vickers:** [121228]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent information and representations he has received on the forthcoming trial of Iranian diplomat Assadolah Assadi in Belgium on charges of terrorism.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the plot against a conference in Paris in 2018, and particularly that an Iranian diplomat may be involved with the incident. We are closely monitoring reporting of the trial taking place in Belgium. The Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Office has not received any recent representations on this issue. While the legal process is ongoing it would be inappropriate to comment further.

#### ■ **Commonwealth Secretariat: Recruitment**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the staff recruitment policy of the Commonwealth Secretariat ensures that members of all 54 Commonwealth countries have an equal opportunity to be considered when vacancies occur.

**Nigel Adams:**

The staff recruitment policy of the Commonwealth Secretariat is a matter for the Secretariat. But we understand that any job advertised by the Secretariat is open to applications from the nationals of all Commonwealth countries.

#### ■ **Developing Countries: Sanitation**

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[120802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the aid budget has been allocated to ensure the provision of (a) water, (b) sanitation and (c) hygiene in developing countries in the 2020-2021 financial year.

**Wendy Morton:**

The proportion of the UK aid budget allocated to water, sanitation and hygiene in the current calendar year will be known with the release of the Statistics for International Development publication in late 2021. Current figures show that in 2019 the UK Government spent £176 million of bilateral official development assistance on water, sanitation and hygiene. This was 1.7% of total bilateral ODA last year. The 2021 annual report will confirm whether the share of ODA that was spent on water, sanitation and hygiene continued in the current year.

The UK Government can also confirm that the overall target of reaching at least 60 million people with improved water or sanitation by December 2020 has been met.

#### ■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: International Men's Day**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[120008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Wendy Morton:**

FCDO recognises that men and boys, as well as women and girls, suffer from harmful social norms and violence. International Men's Day offers an opportunity to reflect on how outcomes for men and boys can be improved, as well as how men and boys can play a key role in advancing gender equality.

FCDO's policy and programmes look to support men and boys as survivors and victims of violence as well as responding to violence against women and girls. Last year we appointed male and female survivor champions to support our work on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. We work with whole communities to challenge the acceptability of violence and bring about social change. For example, in Pakistan we supported an intervention which achieved significant reductions in corporal punishment at school and peer violence for boys as well as girls.

Men and boys can also be powerful change agents in their communities and positive role models. Many of our Girls' Education Challenge projects include activities to target boys and engage them as champions of gender equality. For example, in Mozambique and Nepal, marginalised boys as well as girls will be trained in peer education, life and vocational skills, and business initiatives.

## ■ FSO Safer

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much money his Department has committed to the international fund for the inspection and assessment of the FSO Safer, moored in waters off the Yemeni coast.

**James Cleverly:**

The FSO SAFER oil tanker poses an extreme environmental risk to Yemen and the Red Sea. The UK has contributed £2.5 million to fund the UN assessment and repair mission and we are considering what more we can do to support the UN to develop robust contingency plans. The UK has put this issue on the international agenda. UK-funded research identified the threat posed by the tanker - a spill four times larger than the Exxon Valdez spill and costing up to \$20 billion - and this was used by the UN and the US to underpin their assessments. We regularly lobby the Houthis at senior levels to urge them to facilitate the UN mission as a matter of urgency.

## ■ Gibraltar: UK Relations with EU

**Catherine West:**

[\[121325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any agreement on the future relationship between the UK and the EU will include Gibraltar.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK continues to negotiate for the whole UK family, which includes Gibraltar.

We remain fully committed to finding a solution that supports Gibraltar, its people and its economy.

The UK and the Government of Gibraltar have held a number of constructive discussions with Spain on this issue. It is clearly in all parties' interests to find a solution, to ensure ongoing well-being and prosperity in the region.

## ■ India: Agriculture

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[120156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the effect of the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, on the prices farmers will now receive for their produce.

**Nigel Adams:**

The British High Commission in New Delhi monitors political, social and economic developments in India, including agricultural reform and works closely with the Union and State Governments, and Non-Governmental Organisations, to build capacity and share expertise to promote prosperity for all in India. We support marginalised farmers through technical assistance programmes which strengthen the quality and productivity of local natural resource infrastructure, and by building state and local government capabilities to deliver improved social protection.

## ■ Iraq: Kuwait

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the progress achieved by the Government of Iraq in complying with UN Security Council resolution 2107.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK supports the Government of Iraq's efforts to resolve the file on Kuwait and third-country nationals pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 2107. We welcome continued bilateral dialogue between the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait in progressing this issue.

## ■ Iraq: Security

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the security situation in Iraq.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK closely monitors the security situation in Iraq, and regularly engages with the Government of Iraq and international partners in order to support stability in Iraq and the wider region. The Prime Minister was pleased to welcome Prime Minister Kadhimi to the UK on 22 October. During this visit, the Prime Minister underlined the UK's commitment to supporting the Government of Iraq in countering the threat from Daesh through the Global Coalition, and the need to ensure the security of all foreign and diplomatic personnel in Iraq.

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department made of progress by the Iraqi Government in strengthening security measures so that citizens and foreign personnel can live and work safely in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK closely monitors the security situation in Iraq, and regularly engages with the Government of Iraq and international partners in order to support stability in Iraq and the wider region. The Prime Minister was pleased to welcome Prime Minister Kadhim to the UK on 22 October. During this visit, the Prime Minister underlined the UK's commitment to supporting the Government of Iraq in countering the threat from Daesh through the Global Coalition, and the need to ensure the security of all foreign and diplomatic personnel in Iraq.

#### ■ **Iraqi Economic Contact Group**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what conclusions were reached at the recent Iraqi Economic Contact Group meeting held in London.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK was proud to partner with the Government of Iraq, international partners and international financial institutions to launch the Iraqi Economic Contact Group (IECG) on 22 October 2020. Partners agreed to work with the Government to develop an implementation plan and establish a delivery unit to support reforms to stabilise the economy. The IECG will convene quarterly to assess risks and coordinate international resources behind reform delivery.

#### ■ **Migration and Peace: Overseas Aid**

**Debbie Abrahams:**

[\[121258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the decision to reduce the Official Development Assistance budget at the 2020 Spending Review on (a) levels of international migration and (b) global peacebuilding.

**James Cleverly:**

As announced on Thursday 26 November, in order to maximise our strategic focus in the use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) next year, the Foreign Secretary will lead a short cross-government process to review, appraise and finalise all of the UK's ODA allocations. Decisions on support for international migration and global peacebuilding will be taken as part of this process and based on assessments of need, and evidence of where UK ODA can make a difference.

## ■ Morocco: Western Sahara

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[121281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in Morocco on the recent occupation of further territory in the Western Sahara.

**James Cleverly:**

We are closely monitoring the situation in Western Sahara and are in regular contact with the parties including Morocco. We continue to urge the parties to avoid further escalation, return to the ceasefire agreement, and re-engage with the UN-led political process.

## ■ Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Aid

**Catherine West:**

[\[121326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help support and facilitate access for (a) the Red Cross and (b) other humanitarian organisations to detainees associated with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and ensure the return of the casualties.

**Wendy Morton:**

On 30 October the Foreign Secretary announced £1 million in funding to the ICRC to support their humanitarian efforts in the region. We continue to urge both sides to ensure the safety and security of all persons including through my recent calls with the Azerbaijani and Armenian Foreign Ministers. I also discussed humanitarian access with Russian Deputy Minister Titov during my recent visit to Moscow. The UK Government is keeping the situation under close review, coordinating with local and international partners and will continue to explore opportunities to support partners to deliver an effective international response.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Dan Carden:**

[\[120992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on when to reinstate the UK's commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of gross national income on overseas aid.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has agreed with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs that the Government intends to return to the 0.7% target when the fiscal situation allows.

**■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus****Kim Johnson:**[\[120163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to maintain the aid budget at 0.7 per cent of national income during the covid-19 pandemic.

**James Cleverly:**

Due to the severe impact that the pandemic has had on our economy, which has fallen eleven per cent this year, we are taking the tough decision to spend 0.5 per cent of our national income next year on official development assistance, rather than the usual 0.7 per cent.

**■ Poliomyelitis: Disease Control****Alun Cairns:**[\[121246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to establish a partnership with Rotary International on the joint goal of eradicating polio.

**Wendy Morton:**

Thanks to the joint efforts of Rotary International and the UK Government, we have made major strides in defeating the polio virus. The UK Government appreciates the tireless campaigning and generous fundraising achieved by Rotarians on behalf of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), which has vaccinated millions against polio in the world's poorest countries.

Alongside Rotary, the UK Government has also supported GPEI since 1995 as the second largest sovereign donor. Through our joint commitment and strong advocacy, more than 18 million people are able to walk today who would have otherwise been paralysed by the virus. This decades-long partnership between Rotary International and the UK Government has eliminated the wild polio virus from Africa. We will continue our advocacy together, from the global to the grassroots level, until the wild polio virus is eliminated worldwide.

**Alun Cairns:**[\[121247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding is available for Rotary Great Britain and Ireland and other UK-based voluntary groups to support their work in eradicating polio.

**Wendy Morton:**

Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland is supported by contributions from the public. These contributions are transformed into service projects and grants that support polio eradication. The UK Government does not fund Rotary directly, though we work closely together as joint donors and partners in ridding the world of the polio virus through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office provides support to UK charities making a difference through grants, and our flagship volunteer scheme. The

Small Charities Challenge Fund provides grants to UK charities addressing Global Goals. The Volunteering for Development programme, delivered in partnership with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), supports volunteers to make an impact in the world's poorest communities.

■ **Ramy Kamel**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[121256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 June 2020 to Question 51598, what recent representations he has made to the Egyptian Government on behalf of Rami Kamil.

**James Cleverly:**

We are following the case of Ramy Kamel closely. Our Embassy in Cairo is in regular contact with his lawyer, and has expressed to the Egyptian authorities our concern about his ongoing detention. Most recently, our Ambassador raised our concerns about Ramy Kamel's case with the President of Egypt's National Council for Human Rights on 18 November.

■ **Sri Lanka: Human Rights**

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[121243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to bring forward a new UN Human Rights Council resolution on bringing perpetrators of violations of human rights to justice in Sri Lanka using an Independent Investigative Mechanism model at the next meeting of the UN (a) Human Rights Council and (b) General Assembly; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK has long supported efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, including in our role as penholder on Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). We firmly believe that UNHRC resolution 30/1, and its successor resolutions 34/1 and 40/1, remain the best framework for establishing truth and achieving justice and lasting reconciliation following the conflict in Sri Lanka. We have made this clear in statements delivered on behalf of the Core Group on Sri Lanka at the UNHRC in February, June and September.

The Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has also raised the importance of justice and accountability on several occasions with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena, most recently during calls on 4 and 5 November respectively. We will continue to engage with the Government of Sri Lanka to underline the importance we attach to this issue. Ahead of the March 2021 session of the UNHRC, we will continue to work with our international partners and with the HRC on how best to take forward this longstanding priority for the UK.

## ■ Syria: Overseas Aid

**Anna McMorris:**

[\[120110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Official Report, column 116WH, if his Department will maintain as a minimum the current level of Official Development Assistance spend in Syria in financial year 2021-22.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Syria's budget allocation for financial year 2021/22 will be confirmed when the details of the Government's Spending Review are finalised.

The UK has been one of the largest bilateral donors to the Syria Crisis since 2011. To date, we have committed over £3.3 billion in response to the Syria Crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. We will continue to support the Syrian people affected by the brutality of the Assad regime and we will continue to honour our commitment to support the Syrian people through humanitarian aid and pursuing accountability for the most serious crimes committed in Syria.

**Anna McMorris:**

[\[120111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, on what date funding decisions will be made on the level of Official Development Assistance to be allocated to Syria in financial year 2021-22.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Syria's budget allocation for financial year 2021/22 will be confirmed when the details of the Government's Spending Review are finalised.

The UK has been one of the largest bilateral donors to the Syria Crisis since 2011. To date, we have committed over £3.3 billion in response to the Syria Crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. We will continue to support the Syrian people affected by the brutality of the Assad regime and we will continue to honour our commitment to support the Syrian people through humanitarian aid and pursuing accountability for the most serious crimes committed in Syria.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Abortion

**Sir Edward Leigh:**

[\[109157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the HSA4 Abortion Notification forms received by the Department of Health and Social Care since 1st January 2020, how many abortions have been carried out under Ground E; and how many of the Ground E abortions (a) mentioned medical condition, (b) method of diagnosis, and (c) whether that was the only ground for abortion given.

**Helen Whately:**

Under the Abortion Act 1967, a pregnancy may be lawfully terminated by a registered medical practitioner in approved premises, if two medical practitioners are of the opinion, formed in good faith, that the abortion is justified under one or more of grounds A to G. Ground E refers to cases where “there is substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped”. There can be multiple reasons for an abortion for a fetal abnormality, therefore there can be more than one medical condition mentioned on a HSA4 form.

This data should be treated as provisional, meaning that it may be subject to revision if the Department receives further information from hospitals and clinics on missing information from HSA4 forms, or more forms are received.

There were 1,619 abortions performed under ground E between January to June 2020.

The attached table shows abortions performed under ground E, between January to June 2020 as follows:

- Total number of abortions performed under ground E alone or with any other ground;
- Total number of abortions performed under ground E alone;
- Total mentions of medical conditions; and
- Method of diagnosis.

**■ Abortion: Analgesics****Mary Glendon:****[110128]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to ensure the use of direct fetal analgesia prior to late-term abortions.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 November 2020]:* The Department does not set clinical practice. To support clinical practice, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has considered the issue of fetal pain and awareness in its guidelines ‘The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion’ and ‘Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations for Practice’, which are available at the following links:

[https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/abortion-guideline\\_web\\_1.pdf](https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/abortion-guideline_web_1.pdf)

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/rcogfetalawarenesswpr0610.pdf>

**■ Abortion: Drugs****Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**[\[115489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the publication on 1 October 2020 of supplementary analysis of the January-June 2020 abortion statistics, what gestation was reported on the notification form for each of the cases where abortion pills were taken after 10 weeks for (a) the 40 cases where the second pill only was taken at home and (b) the 10 cases where both pills were taken at home.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* Further breakdowns of the provisional data by gestation and home use are not currently available as we are reviewing and assuring the underlying data in advance of the annual National Statistics publication in summer 2021.

**■ Abortion: Safety****Fiona Bruce:**[\[109291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many meetings the Government has had with abortion providers to monitor the evidence on the safety of abortion pills taken at home since 30 March 2020.

**Fiona Bruce:**[\[109292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many meetings the Government has had with the Care Quality Commission to monitor the evidence on the safety of abortion pills taken at home since 30 March 2020

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 4 November 2020]:* The Government has had nine meetings with abortion providers and four meetings with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to monitor the evidence on the safety of abortion pills taken at home since 30 March 2020.

**■ Agmatine****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[115524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the legalisation of the supplement Agmatine for medical purposes.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* Agmatine is a substance that is classified as a novel food in the European Union. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) can confirm Agmatine is not present in any licensed medicines in the United Kingdom and there have been no clinical trials using agmatine either.

In order for the MHRA to authorise a medicine for use in the UK, a manufacturer has to apply to obtain a marketing authorisation. The MHRA makes its decision to approve a licence for a product based on demonstration of safety, quality and efficacy. Thus far, the MHRA has not received any application for Agmatine to be used for medical purposes.

## ■ **Babies: Neurology**

**Lisa Nandy:**

**[115627]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve awareness among (a) healthcare professionals and (b) the general public of the symptoms of infantile spasms.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* In February 2020, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) updated the clinical guideline Epilepsies: diagnosis and management, originally published January 2012, which covers diagnosing, treating and managing epilepsy and seizures in children, young people and adults. It offers best practice advice on identifying and managing epilepsy to improve health outcomes so that people with epilepsy can fully participate in daily life, and is designed to support children, young people and adults with epilepsy; as well as healthcare professionals. The guideline can be found at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg137>

## ■ **Brain: Injuries**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[120047]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have experienced a brain haemorrhage in each of the last five years.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ **Cancer: Diagnosis**

**Martyn Day:**

**[99674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve early diagnosis of sarcoma in children and young people.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement, through their Children's and Young People's Cancer Clinical Reference Group, is establishing Operational Delivery Networks (ODNs) to enable clinicians to lead and improve cancer pathways for children and young people with cancer, ensuring timely referral and diagnosis.

The recent publication of the 2020 Patient Survey report by the Bone Cancer Research Trust will assist ODNs with this task and the commencement of a clinical

trial is supported by NHS England and NHS Improvement, as recommended, to establish the reasons behind and the consequences of delayed diagnosis.

## ■ Cancer: Health Education

**Martyn Day:** [99670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase public awareness of (a) sarcoma and (b) other less common cancers.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement, launched a new cancer campaign in October 2020 encouraging people aged over 50 who are experiencing persistent symptoms which are indicative of a broad range of cancers to contact their general practitioner. Campaign resources are available to view at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/113-help-us>

## ■ Children: Mental Health Services

**Margaret Greenwood:** [118014]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of average waiting times for child and adolescent mental health services between March and October (a) 2020, (b) 2019, (c) 2018 and (d) 2017.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The information is not collected in the format requested.

## ■ Contact Tracing: Coronavirus

**Bill Esterson:** [106328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to allow local public health departments to write the scripts for telephone calls to contacts of people who have tested positive for covid-19.

**Bill Esterson:** [106329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports from local public health departments that the adequacy of the telephone script used in tracing the contacts of people who have tested positive for covid-19 affects (a) the proportion of contacts traced and (b) the compliance of those people contacted with self-isolation rules.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS Test and Trace adopts a continuous improvement approach to develop the scripts used by contact tracers on an ongoing basis. These have been designed by expert contact tracers at Public Health England. Local teams have access to central scripts and can adapt them to mirror the way in which they are following-up cases. This includes the use of a piloting approach to trial the impacts of alternative scripts,

or adjustments within scripts, to understand whether these improve the public experience of the service.

#### ■ **Contraceptives: Coronavirus**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[119311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic, published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health on 10 September 2020, what recent assessment he has made of the accessibility of remote contraceptive services to marginalised populations; and what steps he is taking to ensure the continuation of face-to-face services for people who experience obstacles in accessing remote services.

**Jo Churchill:**

Ensuring equal access to contraception will be a key theme of our new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy. Sexual and reproductive health services have remained open during the pandemic though some are temporarily reducing their face-to-face appointments and may only be able to see emergency or urgent cases in person. Services are maintaining access during this time through scaling up of online services including increasing eligibility through current provision or utilising a neighbours' service for residents of another local authority.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Birmingham**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[103600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support the Government is providing to Birmingham City Council to assist with covid-19 contact tracing in that area.

**Helen Whately:**

As of 12 October 2020, local authorities are eligible for a series of payments from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. We have committed another £465 million in funding for English local authorities through the local COVID alert level system. This funding will be provided to support proactive containment and intervention measures. Details of support made available have been sent to every local authority and will shortly be published on GOV.UK. This support is in addition to £300 million already allocated to local authorities in England for test, trace and contain activity.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[113146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to consult clinically extremely vulnerable groups on the introduction of new covid-19 guidance on shielding.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 12 November 2020]:* Previous shielding advice helped protect those most at risk from COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic, but many people told us they found this advice very restrictive. The new protective guidance is designed to offer practical and proportionate advice to help people protect themselves and minimise the need to introduce restrictive 'shielding' advice. This reflects the latest advice from senior clinicians, based on our current understanding of the virus. We continue to engage with a Shielding Working Group of over 30 charities and patient groups representing people who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

It is important that guidance and support to the clinically extremely vulnerable balances the risk of exposure to the virus with the potential negative consequences of shielding for a prolonged period.

**■ Coronavirus: Educational Institutions****Dr Dan Poulter:****[117233]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish covid-19 infection data for school and educational settings to improve the information available to teachers, parents and pupils.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Public Health England (PHE) reports on the number of suspected and confirmed clusters and outbreaks linked to schools in the weekly surveillance report which is available at the following link:

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

PHE publish a graph set alongside the weekly surveillance report, which includes additional figures within the 'Community Surveillance' and 'Surveillance in educational-age cohorts' sections. The most recent report is available at the following link:

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

**■ Coronavirus: Health Visitors****Tim Loughton:****[114745]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many health visitors have been reassigned to covid-19 responsibilities; and what plans he has to assign health visitors to the covid-19 vaccination programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2020]:* Public Health England does not collect health visitor redeployment data, decisions regarding deployment is locally determined.

Supporting babies and families has been a priority for local authorities, National Health Service community services and community restoration. Health visiting

services have remained in contact with families during the pandemic and will continue to provide interventions and support through a mixture of face to face and virtual contacts prioritising very young babies and vulnerable families.

NHS England and NHS Improvement lead on the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. This information is not held centrally as it is a local commissioning decision.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Hospitality Industry**

**John Redwood:**

**[106881]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the potential spread of covid-19 infection in the hospitality sector; and what assessment his Department has made of how that sector is able to operate while minimising risk.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

COVID-19 and Test and Trace programme data is used to understand risk factors for contracting the virus and understanding transmission better. This data includes individuals' occupation and exposure activities, for example within hospitality venues, in the time before onset of symptoms or the positive test. Public Health England (PHE) publishes weekly influenza and COVID-19 surveillance reports here and this includes data on suspected and confirmed COVID-19 outbreaks by setting:

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

## ■ **Coronavirus: Housing**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[117224]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with (a) local authorities, (b) health and social care commissioners, (c) Directors of Public Health and (d) community and voluntary sectors to tackle the potential effect of cold homes on covid-19 in winter 2020-21.

**Jo Churchill:**

In preparation for winter 2020-21, Public Health England (PHE) reviewed the Cold Weather Plan for England (CWP) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unchanged this year but PHE has published supplementary materials outlining the intersection of COVID-19 and cold weather risks. The Plan includes recommended actions for all stakeholders including the National Health Service, local authorities, health and social care commissioners, Directors of Public Health and the voluntary and community sector, to help prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of cold weather in England. These should continue to be followed with some additional considerations to mitigate concurrent COVID-19 risks. The CWP and supplementary materials are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cold-weather-plan-for-england>

To raise awareness of the resources, on 11 November PHE published a Health Matters Blog post on cold weather and COVID-19 alongside a stakeholder webinar. The Health Matters Blog is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-cold-weather-and-covid-19/health-matters-cold-weather-and-covid-19>

These resources were disseminated to stakeholders via Resilience Direct, the Winter Resilience Network, the Cabinet Office Communities Prepared Group and through PHE regions. Additional engagement included Directors of Public Health and Directors of Adult Social Services.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Laboratories**

**Ian Murray:** [\[92755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many members of staff are employed at each Lighthouse Laboratory covid-19 testing facility in the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 September 2020]:* We do not publish data in the format requested.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Lancashire**

**Mark Menzies:** [\[106968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support is being made available to help the (a) elderly and (b) people deemed clinically vulnerable who may opt to voluntarily self-shield following Lancashire's move into Tier 3 covid local alert level.

**Jo Churchill:**

National restrictions began in England from 5 November, which superseded additional guidance linked to the local COVID alert levels. Everyone in England, including those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, is required to follow the national restrictions, which have been set out by the Government and apply to the whole population.

The new information includes additional guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people, to help protect them from COVID-19. We will also write to individuals with a version of this guidance. These new shielding measures will apply nationally for four weeks up to 2 December. At the end of the period, we will look to return to a regional approach and will issue further guidance at the time.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[119310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of polymerase chain reaction tests for covid-19 give a false negative result.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* In June 2020 the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies published a briefing paper on the impact of false positives and false negatives in the United Kingdom's COVID-19 reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction testing programme, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gos-impact-of-false-positives-and-negatives-3-june-2020>

**Esther McVey:**

**[96880]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of false positive covid-19 test results on (a) the overall number of covid-19 cases in the UK and (b) subsequent covid-19 policy decisions.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 October 2020]:* The information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Stockport**

**Navendu Mishra:**

**[116690]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) information and (b) financial support is being made available to help protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable in Stockport.

**Jo Churchill:**

National restrictions began in England from 5 November. The Government has published guidance for people, including additional guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people, to help protect them from COVID-19. This applies to those in Stockport and the whole of England. The Government has also written to clinically extremely vulnerable people setting out the guidance and support that is available.

If a clinically extremely vulnerable person cannot work from home, they are advised not to attend work for this period of restrictions and may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay, Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit. The Government has also extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until March 2021, and everyone is encouraged to discuss this option with their employer.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Derek Twigg:**

**[114068]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of how many and what proportion of people in England may decline a covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2020]:* The Department is monitoring people's intention to take a vaccine as part of its planning processes, including regularly reviewing publicly available polling and any research conducted by other

Governmental organisations on the issue. Polls on people's intentions are indicative of general thinking around vaccine uptake as they rely on asking the public hypothetical questions about the future.

The Department recognises that public trust in vaccines will play a significant and important part in the uptake of a COVID-19 vaccine and therefore, we are working closely with Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to provide authoritative information to the public and urge everyone to seek National Health Service advice, so they have the right information to make an informed choice about getting vaccinated.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[116532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that GPs are allocated additional funding during a national covid-19 vaccination programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have now agreed with the British Medical Association's General Practitioners Committee in England that the general practice COVID-19 vaccination service will be commissioned in line with agreed national terms and conditions as an enhanced service.

The Item of Service fee will be £12.58 per vaccination. This is 25% more than the current fee for service for an influenza vaccination; recognising the extended requirements around the COVID-19 vaccination. In addition, a £150 million fund is being made available to support expanding general practitioner capacity in England up to the end of March 2021.

## ■ Coronavirus: Yorkshire and the Humber

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[111441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the four covid-19 mobile testing units operating in the Humber, how many people are employed on (a) permanent and (b) agency contracts to operate those units; and which agencies are used to so employ those people.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2020]:* We do not publish data in the format requested.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[111442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the four covid-19 mobile testing units operating in the Humber, how many members of staff working in those units have tested positive for covid-19 since those units began operating in April 2020; and if he will publish the number of those staff who have so tested positive for each month since April 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2020]:* We do not publish data in the format requested.

## ■ Dental Services: Patients

**Nadia Whittome:** [\[112135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of dental practices taking on new NHS patients.

**Nadia Whittome:** [\[112136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the proportion of dental services accepting new NHS patients.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 10 November 2020]:* No estimate has been made of the proportion of dental practices taking on new National Health Service patients.

If an appointment is required, patients with a regular dentist should call their regular dental practice in the first instance. Those unable to contact their own dentist or not currently registered with a dental practice should contact NHS 111, who will be able to help them contact an urgent dental service or arrange treatment if needed.

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

**Andy Slaughter:** [\[113522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the oral question of the hon Member for Hammersmith to the Leader of the House on 5 November 2020, Official Report, col 495, when he plans to answer Questions 95023, 95024, and 95025, tabled on 24 September 2020, and Question 97479, tabled on 30 September 2020, and Questions 103452, 103453, 103454, 103455 and 103456 tabled on 14 October 2020 by the hon. Member for Hammersmith.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2020]:* We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I refer the hon. Member to the answers to Questions [95024](#), [95025](#), [103452](#).

The hon. Member's remaining questions will be answered as soon as possible.

**Mr Steve Baker:** [\[116465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on answering Questions (a) 88299, (b) 104723, (c) 105362, (d) 109318, (e) 109319, (f) 109321, (g) 109322, (h) 109324, (i) 109325, (j) 109326, (k) 109328, (l) 112038, (m) 112041, (n) 112043 and (o) 91875.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2020]:* We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold the Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I refer the hon. Member to the answers to Questions [88299](#), [105362](#), [112038](#), [112043](#) and [91875](#).

The hon. Member's remaining questions will be answered as soon as possible.

**Emma Hardy:**[\[116626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Questions 107727, 107728, 107729, 108286 and 108287 tabled by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2020]:* We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold the Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The hon. Member's questions will be answered as soon as possible.

**■ Electronic Cigarettes: Coronavirus****Olivia Blake:**[\[119432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of indoor vaping on the transmission of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* No specific assessment has been made. Being in close proximity to anyone with COVID-19 infection would carry a risk of passing on that infection regardless of whether they are smoking or vaping. Public Health England has published COVID-19 advice for smokers and vapers which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-advice-for-smokers-and-vapers/covid-19-advice-for-smokers-and-vapers>

**■ Epilepsy: Students****Judith Cummins:**[\[99639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has provided to local services and universities currently under local restrictions to ensure

that students living with epilepsy are able to access medical appointments and prescriptions for their condition.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government has worked closely with universities on their safe reopening. We have issued guidance on GOV.UK to support this which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses#student-movement>.

During the pandemic there have been no restrictions on individuals on being able to attend medical appointments and accessing prescriptions for their medical conditions. Where a student is self-isolating and needs to access essential supplies like prescriptions, NHS Volunteer Responders may be able to help if they meet the criteria. Details are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-accessing-food-and-essential-supplies>.

Local authorities also have put in place support services which is another service students may be able to access alongside those provided by universities.

■ **Fertility: Medical Treatments**

**Steve McCabe:**

[99516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who no longer meet the (a) age or (b) other eligibility requirements for NHS-funded fertility treatment because of treatment delays during the covid-19 outbreak can still access that treatment.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 October 2020]:* The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment, is, and has been since the 1990s, 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 has been consistently clear that we expect CCGs to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

The Government expects CCGs to give fair consideration to all patients who have had fertility treatment delayed so that no one misses out on treatment due to COVID-19.

## ■ Foetuses: Pain

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[109163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the research entitled *Reconsidering fetal pain*, published in the *Journal for Medical Ethics* in January 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not set clinical practice. To support clinical practice, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has considered the issue of fetal pain and awareness in its guideline on *Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations for Practice*, published in March 2010.

The Department has brought the article to the attention of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. It is for the Royal College to consider whether to revise the guidelines, having looked at the available evidence.

## ■ General Practitioners

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[107662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to increase the (a) retention and (b) recruitment of GPs in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 2 November 2020]:* NHS England and Health Education England are working together with the profession to increase the general practice workforce in England. This includes measures to boost recruitment, address the reasons why doctors leave the profession, and encourage them to return to practice.

This year, a record 3,793 doctors accepted a place in general practitioner (GP) speciality training against a target of 3,500. From 2021, the number of GP training places will increase to 4,000 a year and to support a more balanced distribution of trainee capacity across the National Health Service, the proportion of time GP trainees spend in general practice during training will rise from 18 to 24 months. The updated GP Contract Framework (2020) announced a number of new schemes alongside continued support for existing retention schemes to support GPs to stay in the workforce. These schemes include the GP Retention scheme, the Fellowship Programme, the New to Partnership Payment and Supporting Mentors Scheme.

## ■ Hay Fever

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[120872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of people who have hay fever in the last five years.

**Edward Argar:**

This data is not held.

## ■ Health: Females

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[119312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure coherence between the forthcoming Sexual and Reproductive Health and Women's Health strategies.

**Jo Churchill:**

Officials are working closely together to ensure coherence between the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Women's Health Strategies.

Development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and Women's Health Strategy was paused at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, work on both strategies is now getting underway. We plan to publish the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy in 2021, details of the scope and objectives will be announced in due course. We are currently working to consider priorities for the Women's Health Strategy including how we can ensure that women's voices are heard more effectively moving forward.

## ■ Hearing Impairment: Veterans

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[109359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the long-term provision of NHS audiology care for veterans with service induced hearing loss.

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[110838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many applicants to the Veterans Hearing Fund have been (a) successful and (b) rejected in each month since the programme began.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2020]:* The latest Ministry of Defence annual population survey 'UK armed forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2017', published in 2019, states that 10% of working aged (16 to 64 years old) veterans reported issues with their hearing in comparison with 7% of civilians. When considering veterans over 64 years old this rises to 23% of veterans compared to 16% civilians. This does not differentiate between noise-induced hearing loss and age-induced hearing loss.

In England, veterans' hearing services and the associated hearing aids are commissioned on a local level by clinical commissioning groups. Veterans with noise-induced hearing loss have also been able to seek additional hearing support from the Royal British Legion's Veterans Hearing Aid Fund. The Fund was exclusively for items not supplied by statutory services. The Department does not hold details on the number of applications to the Fund.

**Horses: Slaughterhouses**

**Chris Evans:** [\[91027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many horses slaughtered in UK abattoirs in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020 held horse passports issued by Weatherbys passport issuing agencies.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

**In Vitro Fertilisation: Coronavirus**

**Catherine West:** [\[102889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the age criteria rules for IVF treatment to ensure delays resulting from the covid-19 outbreak do not cause those seeking treatment to become ineligible.

**Helen Whately:**

The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment, is, and has been since the 1990s, 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 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

The Government expects CCGs to give fair consideration to all patients who have had fertility treatment delayed so that no one misses out on treatment due to COVID-19.

**Indigestion**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[118001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) women, (b) men aged (i) under 30 and (ii) over 30 who have had chronic stomach indigestion in each of the last three years.

**Edward Argar:**

This data is not held.

**Influenza: Vaccination**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[113644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the British Society of Gastroenterology consensus guidelines on the management of inflammatory bowel disease in adults, published in 2019, if he will take steps to ensure that there is consistent access to the NHS influenza vaccine for people with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

**Jo Churchill:**

Those with disease and ulcerative colitis may be more at risk of infections like flu if being treated with either immunosuppressant medicines – such as azathioprine, methotrexate and mercaptopurine; or biological medicines – such as adalimumab and infliximab. It is therefore recommended that they have the influenza vaccine every year.

The Green Book sets out clinical risk groups who should receive the influenza immunisation, including those who are immunosuppressed. However, the list is not exhaustive, and the Green Book states that medical practitioners should apply clinical judgment to take into account the risk of influenza exacerbating any underlying disease that a patient may have, as well as the risk of serious illness from influenza itself.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[120182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 110283, whether egg-free influenza vaccines are being made available to GP practices.

**Jo Churchill:**

General practitioners (GPs) 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, including stocks of egg-free cell-based quadrivalent influenza vaccine, to ensure more flu vaccines are available this winter. GPs who have exhausted their own supply are now able to order more flu vaccines from this central stock and is already being delivered across the country.

**■ Integrated Care Systems****Karin Smyth:**[\[119280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October to Question 100452 on Integrated Care Systems, if he will publish the record of the discussions with local authority leaders on legislative proposals that would put Integrated Care Systems on a statutory basis.

**Edward Argar:**

We have no central record of the discussions referred to.

**■ Lung Cancer: Health Services****Jim Shannon:**[\[116481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of levels of (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment of lung cancer during periods of covid-19 lockdown.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England continues to encourage people to access services, especially cancer services, through the 'Help Us, Help You' campaign.

Specialist cancer hubs have been set up to provide COVID-19 secure treatment and diagnostic environments.

In October, the National Health Service issued £150 million in capital funding to regions for investment in diagnostic equipment such as magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography scanners.

**■ Maternity Services: Training****Jeremy Hunt:**[\[116433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS spent on support safety training for maternity staff in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020 to date.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2020]:* National Health Service providers are responsible for delivering safe services and ensuring that staff receive the training they need to provide the highest standard of care.

Health Education England (HEE) allocated £420,000 to directly support maternity safety training in 2019/20. No funds were directly allocated to be spent on maternity safety training in 2018/19 or 2020/21 by the HEE maternity programme.

**■ Medical Treatments: Negligence****Richard Fuller:**[\[115582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on patients of the time limitations for bringing a claim against a manufacturer of (a) mesh, (b) essure sterilisation and (c) breast implants.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department has made no direct assessment.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[115583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Bolton South East of 15 July 2020 on the implementation of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 26 November 2020.

**Mr John Baron:**

[\[120801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 7 September, 7 October and 5 November 2020 regarding his constituent Ms Mavis Guest.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* We replied to the hon. Member on 26 November 2020.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[116540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Digital report entitled Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020 which found that the proportion of children with mental health issues is 50 per cent higher than before the covid-19 outbreak, what steps he plans to take to tackle the mental health needs of children.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

National Health Service mental health services have remained open throughout the pandemic and services have deployed digital tools to connect with people and provide ongoing support. NHS England has also asked all mental health trusts to ensure there are 24 hours a day, seven days a week open access telephone lines for urgent NHS mental health support, advice and triage for all ages through a single point of access.

Our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme is providing schools and colleges with the knowledge and access to resources to support children and young people, teachers and parents. On 8 September, Public Health England (PHE) launched a mental wellbeing campaign for children and young people. It expands PHE's Better Health-Every Mind Matters website with content specifically for children and young people and their parents and carers.

## ■ **Mental Health Services: Coronavirus**

**Joy Morrissey:**

[\[119382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to work with (a) the Lily Jo Project and (b) other mental health organisations to support people affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We continue to work closely with the National Health Service, Public Health England and a wide range of stakeholders to support people's mental wellbeing and mental health throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

**■ Mental Health Services: Fathers****Jeremy Hunt:**[\[117967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve mental health services for new fathers experiencing mental health difficulties during the perinatal period.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* The NHS Long Term Plan commits the National Health Service to expanding access to evidence-based psychological therapies within specialist perinatal mental health services so that they also include parent-infant, couple, co-parenting and family interventions.

Fathers and partners of women accessing specialist perinatal mental health services and maternity outreach clinics will be offered evidence-based assessments for their mental health and signposting to support as required. This will help the five to 10% of fathers who experience mental health difficulties during the perinatal period and increase access to evidence-based psychological support and therapy, including digital options, in maternity settings.

**■ Mental Health Services: Students****Jim Shannon:**[\[115656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that students who are self-isolating as a result of covid-19 have access to counselling for anxiety and mental health problems.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are doing our utmost to ensure that our mental health services are there for everyone who needs them during the pandemic. The National Health Service has worked hard to keep mental health services going during the first peak, using technology where needed but also face to face appointments where appropriate. Talking therapies will continue to be available remotely so people can access help safely from home and the NHS will work to ensure the option of face-to-face support is provided to people with serious mental health illnesses across all ages where it is clinically safe to do so.

**■ NHS and Social Services: Coronavirus****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[91957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) NHS and (b) social care staff have died from covid-19 since the start of the outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Office for National Statistics publishes mortality data for deaths involving COVID-19 for healthcare workers and social care workers in England and Wales. The latest release showed that in England there were 305 deaths involving COVID-19 among healthcare workers and 307 deaths involving COVID-19 among social care workers

registered between 9 March and 12 October 2020 in England, of those aged 20-64 years, using last known occupation. The definition of healthcare workers used will include not only those employed in the National Health Service but wider healthcare sector workers.

## ■ **NHS: Safety**

**Jeremy Hunt:**

**[115553]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is the Government is taking to ensure that the NHS is the safest healthcare system in the world for both patients and staff.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* The Government is clear in its commitment to improve the quality and safety of care and treatment across England.

NHS England and NHS Improvement published the NHS's first ever Patient Safety Strategy in July 2019. The Strategy sets out a vision to continue to improve patient safety, building on the foundation of a patient safety culture and patient safety system.

A series of programmes are planned and underway to help create a safety culture in the National Health Service and to continuously improve the safety of patients in the NHS. For example, patients are being supported to contribute to their own safety by having patients or their advocates on all safety-related clinical governance committees in NHS organisations.

## ■ **Obesity: Health Services**

**Stuart Anderson:**

**[119374]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September to Question 82393, which (a) Ministers and (b) officials his Department is engaging with on the implementation of the Government's obesity reduction strategy, and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Ministers and officials across Government work very closely on reducing obesity and implementing the measures set out in 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives'. Areas of collaboration include the Department working with:

- HM Treasury on fiscal measures including the soft drink industry levy;
- the Department for Education on early years, school food and sports in schools;
- the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on advertising restrictions, the Nutrient Profiling Model, and broader sport and physical activity policy;
- the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on planning;

- the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on food labelling including the marketing and labelling of infant foods, the National Food Strategy and the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services;
- the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on regulatory measures impacting businesses;
- the Department for Transport on promoting active travel and the living streets project;
- the Department for Work and Pensions on food poverty; and
- the Department for International Trade on front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

We will continue to consider the views of a wide range of stakeholders and experts as we implement the obesity strategy and will continue to listen going forwards.

#### ■ Out-patients: Attendance

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[119375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of the cost to the NHS of missed appointments without prior notice.

**Edward Argar:**

Many general practices make patients aware of the cost of missed appointments through information displayed in practice waiting rooms or via other channels. Patients are encouraged to attend booked appointments by text messages and other means of communication that remind them about appointments.

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to focus on improving access to services to ensure patients can access an appointment at a time and in a way that is most convenient to them, including via face to face, online or telephone consultations. Projects to increase appointment compliance are locally led by National Health Service trusts/providers.

#### ■ Outpatients: Travel Restrictions

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[117982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing guidance to NHS Acute (Hospital) Trusts in London to ensure that out-patient appointments are only offered to patients with Freedom Passes when travel restrictions allow.

**Edward Argar:**

Access to healthcare is always determined on a clinical basis and is service specific. To limit access to outpatient services only to those with a Freedom Pass will exclude a significant cohort of patients who may not require or meet the needs of getting a Freedom Pass but do have urgent clinical needs, such as paediatric or cancer patients.

The Government's advice during this current lockdown allows the public to travel for hospital, general practitioner and other medical appointments or visits, and so there are no travel restrictions in place in regard to healthcare reasons.

### ■ **Protective Clothing: Contracts**

**Rachel Reeves:**

[\[113543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many orders for personal protective equipment through contracts awarded by his Department are currently unfulfilled.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2020]:* Over 32 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been ordered overall from United Kingdom-based manufacturers and international partners of which over 20 billion is already in the UK. We have a robust process which ensures that orders are of high quality standard, meet commercial due diligence and are checked for risk and fraud. All contracts are monitored for the delivery and safe receipt of the PPE and any compliance issues are followed up, the timings of which will vary according to when the contract was let.

All contracts have clauses in them that allow the Department to seek redress if the company supplies faulty products or misses delivery dates.

### ■ **Protective Clothing: Costs**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[109145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, (a) What is the combined cost of the 11 largest contracts for the supply of Personal Protective Coveralls, (b) what is the total number of Personal Protective Coveralls procured under each contract, and (c) what is the unit price per Personal Protective Coverall by each supplier of the largest 11 contracts; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

Three hundred and seventy contracts have been awarded by the Department for the supply of all types of personal protective equipment (PPE). The published Contract Award Notices contain details on the different types of PPE ordered against each contract, information which is not collated centrally prior to publication. Purchase orders have been raised against these contracts for over 29 million coveralls which are in the process of being delivered to the United Kingdom or have already arrived and are then quality checked at our UK warehouses before being distributed to the frontline.

Information on the unit price of PPE ordered under each contract is considered commercially confidential.

## ■ School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[118549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the saving to the public purse as a result of suspending the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme from March to September 2020; and how those funds have been allocated.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 November 2020]:* The saving to the public purse as a result of suspending the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme from for the final two weeks of the spring term and the whole of the summer term 2020 was just over £10 million.

The funding for the Scheme which was not spent during the suspension was used to support other Government priorities during the pandemic.

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[118551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the cost of the contract for the delivery of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme has reduced in recent years.

**Jo Churchill:**

The cost of the contract for the delivery of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme has not reduced in recent years. It has, however, fluctuated in recent years by £1 million or £2 million depending on any supply challenges or distributor issues.

## ■ Suicide: Harlow

**Robert Halfon:** [\[117976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have died by suicide in Harlow constituency compared to the national average in each of the last three years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* The Department does not hold the requested data.

## ■ Suicide: Railways

**Robert Halfon:** [\[117975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Transport to help prevent suicides on the railways.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* The fourth progress report of the cross-Government suicide prevention strategy recognises the importance of reducing access to the means to attempt suicide, including on railways.

Our cross-Government suicide prevention workplan, published by the Department of Health and Social Care in 2019, includes actions led by the Department for Transport to reduce suicides on our railways, such as the Small Talk Saves Lives campaign

launched with Samaritans, and work with British Transport Police that brings together local health and social care partners to address identified problem sites.

The Department for Transport continues to meet with the transport industry and stakeholders to discuss best practice in suicide prevention on England's transport networks.

### ■ **Test and Trace Support Payment: Supply Teachers**

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[113647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether agency supply teachers who are asked to self isolate by a school on behalf of Public Health England are eligible to apply for the Test and Trace support payment scheme without a NHS Test and Trace number.

**Helen Whately:**

The Test and Trace Support Payment is available to people who are required to self-isolate, are on a low income and will lose income because they are unable to work from home. Applicants need to have a Test and Trace reference number to demonstrate they have been formally required to self-isolate. Where a school asks staff to self-isolate, in line with guidance given by local public health teams, the school is asked to provide NHS Test and Trace with the details of people who have been told to self-isolate. The school will then receive a notification, including a Test and Trace reference number, which any eligible staff can use to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment.

### ■ **Vulnerable Adults: Coronavirus**

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[117993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a person is able to stay overnight at another residence to assist a vulnerable relative while that relative's spouse is in hospital under the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and what plans he has to ensure that people are able to provide care in a vulnerable relative's home after 2 December 2020 under a new tiered system of restrictions.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Under the November 2020 COVID-19 lockdown regulations, carers can arrange for friends or family to care for a vulnerable or disabled person that they usually look after as a form of respite care. If a carer needs a break, or to receive medical treatment, they can arrange for a friend or family member to come into the home of the person who needs care, to stay and provide care overnight. This arrangement is permissible if it is reasonably necessary for the purpose of respite care to be provided for the person being cared for.

Cabinet Office guidance published on GOV.UK sets out further information on the permitted reasons for an overnight stay during the November 2020 COVID-19 lockdown. The Government is keeping this guidance under constant review, and any changes to this guidance will be announced in due course.

**HOME OFFICE**■ **Airports****Steve Double:**[\[120896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that there is no disruption to EU passengers at UK airports after the end of the transition period from 1 January 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

From 1 January 2021, EU, EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members will be subject to UK immigration control on the same basis as non-EEA nationals.

The Government has already set out its position that EU, EEA and Swiss nationals can continue to use e-passport gates, beyond the end of the transition period, on a similar basis to how nationals of the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore and South Korea currently use them.

**Steve Double:**[\[120897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to ensure that Border Force has (a) resources and (b) processes in place at airports after the end of the transition period from 1 January 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Border Force is continuing to build a pipeline of resource required to meet end of Transition requirements. In addition to c.900 officers recruited prior to FY 20/21, Border Force are currently recruiting an additional c.1100 staff - c.670 of these are required for the end of the Transition Period, with the remainder being recruited to be ready for the completion of phased border controls in July 2021.

Border Force is ensuring maximum flexibility in its recruitment and deployment model, including increasing the size of its mobile Readiness Taskforce to c.400 staff, which will enable swift deployment of staff to respond to peaks and pressures as they occur.

Border Force is confident that resources will meet the anticipated overall operational requirements by the end of December. This will be primarily through permanent recruitment, with any gaps filled through contingency routes.

In addition to providing comprehensive training to all new starters, Border Force is also currently delivering a programme of training for existing staff covering changes to policy and processes at the end of the Transition Period.

It is though worth noting international passenger travel has been greatly reduced by restrictions implemented worldwide in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## ■ Assadolah Assadi

**Martyn Day:**

**[119300]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of threats against Iranian dissidents and activists in the UK as a result of the forthcoming trial against an Iranian diplomat in Belgium on terrorism charges relating to alleged plots to bomb a conference of Iranian dissidents in 2018.

**James Brokenshire:**

The UK takes a zero-tolerance approach to violence and threats. We will continue to work closely with our international allies to protect the UK and our interests from any Iran-based threats.

## ■ Biometric Residence Permits

**Patrick Grady:**

**[120888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of appointments for biometric enrollment are her Department's commercial partners Sopra Steria required to offer to applicants for free at any given time.

**Chris Philp:**

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) regarding availability of free appointments for biometric enrolment related to Sopra Steria Ltd is published on a quarterly basis as part of the Key Performance Indicators for Government's Most Important Contracts held by the Home Office.

Please follow the below link;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-performance-indicators-kpis-for-governments-most-important-contracts>

*Note: In order to find the information specific to Sopra Steria Ltd and the front end services contract, this can be identified via column C and selecting Sopra Steria Ltd.*

## ■ British Nationality: Ceremonies

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[113663]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has made to enable the covid-safe continuation of citizenship ceremonies during the period of the new national covid-19 lockdown from 5 November 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

Each local authority is responsible for administering citizenship ceremonies. Local authorities strictly follow Government as well as local advice relating to social distancing and public safety.

In addition, an innovative process for 'virtual' citizenship ceremonies was implemented in July. Work continues to increase availability of virtual ceremonies across local authorities to maximise opportunities for applicants to attend one.

## ■ Demonstrations: Coronavirus

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[121191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 November 2020 to Question 117954, if she will publish which provisions under the Serious Crime Act 2007 which allow for someone engaging in peaceful protest that is in breach of Coronavirus regulations to be detained and/or charged under that Act; and if she will make a statement.

**Kit Malthouse:**

People are required to follow the rules under the current national measures that are in place for large gatherings, including protests. They are in place to protect the public and save lives during this national pandemic.

Sections 44 to 46 of the Serious Crime Act 2007 provide for offences of encouraging or assisting an offence. Whether someone engaging in peaceful protest that is in breach of Coronavirus regulations has committed an offence under sections 44 to 46 of the Serious Crime Act of encouraging or assisting an offence will depend on the circumstances.

Individual decisions on detaining or charging an individual are operational matters for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

## ■ Extradition

**Philip Davies:**

[\[114805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that UK courts have the right to demand to see and assess evidence of a *prima facie* case to answer which has been collected by the requesting state in extradition cases after the transition period and (b) when that evidence is considered insufficient to refuse that request.

**James Brokenshire:**

*In the absence of an agreement on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice with the European Union, the UK's extradition relations with EU Member States would be governed by the European Convention on Extradition 1957 and its Additional Protocols. The prima facie evidence requirement for extradition requests from States which are parties to the European Convention on Extradition was removed when the Convention came into force in the UK in May 1991. To introduce a prima facie case requirement would be incompatible with the Convention.*

*The Government's approach to negotiations with the EU provides for extradition arrangements which are more streamlined than the European Convention on Extradition. The Government has not sought to introduce a prima facie case requirement, as to do so would render future arrangements with the EU less effective at bringing fugitives to justice than the Convention. However, the Government is seeking to introduce further safeguards beyond those included in the EAW Framework Decision. These would guarantee a judge in the UK the ability to dismiss a warrant from an EU Member State on the basis that it is a disproportionate*

*interference with the requested person's rights and/or if there has not yet been a decision to charge and try them.*

## ■ Fire Stations: Air Pollution

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[119158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference the finding in the University of Central Lancashire report entitled Minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic fire effluents: Interim Best Practice Report, published in November 2020, that exposure to high levels of toxic contaminants increased cancer among firefighters, if she will take steps to improve indoor air quality in fire stations.

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[119160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference the report by the University of Central Lancashire entitled Minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic fire effluents: Interim Best Practice Report, published in November 2020 and the finding in that report that exposure to high levels of toxic contaminants increased cancer among firefighters, if he will meet with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to discuss steps to improve Government guidance on indoor air quality in public sector buildings.

**James Brokenshire:**

Responsibility for health and wellbeing of firefighters rests with Fire and Rescue Authorities as employers. This includes working conditions inside fire stations. There are strict requirements for decontamination of personal protective equipment following incidents which should always be followed.

The National Fire Chiefs' Council's (NFCC) Health and Wellbeing lead, has established a health and wellbeing board to drive positive change across the sector which focuses on prevention, early intervention and support for individuals. The Home Office are supporting these initiatives.

## ■ Fisheries and UK Border Force

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[120961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to combine the Fishery Protection and Border Force fleets to form a sea-going UK Coastguard.

**Chris Philp:**

Whilst we do not comment on any future Home Office or UK Government Policy it is worth noting that the Marine, Maritime Organisation (MMO), an executive agency of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for the enforcement of fishing and various marine environmental regulations in English waters.

Within UK Government, the Department for Transport has the overall responsibility for the establishment, operation and maintenance of an adequate and effective civil

maritime and civil aeronautical search and rescue service. This is delegated to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and delivered through HM Coastguard.

## ■ Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[119352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of changes in Government funding for fire and rescue services on (b) the ability of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service to protect people's lives and (b) public safety.

**James Brokenshire:**

Fire and rescue services have the resources they need to do their important work.

Overall fire and rescue authorities will receive around £2.3 billion in 2020/21.

Standalone fire and rescue authorities will see an increase in core spending power of 3.2 per cent in cash terms compared with 2019/20.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service will receive a core spending power of £67.1 million in 2020/21, an increase of £2.0 million since 2019/20 (3.1%).

Decisions on how resources are allocated across prevention, protection and operational functions are best deployed to meet core functions are a matter for each fire and rescue authority.

## ■ Home Office: Correspondence

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[114289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's average response time to enquiries from hon. Members was in (a) August, (b) September and (c) October 2020.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Home Office does not measure the average time for responding to correspondence from hon. Members.

However, in line with Cabinet Office guidance, the Home Office has a target of responding within 20 working days where a response is required.

As you will understand, the Home Office has, during the current year, dealt with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. The Home Office ensures that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised and is taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[114290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average response time is for her Department to respond to enquiries from hon. Members.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Home Office does not measure the average time for responding to correspondence from hon. Members.

However, in line with Cabinet Office guidance, the Home Office has a target of responding within 20 working days where a response is required.

As you will understand, the Home Office has, during the current year, dealt with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. The Home Office ensures that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised and is taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

**Human Trafficking: Victim Support Schemes****Alex Norris:**[\[121339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether financial support for victims of human trafficking is adjusted for inflation.

**Victoria Atkins:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to UIN 120984 on 30th November 2020.

**Immigration****Robert Largan:**[\[119427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) visa applications, (b) asylum claims and (c) indefinite leave to remain applications have been accepted (i) nationally and (ii) in the High Peak constituency in the first six months of 2020.

**Robert Largan:**[\[119428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) visa applications, (b) asylum claims and (c) indefinite leave to remain applications have been rejected (i) nationally and (ii) in the High Peak constituency in the first six months of 2020.

**Robert Largan:**[\[119429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) visa applications, (b) asylum claims and (c) indefinite leave to remain applications have been processed (i) nationally and (ii) in the High Peak constituency in the first six months of 2020.

**Robert Largan:**[\[119430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) visa applications, (b) asylum claims and (c) indefinite leave to remain applications are still outstanding (i) nationally and (ii) in the High Peak constituency as at 23 November 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

The available data on entry clearance visa applications are published in table Vis\_D01 of the Entry clearance visa detailed datasets.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets> Data on decisions, including whether this was a grant or refusal, are published in table Vis\_D02. All data can be broken down by nationality.

The available data on indefinite leave to remain applications are published in settlement tables <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020/list-of-tables#settlement> se\_02\_q and se\_03.

The available information on other data on processing times are published as part of the Migration Transparency data, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>.

The Home Office publishes data on asylum in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release> Data on asylum applications are published in table Asy\_D01 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-applications-decisions-and-resettlement> of the Asylum and resettlement detailed datasets. Data on initial decisions, including whether this was a grant or refusal, are published in table Asy\_D02. Data on the number of asylum applications awaiting a decision are published in table Asy\_D03. All data can be broken down by nationality.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending September 2020. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-statistics-data-tables-year-ending-september-2020#asylum-and-resettlement>. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2020>

The Home Office has no published data to answer part (ii) of the questions regarding the High Peak constituency. The information is not readily available nor held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Stella Creasy:**

**[121249]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the guidance that has been issued to youth offending teams and prison governors on how to assist children to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

The EU Settlement Scheme guidance published on gov.uk applies to all who may apply under the scheme, including young offenders. The Home Office is working with

the Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service and the Devolved Administrations to raise awareness of the scheme and the guidance.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Afzal Khan:** [\[121005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton dated 19 February 2020 on Mr Ignisious Gaisah.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has no trace on its systems of receiving correspondence from the Hon. Member for Manchester Gorton on behalf of his constituent Mr Ignisious Gaisah. The UKVI MP Account Management team will contact the Hon. Member's office to resolve this matter and any other outstanding correspondence from the Hon. Member.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[121006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton dated 16 October 2020 on Mr Saqib Ali.

**Kevin Foster:**

A reply was sent on 26 November 2020.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[121355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 16 October 2020 on Huzaifah Mustafa and Zainish Ellahi.

**Kevin Foster:**

An official response was sent on 27 November 2020.

## ■ **Terrorism: Iran**

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[119181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the forthcoming trial against an Iranian diplomat in Belgium on terrorism charges, what discussions she has had with police services on threats against Iranian dissidents and political activists in the UK.

**James Brokenshire:**

The UK takes a zero-tolerance approach to violence and threats. We will continue to work closely with our international allies to protect the UK and our interests from any Iran-based threats.

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

**■ Work Experience: EU Nationals****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[114248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether young people from EU countries will be allowed to continue to pursue unpaid short-term work placements in the UK without a work permit after the transition period.

**Kevin Foster:**

Free Movement will end on 31 December 2020 with the end of the Transition Period. Following the end of the Transition Period EEA and Swiss nationals will be able to continue to travel to the UK for holidays or short-term trips, without needing a visa.

We have set out plans to introduce a future points-based immigration system, which together with our generous list of Permitted Paid Engagements and Activities within the visitor route, will provide a route for workers within the Charity sector to undertake voluntary work within the Tier 5 route.

We have also 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. This may also provide a viable route for EU nationals to come to the UK to work on a voluntary basis.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Buildings: Insulation****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[119228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether UK Finance has officially acknowledged that leaseholders of residential properties without external cladding do not need to provide an EWS1 form to finance, remortgage or sell their properties.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 process is not a Government or regulatory requirement. Whether an EWS1 is needed is determined by lenders and the professionals valuing a building - not all lenders ask for an EWS1. The Department has come to an agreement with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) that flats in blocks without cladding do not need an EWS1 form. Government will continue to work with industry to support a more proportionate approach to valuations of flats.

**■ Collective Worship: Coronavirus****Emma Hardy:**[\[121343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the latest guidance on places of worship in tier 3 remaining open, what acts of collective worship are allowed in areas in tier 3.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

We are pleased that from 3 December, places of worship can open for communal worship in all tiers, including tier 3. They must ensure that they are Covid-secure, taking account of the social distancing guidance. Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies are also permitted in places of worship in all tiers, with up to 15 people in attendance, as are funerals, with up to 30 people in attendance.

**Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[119333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to ensure adequate funding for the statutory duties in the Domestic Abuse Bill to ensure local authorities can provide support and protection to those experiencing domestic abuse and their children.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Following the outcome of Spending Review, £125 million funding will be allocated to local authorities, to cover costs of the new duty to provide support in safe accommodation for 2021-22.

MHCLG has also provided £6 million to support relevant local authorities to undertake early planning and preparation work so they are ready to implement the new duty.

**EU Grants and Loans****Louise Haigh:**[\[120914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the average amount of European Structural Investment Funding was per year for the period 2014-20; and what the projected average Shared Prosperity Fund funding will be per year.

**Luke Hall:**

The UK Partnership Agreement 2019 states that the total European Structural and Investment Funds allocated to the UK for the 2014-2020 programme was €16.4 billion. This includes €11 billion for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF), which are known collectively as 'Structural Funds'.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is the domestic successor to the EU Structural Fund programme. We will ramp up funding so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match EU receipts. Funding profiles will be confirmed at the next Spending Review.

**Help to Buy Scheme: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[119175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the Help to Buy Loan

scheme to the end of 2021 to allow people whose purchases have been disrupted by the covid-19 outbreak to complete those purchases under that scheme.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government recognises that there have been delays caused by Covid-19. That is why on 31 July a two-month extension was announced to the building completion deadline from 31 December 2020 to 28 February 2021. The legal completion deadline for the purchase remains 31 March 2021.

The Government also announced an extra measure to protect existing customers who have experienced severe delays as a result of coronavirus. Homes England, who administer Help to Buy, will work with those who had a reservation in place before 30 June to assess their situation and look to provide an extension where necessary, in which case, they will have until 31 May 2021 to legally complete. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-to-buy-scheme-extended>.

We believe these measures provide sufficient time for developers to build out homes delayed by Covid-19 and protect customers whose purchases have been significantly delayed. There are no plans to extend the current scheme further.

Meanwhile the Government's new Help to Buy scheme, which will replace the current scheme and is for first time buyers only, will commence on 1 April 2021 and run until March 2023. More information can be found at: <https://www.helptobuy.gov.uk/equity-loan/help-to-buy-equity-loan-2021-2023/>.

■ **Holiday Accommodation: Non-domestic Rates**

**Tim Farron:**

[121224]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent progress he has made on the Business rates treatment of self-catering accommodation consultation.

**Luke Hall:**

The Government is grateful to those who responded to the consultation, and is considering how to address the questions raised.

This includes considering the impact on local authorities' income and the Exchequer, the deliverability of possible reforms, and the impact of coronavirus on the UK's tourism industry.

The Government will set out its next steps in due course.

■ **Housing: Construction**

**Adam Holloway:**

[119194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason the new standard method for assessing local housing need uses a house price to workplace-based earnings ratio rather than a house price to residence-based earnings ratio.

**Adam Holloway:**

**[119195]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what comparative assessment he has made of the effect of using a (a) house price to workplace-based earnings ratio and (b) house price to residence-based earnings ratio on the assessed local housing need of towns where people commute to work in nearby cities.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The consultation on changes to the current planning system set out the elements we want to balance when determining local housing need, including meeting our target of building 300,000 homes, tackling affordability challenges in the places people most want to live, regenerating brownfield sites, and renewing and levelling up our towns and cities. The affordability adjustment used in the proposed standard method is based on the median house price to workplace-based earnings ratio, published annually by the Office for National Statistics. The house price to workplace-based earnings ratio compares the median salary earned in a local authority against the median house price in that same authority area. We have consulted on each element of the indicative formula, including affordability, and are considering carefully how they work together to achieve an appropriate distribution. The proposals were out for consultation until 1 October 2020. Following consideration of the consultation responses received, the Government will publish a response.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

**[121115]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to make (a) heat pumps, (b) solar panels and (c) other domestic renewable technologies compulsory for new housing in future planning regulations.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Mandating a particular renewable technology may not be appropriate for all dwellings in all areas. National planning policy encourages the use of renewables without requiring any particular technology. In the case of the Building Regulations, the Government sets minimum energy performance standards for new homes and non-domestic buildings. These are expressed in performance terms and do not prescribe the technologies, materials or fuels to be used. This allows builders and homeowners the flexibility to innovate and select the most practical and cost-effective solutions appropriate in any development. Not all dwellings may be suitable for solar panels because of their orientation and other reasons such as structural strength of the roof.

In October 2019, we launched the first stage of a two-part consultation that proposed changes to Part L of the Building Regulations for new homes. We proposed an ambitious uplift in the energy efficiency of new homes through the introduction of a Future Homes Standard. We expect that homes built to the Future Homes Standard will have carbon dioxide emissions 75-80 per cent lower than those built to current Building Regulations standards. This means they will be fit for the future, with low carbon heating and very high fabric standards.

We committed in Planning for the Future to review the roadmap to the Future Homes Standard to ensure that implementation takes place to the shortest possible timeline. We will be publishing the Government response to the Future Homes Standard interim uplift consultation as soon as possible. This will set out a roadmap to the Future Homes Standard.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[121116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to introduce planning regulations to require new build homes to (a) be zero carbon and (b) have built in domestic renewables which generate at least 50 per cent of that home's energy needs by December 2023.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Hon. Member to my answer to Question 121115 on 1 December. I will add that the Government remains committed to meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050 and recognises the important contribution that the energy efficiency of buildings has to make in meeting it. National Planning Policy expects that local authorities should adopt proactive strategies to reduce carbon emissions, recognising the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. There are provisions in the Planning and Energy Act 2008 that allow development plan policies to impose reasonable requirements for renewable energy use. This means that a proportion of energy used in development in their areas can be energy from renewable sources and/or be low carbon energy from sources in the locality of the development.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[121315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his 21 November 2020 announcement entitled Government steps in to help homeowners caught up in EWS1 process, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of leaseholders and homeowners who will continue to need an EWS1 certificate to sell their home.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 process is not a Government form or regulatory requirement, and the Department does not hold data on its use. It was designed by industry to aid the valuations of buildings over 18 metres. Whether an EWS1 is needed is determined by lenders and the professionals valuing a building - not all lenders ask for an EWS1.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[121316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his 21 November 2020 announcement entitled Government steps in to help homeowners caught up in EWS1 process, what recent estimate he has made of the number of buildings awaiting a survey; and what his timeframe is for resolving that backlog.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 process is not a Government form or regulatory requirement, and the Department does not hold data on its use. Government has announced the provision of £700,000 funding to train more assessors. This will help speed up valuations where EWS1 forms are justified.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[121317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his 21 November 2020 announcement entitled Government steps in to help homeowners caught up in EWS1 process, what his timeframe is for issuing additional guidance on indemnity insurance.

**Christopher Pincher:**

My Department has been engaging with the insurance industry to investigate commercial and Government solutions that improve the availability of professional indemnity insurance solutions (PII) for key building safety professionals, including those working on the EWS1 process. This is a highly technical area with complex market dynamics; however, discussions have been positive and a number of options are being investigated.

**■ Levelling Up Fund****Steve Reed:**[\[121264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the criteria by which bids for funding from the Levelling Up Fund will be assessed.

**Steve Reed:**[\[121265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Levelling Up Fund announced in the Spending Review 2020, how his Department will assess which local authority areas are able to bid for funding.

**Kate Hollern:**[\[121266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, over what period local areas will be able to bid for funding from the Levelling Up Fund.

**Kate Hollern:**[\[121267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding from the Levelling Up Fund will be available to local areas to bid for in (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

**Luke Hall:**

The Government is launching a new Levelling Up Fund worth £4 billion for England, that will attract up to £800 million for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the usual way. This will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery.

The Fund will be open to all local areas and allocated competitively. In its assessment process, the Fund will adopt the approach in the refreshed Green Book to ensure that investment supports levelling up and spreads opportunity across the UK – with projects assessed on how well they deliver policy aims and their impact on local areas.

We will publish a prospectus for the Fund and launch the first round of competitions in the New Year.

## ■ Local Government: Sussex

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[119436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what fiscal steps his Department is taking to support local authorities in Sussex during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Luke Hall:**

For 2020-21, we have now committed over £7.2 billion for local authorities to fund their response to the Covid-19 pandemic, even before the extension of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund for those authorities under the highest level of restriction – potentially worth over £200 million a month – which was announced as part of the Covid-19 Winter Plan. This is part of an unprecedented package of support for local authorities to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, including measures worth an estimated c. £3 billion of additional support next year. This takes the total support committed to councils in England to tackle the impacts of Covid-19 to over £10 billion.

Councils in the Arundel and South Downs constituency have been allocated over £96 million in funding from Government, including over £53 million in unringfenced funding, and over £13 million from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

Looking ahead to next year, Spending Review 2020 provides councils with the funding and stability to support vital social care services and tackle Covid-19. Local authorities will be able to access an additional £2.2 billion in resources to support Adult and Children's Social Care and maintain universal services. In addition, we are providing over £1.5 billion in unringfenced grant for ongoing Covid-19 pressures and extending support to offset the income losses councils are experiencing.

Provisional allocations for the annual local government finance settlement for local authorities in Sussex will be announced shortly.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[119370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport of 24 September 2020 on dangerous cladding in Plymouth.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The response was emailed to the Rt Hon Member on Wednesday 25 November 2020.

■ **Woodhouse Colliery****Tim Farron:**[\[121225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his plans are for the proposed Woodhouse Colliery coal mine in Cumbria.

**Christopher Pincher:**

On 2 October, Cumbria County Council resolved to grant planning permission for the revised application for the proposed Woodhouse Colliery coal mine. An Article 31 holding Direction has been placed on the application to allow the Secretary of State time to consider whether call in is warranted, following requests from yourself and environmental groups. The application is currently being assessed and the Secretary of State will issue his decision, whereupon relevant parties will be notified.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ **Import Duties: USA****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[121185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the HMRC Guidance entitled Commercial policy measures of imported products originating in the USA (Tariff stop press notice 49) published on 16 November 2020, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the criteria for determining which products imported into the EU from the US should be subject to additional customs duties following adjudications in the WTO dispute DS353 United States – Measures Affecting Trade in Large Civil Aircraft.

**Greg Hands:**

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) authorised the imposition of countermeasures in the WTO Boeing dispute (DS353) on 26 October. The products impacted by these additional duties were selected from a consultation the EU ran in May 2019. The EU Member States voted on the final list at the Trade Barriers Committee in November. Following withdrawal from the EU, the UK does not participate in this committee.

Escalating tariffs is ultimately in nobody's interest. The UK continues to push for a negotiated settlement to the Airbus and Boeing disputes and the removal of punitive tariffs.

**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[121186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the HMRC Guidance entitled Commercial policy measures of imported products originating in the USA (Tariff stop press notice 49) published on 16 November 2020, what assessment the Government made of potential effect on British bicycle manufacturers and retailers of

additional customs duties on imports from the US of products used as bicycle components.

**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[121187]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the HMRC Guidance entitled Commercial policy measures of imported products originating in the USA (Tariff stop press notice 49) published on 16 November 2020, whether the additional customs duties on bicycle components imported from the US will apply after the end of the transition period.

**Greg Hands:**

The tariffs referred to are imposed as part of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) award of retaliatory rights in the Boeing dispute, recognising harm felt by UK and European industries as a result of US subsidies.

The UK Government continues to push for a swift de-escalation of the Airbus and Boeing disputes. We want a negotiated settlement and to remove punitive tariffs that unnecessarily harm businesses and consumers on both sides of the Atlantic, who are already dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

For the remainder of the Transition Period, the United Kingdom will automatically impose the EU's retaliatory measures under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement. From January 2021 the United Kingdom will represent itself independently in disputes at the WTO and shall undertake such actions as are in the best interests of the United Kingdom.

## ■ **Medicine: Israel**

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[117399]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to strengthen the UK's trade relationship with Israel in medical research and development.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom and Israel have a strong and important trading relationship, and we are committed to strengthening it further.

That's why, to promote international collaboration on Science and Innovation, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office jointly funded our Science and Innovation Network (SIN), based in over 40 countries around the world. The priorities for British engagement with Israel are set by Industry Strategy and the United Kingdom-Israel Science Council, a group of 30 leading scientist and policymakers from both countries, chaired by the British Ambassador in Israel.

Further, through the UK-Israel tech hub, the UK-Israel Dangoor Healthcare Initiative was established to create a pipeline of the best Israeli healthcare innovations for the United Kingdom's healthcare sector. Information on its most recent projects can be found [here](#).

**JUSTICE****■ Debt Collection and Evictions: Coronavirus****Catherine West:**[\[121327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether (a) enforcement of evictions and (b) taking control of goods procedures will be paused in areas subject to tier restrictions after the end of the autumn 2020 national covid-19 lockdown.

**Alex Chalk:**

In light of the extraordinary circumstances engendered by the coronavirus pandemic, the Government has taken steps to ensure that enforcement activity is conducted safely and in accordance with the public health measures in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

On 16 November the Government laid the Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction and Taking Control of Goods) (England) Regulations 2020. The Regulations prevent enforcement agents from enforcing residential evictions, other than in limited circumstances, until 11 January 2021, in order to protect public health. We continue to keep the position regarding enforcement of evictions following 11 January under review.

The Regulations also prevent enforcement agents taking control of goods inside homes until the end of the national restrictions on 2 December. The Government has published Covid-19-secure guidance for enforcement agents using the taking control of goods procedure which is being updated.

**■ Family Courts****Peter Kyle:**[\[121312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps have been taken to use the findings from his Department's Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts to inform the make-up of the advisory panel for the Review of the Presumption of Parental Involvement.

**Peter Kyle:**[\[121313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what representation there is on the advisory panel for his Ministry's Review of the Presumption of Parental Involvement for (a) Black and Minority Ethnic survivors, (b) Deaf and disabled survivors, (c) survivors of sexual violence and (d) mothers.

**Peter Kyle:**[\[121314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will consult domestic abuse and sexual violence specialist lawyers and academics during his Review of the Presumption of Parental Involvement.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Review of the Presumption of Parental Involvement builds directly on the work of the Harm Panel. Independent researchers will draw from the evidence gathered

during the public call for evidence from that review and will conduct additional research which will include detailed case file analysis to assess the application of the presumption of parental involvement.

The Advisory Group has been assembled from a range of voices from across the family court system, and beyond. Their collective experience will be drawn upon to provide advice and inform the commissioned researchers.

A core element of the work of the independent researchers undertaking the evidence gathering will be to understand how the application of the presumption of parental involvement impacts upon people with protected characteristics and how the interpretation of those characteristics may have influenced the outcome. As part of this they will be engaging with the relevant groups – including, but not limited to, Black and Minority Ethnic survivors, deaf and disabled survivors, survivors of sexual violence and mothers.

The independent researchers undertaking the review will consider all available evidence, including from academics and professionals specialising in domestic abuse and sexual violence.

## ■ Prison Accommodation

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[121207]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Prison Population Projections 2020 to 2026, England and Wales, published on 26 November 2020, Figure 1.1, how he plans to achieve and maintain headroom of 5500 prison places in (a) January, (b) February, (c) March, (d) April and (e) May 2021.

**Lucy Frazer:**

In March, HMPPS implemented a 'compartmentalisation' strategy to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals. Using modelling from Public Health England, HMPPS estimated that creating a headroom across the prison estate of 5,500 (5,000 in the adult male estate) would allow all prisons to fully implement this strategy.

The required headroom has been achieved through a combination of reductions in operational capacity, new prison accommodation (which has enabled prisons to hold an increased number of prisoners in single cell accommodation), releases from prison, and reduced receptions into prison.

HMPPS will monitor actual and projected population growth carefully to ensure that compartmentalisation is maintained. The increased use of testing is expected to reduce the headroom necessary to deliver compartmentalisation, and options for increasing capacity if needed are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

## ■ Prisoners: Coronavirus

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[121208]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Prison Population Projections 2020 to 2026, England and Wales, published on 26 November 2020, Figure 1.1, how he plans to prevent rising risks of covid-19 infection as the prison population increases.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The safety of our staff and those in our care remains our top priority and when responding to Covid-19 we continue to work closely with public health authorities to develop and refine our response to the pandemic. HMPPS will continue to apply a range of measures to limit the spread of the virus in prisons and save lives.

The compartmentalisation of prisoners requires establishments to introduce isolation units for the symptomatic, shielding units for the vulnerable, and reverse cohorting to quarantine new arrivals. Social distancing and basic hygiene are also effective controls to reduce transmission and we will continue to provide access to the right cleaning and hygiene products in prisons. Other measures we will continue to apply include adapting prison regimes to support social distancing and PPE usage.

We have also expanded the estate with new temporary units. Over 1,000 temporary cells were delivered to increase space and help reduce the spread of the virus. These units were placed where there are the highest number of shared cells, a lack of in-cell sanitation and where there were high numbers of vulnerable prisoners. Over 800 of these cells are currently in use. An Annex at HMP/YOI Rochester was also opened up to hold up to and additional 70 men.

We have started to rollout regular testing for frontline staff which means we can identify positive cases earlier and will be able to minimise the spread of outbreaks. HMPPS is also rolling out testing for prisoners on reception and transfer.

## ■ Youth Courts: Camberwell and Peckham

**Helen Hayes:**

**[121319]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the closure of Camberwell youth court on the (a) backlog of youth court cases and (b) resilience of the youth justice system.

**Chris Philp:**

In the case of any court closure, we undertake a public consultation exercise and consider the responses we receive very carefully. The Lord Chancellor only agreed to close the court when satisfied that effective access to justice would be maintained when the court closed.

The number of outstanding youth court cases in the South London Local Justice Area was 441 in June 2020, this figure includes the outstanding arrest warrants. The next publication of the National Statistics series 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' will provide the quarterly information to September 2020 and will be available from 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) continually review and prioritise all youth cases. Judicial instructions for the prioritisation of cases ensure that youth cases, particularly those involving an individual who will be crossing a relevant age threshold, are a top priority. Our £1bn reform programme involving over 50 projects to improve our court and tribunal services, is delivering new technology and modern ways of working, delivering a more flexible and resilient justice system.

#### ■ Youth Courts: Coronavirus

**Stephen Morgan:**

[119353]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of youth court closures as a result of covid-19 on the level of case backlogs in England and Wales.

**Chris Philp:**

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) continually review and prioritise all youth cases. Judicial instructions for the prioritisation of cases ensure that youth cases, particularly those concerning individuals who will be crossing a relevant age threshold, are one of the top priorities.

The next publication of the National Statistics series 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' will provide the quarterly information to September 2020 and will be available from 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics> This will allow an assessment to be made and illustrate the impact of Covid-19 arrangements in the youth court over that time.

#### ■ Youth Courts: Greater London

**Helen Hayes:**

[121318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of outstanding youth court cases in south London; and what steps he is taking to improve the efficiency of hearings.

**Chris Philp:**

The number of outstanding youth court cases in the South London Local Justice Area was 441 in June 2020, this figure includes the outstanding arrest warrants. The next publication of the National Statistics series 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' will provide the quarterly information to September 2020 and will be available from 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) continually review and prioritise all youth cases. Judicial instructions for the prioritisation of cases ensure that youth cases, particularly those involving an individual who will be crossing a relevant age threshold, are a top priority.

Our £1bn reform programme involving over 50 projects to improve our court and tribunal services, is delivering new technology and modern, more efficient ways of working.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Abortion: Northern Ireland****Sarah Champion:****[118529]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 91890 on abortion: Northern Ireland, what plans he has to conduct an assessment of the infection risks to the pregnant women forced to travel to the British mainland to access abortion care; and whether he has raised the issue of those potential infection risks with the Northern Ireland Minister for Health.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Women and girls resident in Northern Ireland continue to have access to safe, fully-funded abortion services in England through the Government-funded scheme. The Government continues to monitor and keep these services under review.

The health and safety of women and girls in accessing abortion care remains paramount right across the UK. No assessment has been made of the infection risks to pregnant women travelling to Great Britain to access abortion care, on the basis that abortion services are provided within professional standards of practice to the highest standards of patient care.

Some abortion service provision commenced in Northern Ireland through existing sexual and reproductive health clinics across most Health and Social Care Trusts from April 2020. My Department and I are continuing to engage with the Northern Ireland Minister of Health and his department on progressing with the full commissioning of services for access to safe and lawful abortion care for women and girls in Northern Ireland.

**Dr Rupa Huq:****[119313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent assessment he has made of the risk of (a) stress and (b) psychological trauma to pregnant women who have to travel from Northern Ireland to Great Britain to access abortion care.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No. 2) Regulations provide the new framework for safe and lawful access to abortion services in Northern Ireland.

I am pleased interim services commenced in Northern Ireland from early April 2020, and that, according to figures released by the Department of Health in October, over 719 abortions have been provided to women and girls without their having to travel to England.

The Government recognises the health impacts, and stress, that can arise if women and girls choose, or have, to travel from Northern Ireland to Great Britain to access abortion care. That is why it is vital that women and girls are able to consult with experts and access counselling and support services to receive the appropriate care and support they need in accessing abortion services.

The Government's Central Booking Service in England can continue to be contacted for support and advice on options available to access abortion services, and Informing Choices Northern Ireland has been acting as the Central Access Point in order to provide a local pathway to abortion care in Northern Ireland.

The health and safety of women and girls remains paramount in accessing abortion services right across the UK. My department and I are continuing to engage with the Northern Ireland Minister of Health and his department on progressing with the full commissioning of services for access to safe and lawful abortion care for women and girls in Northern Ireland.

### ■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

**[120911]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what funding remains to be allocated under the New Decade, New Approach commitments.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* The UK Government is providing £2 billion of funding to support implementation of the New Decade, New Approach deal. This includes a £1bn Barnett-based investment guarantee from the UK Government, which includes significant new funding to turbocharge infrastructure investment. This guarantee applies in all circumstances, and allows the Executive to plan new investment.

From the other £1bn in capital and resource funding, the UK Government has provided the NI Executive with £523m in 2020/21, in addition to the £30m in 2019/20, which was released to support pay parity for nurses.

The New Decade, New Approach financial package was accompanied by stringent conditions to deliver a greater level of accountability for public spending and ensure the new Executive is building sustainable public services. This includes the establishment of an Independent Fiscal Council that will play an important role in improving transparency and fiscal performance. Subject to these conditions being fulfilled, there will be a further £447m released to the Executive over the next four years. This will be for; public service transformation, nurses' pay, ultra-low emission transport, support for the Northern Ireland Graduate Entry Medical School and funding to address NI's unique circumstances.

### ■ Ulster Bank: Belfast

**Claire Hanna:**

**[121404]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with Natwest on the potential effect of its review of Ulster Bank operations on jobs in Belfast.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

We have not had any discussions with Natwest regarding their review of Ulster Bank. The transfer reflects internal restructuring within Natwest Group and is a matter for them and the relevant financial regulators.

I welcome the fact that Ulster Bank have said that customers will see no changes to their day-to-day banking when the transfer is completed, and in particular their commitment that local jobs will not be impacted as a result.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Scotland Office: International Men's Day

**Philip Davies:**

[\[120013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight where we need to do more to improve outcomes for men and boys and to talk about some of the work across Government to tackle those issues.

This work ranges from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities looking at outcomes for the whole population - including ethnic minorities and White British people; preparation for an Employment Bill which, subject to further consultation, will make flexible working the default unless employers have good reason not to; delivering the Suicide Prevention Workplan, which sets out action that is being taken across Government departments and the NHS to reduce suicides, including amongst men.

This Government is committed to levelling up opportunity and ensuring fairness for all - regardless of gender or background.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Air Traffic Control

**Tom Tugendhat:**

[\[119292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department collects data from (a) individual airports and (b) NATS on the number of aircraft which join an interception landing system between 8nm and 10nm from the east of an airport.

**Tom Tugendhat:**

[\[119293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guidance his Department issues to (a) NATS, (b) the CAA and (c) individual airports on aircraft approaching from the south and east of an airport joining the interception landing system closer to the runway during periods of lower traffic.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department has issued notices under Section 78(1) of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 to London Heathrow, London Gatwick and London Stansted airports. These notices set out the noise mitigation requirements for departing and arriving aircraft at these

airports, including details on the Instrument Landing System (ILS) joining point arrangements.

The Department does not collect data on where aircraft join the airport's ILS, but we expect London Heathrow, London Gatwick and London Stansted airports to do so and we encourage other large airports to do the same.

The Department has not provided any specific guidance to NATS, the Civil Aviation Authority or individual airports relating to aircraft arrival operations during an extended period of low air traffic movements. However, we expect that all airports will seek to ensure their arrival operations are efficient, provide safe and stabilised approaches, and minimise their overall environmental impact.

## ■ Airports: Coronavirus

**Siobhan Baillie:**

[119422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the potential merits of introducing the recently released Israeli-developed self-service instant covid-19 test at UK airports.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government recently announced the launch of Test to Release for International Travel, which will be implemented from 15 December. The test to release scheme is a voluntary, opt-in scheme that allows people arriving in England from countries, territories and regions not on the travel corridor list to book and pay for a test which, if negative, allows them to cease self-isolating early and go about their daily lives. The test needs to be taken no earlier than 5 full days since the traveller was last in a country, territory or region, not on the travel corridors list and must meet minimum standards.

The regulations do not specify the type of test that should be used – any tests that meet the minimum standards will be able to be used for the purposes of determining whether you can cease self-isolating early. We continue to engage with international partners on health measures at the border, including how testing and other technology is developing.

Detailed guidance on minimum standards for private providers is available on Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/testing-to-release-for-international-travel-minimum-standards-for-testing/minimum-standards-for-private-sector-providers-of-covid-19-testing-for-testing-to-release-for-international-travel>

**Judith Cummins:**

[121277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, in reference to his announcement of additional financial support for airports on 24 November 2020, if he will set out (a) how much each airport will receive and (b) when funding will be available from.

**Robert Courts:**

On 24 November, the Government announced a financial support scheme to support eligible commercial airport and ground handling businesses by reducing cash burn

and could unlock shareholder and lender support. This will provide support up to the equivalent of the site's business rates liabilities in 2020/21 financial year, capped at up to £8m per eligible site, and subject to certain conditions. The scheme will open for applications in the new year, and we will be looking to make payments to successful applicants before the end of the financial year.

## ■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

**Tom Tugendhat:**

[\[119294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of trial schemes have been withdrawn by local authorities since the allocation of tranche one of the emergency active travel funding.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Active Travel Fund will deliver over 400 cycling schemes. Whilst the majority of local authorities are reporting a positive impact in local communities, ten local authorities have notified the Department that they have removed schemes funded in tranche one of the emergency active travel fund. We are aware that many other authorities have modified schemes or reprioritised funding in response to feedback from local communities. This is to be expected given that many schemes were introduced on a trial basis, and the pace of delivery as part of the initial phase of the Covid emergency response.

## ■ **Cycling and Walking: West Sussex**

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[119434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to local authorities in West Sussex to increase levels of cycling and walking.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department announced £175 million of active travel funding for local authorities on 13 November, including an allocation of £2,351,250 for West Sussex. In addition this summer West Sussex received £781,000 from the first tranche of the Emergency Active Travel Fund. The Department has also funded the development of the West Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

## ■ **Driving Tests: High Wycombe**

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[121244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has in place to ensure that learners taking a driving test in High Wycombe are able to take a test locally after the driving test centre is closed in spring 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Test centres at Aylesbury, Slough and Uxbridge have the capacity to meet the extra demand for testing once the centre at High Wycombe closes on 12 March 2021. Driving examiners currently carrying out tests at High Wycombe will carry out tests at these other centres.

Slough and Uxbridge are the nearest test centres to High Wycombe with a travel time of under 30 minutes for either test centre.

■ **Holyhead Port and Liverpool Port: Overseas Trade**

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[121178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential (a) long-term and (b) short-term freight traffic flows through the port of (i) Holyhead and (ii) Liverpool after the end of the transition period.

**Rachel Maclean:**

DfT has considered the impact of additional border requirements for goods travelling to the EU following the end of the transition period. In the case of both Liverpool and Holyhead detailed modelling has been undertaken considering the potential impact of these additional checks. The modelling considered a Reasonable Worst Case Scenario (RWCS). Even under the RWCS, disruption is expected to be relatively limited at these locations with any queues clearing within the day and as such there is not expected to be a marked knock on impact on the volume of goods travelling through those ports. This impact is also expected to reduce as traders become used to the new border requirements over time. Nevertheless these queues could lead to short term localised traffic disruption. DfT has shared the results of its modelling with the Welsh Government and relevant Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) so that these estimates can be considered in the development of their traffic management plans.

■ **Railway Stations: Leicester**

**Claudia Webbe:**

[\[119424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to introduce quadruple-track railway at Leicester station; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Following Network Rail's publication of the Strategic Advice for improving capacity in the Leicester area, they are working on a business case for a suite of interventions which could deliver the enhancements required in the area. Quadruple-tracking is one of the options that Network Rail is considering. Network Rail is producing a Strategic Outline Business Case for the first part of the scheme which we expect to receive by Summer 2021.

■ **Railways: Midlands**

**Claudia Webbe:**

[\[119423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with Midlands Connect on a direct rail connection between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham as part of the Midlands Rail Hub project.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Officials have been in discussion with Midlands Connect and Network Rail regarding proposals for new infrastructure, which would allow direct services between Coventry,

Leicester and Nottingham. A strategic outline business case is being developed by Midlands Connect, and we expect to receive it in Spring 2021.

## ■ Railways: Passengers

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[119253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of passenger rail journeys.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Government guidelines are currently that non-essential travel by public transport should be avoided. However, we are preparing for recovery by working closely with industry to consider products to accommodate more flexible commuting and on the production of business plans for the new financial year which will contain initiatives to stimulate recovery and growth in passenger numbers.

## ■ Railways: Repayments

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[121354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with train operating companies on offering full refunds to passengers who have purchased advanced rail tickets and are no longer able to use those tickets due to covid-19 restrictions.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

In October government agreed with the rail industry that, where a passenger with an Advance ticket is prevented from travelling due to changes to local or national restrictions, change of journey administration fees will be waived and, if they purchased their ticket directly from a train operator, they will be able to apply for a Rail Travel Voucher valid for 12 months. Independent rail retailers can use their discretion to offer a credit note if they have the ability to do so, or a fee-free change of journey.

On 24 November, government announced that Advance ticket change of journey fees will also be waived for students who need to rearrange travel to comply with the student travel window.

## ■ Roads: Coventry

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[121273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to roads and highways in Coventry in each of the last 10 years.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Coventry City Council is a constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Since 2010 most of their transport funding, including highways maintenance and integrated transport block funding, has been paid directly to the

Combined Authority. The funding provided by the Department for Transport for local roads and highways in Coventry since 2010 is shown in the table below.

### Coventry

£M	HMB	CF	POT- HOLE	ITB	MAJOR PROJECT	LPPF	WINTER 2018	BUDGET LSTF	TOTAL	
10/11							0.217		0.217	
11/12							0.488		0.488	
12/13								0.470	0.470	
13/14						1.863	0.362	1.699	3.924	
14/15			0.436			3.782		1.328	5.546	
15/16		2.750							2.750	
16/17*			0.154		1.100				1.254	
17/18*		2.750			1.200				3.950	
18/19					0.400			1.226	1.626	
19/20										
20/21*		5.000			18.100				23.100	
Total	n/a**	10.500	0.590	n/a**	20.800	5.645	1.067	1.226	3.497	43.325

### Headings

**HMB** is Highways Maintenance Block (needs and incentive elements)

**CF** is Challenge Fund (a bid based fund for larger maintenance projects from 2015/16)

**ITB** is Integrated Transport Block

**LPPF** is Local Pinch Point Fund

**NPIF** is National Productivity Investment Fund

**LSTF** is Local Sustainable Transport Fund

\* This includes £19.6 million funding to Coventry City Council for the A46 South Coventry Link Road Phase 1 (Stoneleigh Junction) which is physically in Warwickshire but Coventry get most of the benefits. The funding is allocated to Coventry and this scheme is being managed jointly with Warwickshire County Council.

\*\* Funding paid directly to West Midlands Combined Authority.

## ■ Speed Limits

**Tom Tugendhat:**

[\[119295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what guidance his Department issues to local authorities on the introduction of 20mph speed limits.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department for Transport issues non-mandatory guidance to English local authorities on setting speed limits, including 20mph speed limits. It suggests that 20mph limits can be introduced in streets that are primarily residential as well as major streets where there may be significant numbers of pedestrian and cycle journeys and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic.

Local authorities are responsible for taking decisions about setting speed limits on their roads as they have the local knowledge making them the best placed to do so.

## ■ Taxis: Carbon Emissions

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[121188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to support the taxi trade in adopting zero-emission-capable taxis.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has supported the taxi and private hire vehicle sector to transition to lower emission vehicles. The Plug-In Taxi Grant offers up to £7,500 off the price of eligible purpose-built taxis, this has supported over 3,800 taxis in London, and increasing numbers in towns and cities across the UK. The Plug-In Car Grant of up to £3,000 is available for those switching to eligible vehicles that do not meet the requirements of the Plug-In Taxi Grant.

Recognising the need for continued support in this area, at the March 2020 Budget the Government announced a further £129.5 million to extend the plug-in Grants for vans, taxis and motorcycles; £403 million for the Plug-In Taxi Grant to 2022-23 and that all zero emission cars would be exempt from the Vehicle Excise Duty supplement.

## TREASURY

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[909608\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support job retention during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Government has taken unprecedented action to protect jobs during the pandemic, most notably through the CJRS which has seen 1.2 million employers

apply to help to pay the wages of 9.6 million furloughed jobs. The CJRS has been extended until March, and the OBR have forecast this is set to support up to 6 million jobs. Employers have also received billions in loans, tax deferrals, Business Rate reliefs, and general and sector-specific grants.

**Douglas Ross:**

**[909610]**

What level of financial support his Department has provided to Scotland in the Spending Review 2020.

**Steve Barclay:**

Spending Review 2020 is for the whole of the UK. For Scotland, SR20 confirms an additional £2.4 billion for the Scottish Government on top of its baseline for 2021-22, building on an unprecedented upfront guarantee of £8.2 billion in 2020-21 to support the Covid response; SR20 confirms several UK-wide programmes, such as for vaccines, green growth clusters, offshore wind capacity and digital infrastructure, which will benefit people and businesses in Scotland; SR20 also provides targeted support by reprofiling City and Growth Deals in Moray, Tay Cities, Borderlands and the Scottish Islands from 15 to 10 years to accelerate investment in local economic priorities.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[909615]**

What assessment he has made of the effect of the Spending Review 2020 on economic recovery during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

Spending Review 2020 (SR20) prioritises funding to support the government's response to Covid-19 and invest in the UK's recovery across the UK.

SR20 confirms a further £38bn to tackle Covid-10 this year and provides a further £55bn for departments to respond to Covid-19 next year

SR20 also announces the next phase of our infrastructure revolution to kickstart the UK's economic recovery with £100bn of capital investment next year.

This builds on the unprecedented level of support this government has provided to support the economy's recovery during the Covid-19 outbreak.

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[R] [909625]**

What steps his Department is taking to increase investment in the North of England as part of the Government's levelling up agenda.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

To level up opportunity across the UK, including in the North of England, at the recent Spending Review, the Chancellor made record increases to capital investment.

This included multi-year funding settlements for programmes to drive growth in the North of England, from broadband to intra-city transport settlements.

The North will also benefit from the £4bn Levelling Up Fund, to invest in local infrastructure and economic recovery, and a new UK-wide infrastructure bank headquartered in the North.

## ■ **Bankruptcy: Tax Avoidance**

**Chris Law:**

[\[119263\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people who have declared bankruptcy as a result of the Loan Charge.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC do not want to make anybody bankrupt, and insolvency is only ever considered as a last resort. HMRC will work with individuals to reach sustainable and manageable payment plans wherever possible. In line with current practice, HMRC will pause recovery action where a taxpayer has no ability to pay, until there is a significant change of circumstance.

HMRC are not always the only creditor and some individuals may choose to enter insolvency themselves based on their overall financial position.

Anyone who is worried about being able to pay what they owe is encouraged to get in touch with HMRC as soon as possible on 03000 599110.

## ■ **Capital Gains Tax**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[119350\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to publish a response to the Office for Tax Simplification's Capital Gains Tax Review.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government thanks the OTS for their independent report and will consider the recommendations made and respond in due course.

## ■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Charities**

**Martyn Day:**

[\[119299\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the economy of charity sector organisations having to stop delivering vital services in order to be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The purpose of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is to support people who would otherwise have been made redundant. To prevent fraudulent claims, we made clear that individuals cannot work or volunteer for their organisation. This is to protect individuals too – if we allowed workers to volunteer for their employer, the employer could ask them to effectively work full time while only paying them 80% of the wages.

On 8 April the Chancellor announced a £750m support package for charities providing key services and supporting vulnerable people during the Covid-19 crisis. This includes £360 million direct from Government departments. Up to £200 million is

supporting hospices, with the rest supporting organisations like St John Ambulance and the Citizens Advice Bureau as well as charities supporting children, victims of domestic abuse or disabled people. £200 million is being distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. The Fund closed to new applications on 17 August and £184m - 97% of the total fund value – had been awarded as of 13 October.

The Government also matched public donations to the BBC's "Big Night In" charity appeal, with over £37 million being distributed by Comic Relief, Children In Need and the National Emergencies Trust to charities on the frontline. 100% of the Fund value of £34.4m was awarded as of 15 October.

### ■ **Coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund and Self-employment Income Support Scheme**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[121307\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how money has been allocated that was not spent from the (a) Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund and (b) Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Local authorities spent the vast majority of the funding which they were allocated for the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, which closed to new applicants at the end of August. The c. £18 million of underspends from the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund have been used to help pay for the costs of other COVID-19 business support schemes.

We have since allocated an additional £1.1 billion to local authorities for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), a new discretionary business support scheme. The ARG is intended to complement the Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes, which provide per-month grant amounts to businesses facing restrictions in Tier 2 and 3 areas.

The first two Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grants received claims from 2.7 million individuals totalling £13.7bn. HMRC and HMT are working closely together to track the cost of the scheme and ensure HMRC receives appropriate levels of funding to deliver each grant, including the two further SEISS grants announced by the Chancellor.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[121306\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of data published by (a) HMRC, (b) Office of National Statistics, (c) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Business Population Estimates and (d) the National Audit Office on the number of people not eligible for financial support during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has provided a comprehensive economic response that is one of the most generous in the world, taking unprecedented steps to support families, businesses and the most vulnerable. As well as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Self-Employment Support Scheme (SEISS), the package includes a suite of Government-backed loans and grants to businesses, tax deferrals and mortgage and consumer credit holidays. This package also includes extra funding for the welfare safety net, to help those unable to obtain other forms of support. The temporary welfare measures include increases to Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, and Local Housing Allowance, a relaxation of the Universal Credit minimum income floor and measures to make Statutory Sick Pay and new style Employment and Support Allowance easier to access.

The Government prioritised delivering support to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible while guarding against the risk of fraud or abuse. The Government takes an evidence-based approach when developing policy, and this has meant making difficult decisions; the Chancellor has acknowledged that it has not been possible to support everyone as they would want. However, as the National Audit Office report acknowledges, the support schemes have been successful in supporting millions of people and protecting large scale job losses.

**■ Customs Declaration Services Programme****Louise Haigh:****[121300]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what contingency plans are in place in the event that the Customs Declaration Service is not fully operational on 1 January 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

The changes required to the Customs Declaration Service to facilitate Northern Ireland's trade with Great Britain and the Rest of the World have been in the trade test environment since 15 October and are on track to be implemented in December.

External readiness remains the most significant challenge to successful delivery, and the Government has procured the Trader Support Service to mitigate trader readiness challenges. This is a free service to support businesses with the new administrative process under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**■ Debts: Coronavirus****Colleen Fletcher:****[121272]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of household debt in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

**John Glen:**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produce estimates of household debt in the UK. In the UK as a whole, household debt-to-income increased from 133% in 2019

Q4 to 135% in 2020 Q2. It remains significantly below its pre-financial crisis peak of 160% in 2008 Q1.

The latest available data for household debt in the West Midlands relates to the period between April 2016 and March 2018. The data indicates that median household non-mortgage debt in the West Midlands over this period was £4,300, which was the fourth lowest of any English region. The ONS does not produce estimates of the level of household debt in Coventry and England.

## ■ Digital Technology: Tax Yields

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

[\[119419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much income has been generated by the Digital Sales Tax since its introduction in April 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Digital Services Tax was estimated at Budget 2018 to raise about £1.5bn from 2020-2021 to 2023-2024. However, DST payments are not required before 9 months and a day after the end of an accounting period, and as the tax has been in force for less than 9 months nothing has yet been paid.

## ■ Employment: Coronavirus

**Alison Thewliss:**

[\[121280\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what dates he met with representatives of (a) Excluded U.K., (b) Forgotten Ltd, (c) Forgotten PAYE, (d) Maternity Petition, (e) APPG Gaps in Support, (f) Annual PAYE, (g) New Starter Justice and (h) Refused Furlough.

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[121309\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether has met with representatives of (a) ExcludedUK, (b) ForgottenLtd, (c) ForgottenPAYE and (d) APPG Gaps in Support.

**Jesse Norman:**

Treasury ministers and officials have had meetings with a wide variety of organisations and individuals in the public and private sectors, including MPs, businesses, professional representative bodies, and the unions, throughout the development of the COVID-19 support package including both the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

This proactive engagement has been widely praised, and the Institute for Government has said: "The Government's approach to consultation compensated for some of the difficulties of accelerated policy development, because it gave it fast access to information, and an early sense of whether the measures would work and how they would be received by businesses and workers. This contributed to both positive reception on announcement and successful roll-out."

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

## ■ Foreign Companies: VAT

**Mrs Pauline Latham:**

[119229]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that overseas sellers are aware of the need to register to pay UK VAT for goods under £135 from 1 January 2021; and when he plans to publish guidance on registration.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC have published guidance on 20 July 2020 and 20 November 2020 setting out information on the proposed changes for overseas sellers and online marketplaces and what businesses will need to do in order to prepare, including when and how to register for VAT.

## ■ Foreign Investment in UK

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[121245]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps his Department is taking to create a positive environment for investment in the UK after the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government will maintain a competitive tax environment for business, ensuring the UK remains one of the most attractive places in the world to invest, start and grow a business.

As part of this, last month the Government announced a year-long extension to the £1 million temporary cap of the Annual Investment Allowance (AIA). The AIA provides firms 100% same year tax relief on qualifying capital expenditure, up to a fixed limit; and it responds to the needs of business, providing further upfront support for investment in 2021.

## ■ Levelling Up Fund

**Louise Haigh:**

[120917]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Spending Review 2020, what the timescale is for the £4 billion Levelling Up Fund.

**Nia Griffith:**

[121203]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Spending Review 2020, for how many years the £4 billion Levelling Up Fund will run; and what the projected average spend is per annum.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The government is launching a new Levelling Up Fund worth £4bn for England, that will attract up to £800m for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the usual way. The Levelling Up Fund will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on

people and their communities and will support economic recovery. The SR makes available up to £600m in 2021-22. Further funding will be spread over subsequent years up to 24/25.

**Kate Hollern:** [\[121268\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the Levelling Up Fund on local economic recovery.

**Kate Hollern:** [\[121269\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the effect the Levelling Up Fund will have on national economic recovery.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Levelling Up Fund will invest in high value local projects in England to boost local economic recovery, including bypasses and other local road schemes, bus lanes, rail station upgrades, regenerating eyesores, upgrading town centres and community infrastructure, and local arts and culture. This is about empowering local areas to identify and bring forward genuine local priorities. To support levelling up opportunity across the country, we will prioritise bids to drive growth and regeneration in places in need, those facing particular local challenges, and areas that have received less Government investment in recent years.

## ■ Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties

**Ian Mearns:** [\[121232\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he (a) plans to make an assessment of the effectiveness of the vehicle excise duty scheme and (b) has made an assessment of the potential merits of a scheme whereby the number of miles driven is a factor in the annual cost for the user.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government uses the tax system to encourage the uptake of vehicles with low carbon dioxide emissions to help meet our legally binding climate change targets. This is why zero emission cars and electric vans are liable to pay no Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), either at first registration, or subsequently. At Budget 2020, the Government published a call for evidence on VED, which considers a range of changes to VED, including how to strengthen its environmental incentives. This closed in September and the Government will announce next steps in due course.

VED is a tax on vehicle ownership and, as such, does not vary with the number of miles driven. Motorists pay fuel duty on the petrol or diesel they purchase so those who complete significant mileage will pay more in fuel duty than those who drive fewer miles.

As with all taxes, the Government keeps VED under review. The Government is committed, as the UK transitions towards the phase out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans, that revenue from motoring taxes keeps pace with this change, to ensure it can continue to fund first-class public services and infrastructure. Any changes to the

tax system will be considered by the Chancellor and any further steps will be announced in due course.

## ■ Personal Income: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[121271\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on household incomes in (a) Coventry (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

**John Glen:**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produce estimates of household income in the UK. The latest available data indicates that in 2018, gross household disposable income (GHDl) per head was £15,353 in Coventry and £18,222 in the West Midlands. GHDl per head in England was £21,609 and £21,109 in the UK as a whole.

GHDl per head for the UK was 3.2% lower in 2020 Q2 than in 2019 Q4.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[909619\]](#)

What recent comparative assessment his Department has made of the effect on regional economies of the Government's covid-19 financial support package.

**John Glen:**

The government recognises that every region is feeling the impact of this crisis, and has taken unprecedented steps to support people and businesses across the country.

For example, the government has helped over a million employers furlough 9.6 million employments, including 350,700 in the North East, and supported over 60 billion pounds of loans, including £1.4bn for over 40,000 businesses in the North East. Regional breakdowns are published regularly on gov.uk.

## ■ Public Sector: Pay

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[121334\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his oral contribution of 25 November 2020, Official Report column 828, on public sector workers who earn below the median wage of £24,000 being guaranteed a pay rise of at least £250, on what basis that median wage estimate was calculated.

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[121335\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his oral contribution of 25 November 2020, Official Report column 828, on 2.1 million public sector workers who earn below the median wage of £24,000 being guaranteed a pay rise of at least £250, on what basis that 2.1 million figure was calculated; and whether that figure is inclusive of local government workers.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Office for National Statistics's 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings' (ASHE) shows that median basic weekly pay for the public sector is £504. This suggests that just under half of the public sector have basic weekly pay of £460 (whole economy median weekly basic pay) and less.

Since the uplift will be applied on a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) basis, we have used ASHE microdata to also exclude those earning less than the median but not on an hourly basis. This showed that 38% of the public sector earn less than £24,000 on an FTE basis.

The Office for National Statistics estimate that public sector employment was 5.51 million in June 2020. This includes: The National Health Service, central government and local government.

Sources: Table 13.a at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkhours/datasets/publicandprivatesectorashtable13>

ONS Public sector employment, UK: June 2020:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/publicsectoremployment/june2020>

The £24,000 earnings floor is taken from the Office for National Statistics's 'Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings'. This data gives whole economy median basic weekly earnings for all employees of £460. The equivalent annually is £23,985 (calculated by dividing by 7 days a week, and multiplying by 365 days a year).

Source: Table 1.3a at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkhours/datasets/allemployeesashtable1>

**Renewable Energy: VAT**

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

**[121114]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of removing VAT on domestic renewables and installations for a period on 10 years from 1 January 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

The installation of many energy saving materials, including solar panels, that generate domestic renewable energy, are already subject to the reduced rate of VAT of 5 per cent when certain conditions are met.

The Government currently has no plans to change the VAT treatment of renewables. However, all taxes are kept under review.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Holyhead Port

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[121175\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that will be created by the establishment of an offsite HMRC facility to serve the port of Holyhead; and what proportion of those jobs will be (a) professional and (b) routine.

**Jesse Norman:**

Estimates have been carried out based on volumes of traffic and expectations of site use.

HMRC are currently planning on in excess of 120 full time equivalent roles on site, attending over three shifts a day. The majority of roles will range from security and traffic marshalling to front office staff. Specialist roles will be provided by Defra, the Welsh Government and Border Force.

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[121176\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the resilience of the road network around Bangor in the event of the location of an HMRC offsite facility to serve the port of Holyhead in that area.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC are working in partnership with the Welsh Government to provide for a joint Inland Border Facility/Border Control Point in North Wales, exploring suitable sites. Part of this consideration includes access to and from sites from the strategic road network.

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[121177\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the length of time an HMRC facility will be required offsite to serve the port of Holyhead.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC will use the facility for two years.

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[121179\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when consultations will begin with the local community in Bangor on the potential development of Parc Bryn Cegin industrial estate into a lorry park by HMRC.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC and Welsh Government are currently assessing the site based on deliverability as an Inland Border Facility to support the port of Holyhead. Access with the surrounding areas is being considered during this process. Should the site be selected, HMRC will consult with local communities.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Tax Avoidance

**Chris Law:**

[\[119261\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many contractors have worked for HMRC whilst using disguised remuneration schemes.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are aware of 15 contractors who have used disguised remuneration (DR) schemes while engaged either by the department or by Revenue & Customs Digital Technology Services (RCCTS). In each of the cases, the contractors were engaged via an agency or a company providing a service.

HMRC do not engage in, or enter into, disguised remuneration schemes. It is possible for a contractor providing services to HMRC to use a disguised remuneration scheme without the department's knowledge or participation. Where HMRC become aware of a contractor who is using a disguised remuneration scheme, they take robust compliance action, including the immediate termination of the engagement. Any contractor identified in the course of HMRC's compliance work as a scheme user would be investigated in the same way as any other contractor.

## ■ Royal Docks: Free Zones

**David Simmonds:**

[\[121407\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department received an application (a) from or (b) on behalf of the Royal Docks in the London Borough of Newham to become a free port; and what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of the Royal Docks becoming a free port.

**Steve Barclay:**

We recently published the bidding prospectus for Freeports in England, setting out how ports can apply for Freeport status, and further details on our proposals for the policy. Areas across England, including air, rail and sea ports, have until the 5 February 2021 to submit bids for Freeport status. Successful locations will be announced in the spring following a fair, open and transparent assessment process.

## ■ Self-employed: Coronavirus

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[119178\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional support to assist people who are self-employed and required to self-isolate.

**Jesse Norman:**

Self-employed individuals who are required to self-isolate may be eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). The Government has announced that the third SEISS grant will cover the period from November 2020 to January 2021 and will be calculated at 80 per cent of average trading profits, capped at £7,500. The Government has published guidance on gov.uk on who can claim and sets out

specific information about self-isolation and how this interacts with the eligibility criteria for the third grant.

Moreover, the SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support that may be available to self-employed individuals who have been required to self-isolate. Through the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, self-employed individuals on low incomes who cannot work from home and who are asked to self-isolate may be eligible for a one-off payment of £500. The Universal Credit standard allowance has been temporarily increased for 2020-21 and the Minimum Income Floor relaxed for the duration of the crisis, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, they may also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays and other business support grants.

**Darren Henry:**

**[121393]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) newly and (b) other self-employed people who have been affected by the covid-19 outbreak and who are ineligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The design of the SEISS, including the eligibility requirements that an individual's trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to their non-trading income, means it is targeted at those who most need it, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

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

Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the support available. The Universal Credit standard allowance has been temporarily increased for 2020-21 and the Minimum Income Floor relaxed for the duration of the crisis, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, they may also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

**Fay Jones:**

**[119386]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason (a) income from furnished holiday lets is not included in calculations for support under the Self Employed Income

Support Scheme and (b) an individual must receive more than half of their income from self-employment in order to be eligible for support from that scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The self-employed are very diverse and have a wide mix of turnover and profits, with monthly and annual variations even in normal times, and in some cases with substantial alternative forms of income too. The design of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), including the eligibility requirement that an individual's trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to their non-trading income, means it is targeted at those who need it the most, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income

Income from furnished holiday lets is classified as non-trading income and therefore it is not considered as part of a self-employed individual's trading profits.

Beyond this, the SEISS continues to be just one element of a comprehensive package of support for the self-employed. The Universal Credit standard allowance has been temporarily increased for 2020-21 and the Minimum Income Floor relaxed for the duration of the crisis, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, they may also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

■ **Tax Avoidance**

**Chris Law:**

[\[119262\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people subject to the Loan Charge who were in settlement discussions with HMRC relating to the Loan Charge have reached a settlement on that matter.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC are currently preparing a report to Parliament on the implementation of the independent Loan Charge Review, which is due imminently. The report will include figures up to the 30 September 2020 deadline for taxpayers who settled their use of disguised remuneration tax avoidance schemes.

■ **UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**

**Nia Griffith:**

[\[121204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many customs agents have been recruited to manage the Trader Support Service.

**Jesse Norman:**

On Friday 18 September 2020, the Government confirmed that a Fujitsu led consortium had been appointed to deliver the Trader Support Service (TSS). The consortium has expertise across the range of services needed to make the TSS effective, including the Institute of Export & International Trade, an existing provider

of customs education, and the Customs Clearance Consortium, an established customs intermediary.

**Nia Griffith:**

[\[121205\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what date the Trader Support Service will be fully operational.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Trader Support Service (TSS) was launched on 28 September and will be making declarations on behalf of traders from 1 January. The Trader Support Service will be able to help all traders, regardless of size and at no additional cost, to get their businesses ready for changes to trade due to the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[121302\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when traders will be provided with details on what data to input into the Trader Support Service to ensure that goods can continue to move on 1 January 2021.

**Jesse Norman:**

When traders register with the Trader Support Service they will receive support and guidance on what the Protocol means for them. This will include the steps they need to take to comply with the Protocol.

The Trader Support Service will support traders to understand the information they will need to collect about their goods, including their description, value and any supporting documentation required. HMRC and the consortium are currently finalising technical details on how the declaration service will operate, and will be setting out the specifics of how information should be provided via the TSS shortly.

The service will then use this information to complete import and safety and security declarations on behalf of trader users. Where a business uses the TSS to complete these they will not need access to HMRC systems, such as CDS or ICS, themselves.

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[121304\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Trader Support Service will provide assistance on (a) SPS checks and (b) the transiting of Northern Ireland to Great Britain goods via Dublin port.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Trader Support Scheme will offer core services focusing on both trader education and the completion of customs processes.

- In relation to trader education, the Service will:

- o educate businesses on what the Protocol means for them, and the steps they need to take to comply with them (including getting relevant Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) numbers)

- o support businesses developing processes to accurately provide the Trader Support Service with all the information it needs to submit declarations on their behalf (including information on the 'risk' status of the goods)

- o advise businesses on the additional documents/licences that they will need (for example, a permit is needed to import endangered species (CITES) goods).

- In relation to completing processes, the Service will:

- o submit relevant declarations into CDS (and hold the necessary authorisations required for simplified declarations)

- o submit relevant safety and security declarations into HMRC's Import Control System (ICS)

The Trader Support Service will be able to help all traders who need the service, regardless of size and at no additional cost, to support businesses with changes to trade under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ Equal Pay

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[120143\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of the gender pay gap.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

On 3rd November, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published new earnings figures from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). These include figures for the UK's gender pay gap (GPG) and are the most recent assessment of trends available. The overall GPG has decreased to 15.5% from 17.4%. This is the lowest recorded measurement since the survey began in 1997 and is the largest decrease in GPG since 2011. The GPG for full-time employees has decreased to 7.4% from 9.0% and the GPG for part-time employees has decreased to -2.9% from -3.5%. The part-time GPG is already in favour of women, and so this also represents a closing of the gap as it is now closer to 0%.

### ■ Females: New Businesses

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[121059\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government Equalities Office is taking to support women to start their own business.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

I want the UK to be the best place for women to start a business. As much as £250 billion of new value could be added to the UK economy if women started and scaled businesses at the same rate as men.

My officials at the Government Equalities Office have supported the Minister for Women to host a roundtable for a diverse range of female entrepreneurs at all stages of their journey. I was delighted to support the recent report published by the Female Founders Forum Project, showcasing successful female entrepreneurs who are powering the UK's recovery.

The government's Start-Up Loans programme has provided more than 31,000 loans, worth over £245 million, to women, as of October 2020.

In response to the Rose Review the government has set out an ambition to increase the number of female entrepreneurs by 50% by 2030, equivalent to nearly 600,000 additional female entrepreneurs.

## ■ **Gay Conversion Therapy**

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[121270\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent steps her Department has taken to end gay or gender conversion therapy in the UK.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is committed to end conversion therapy, a practice that has no place in civilised society. We have been working at pace to establish a robust definition of conversion therapy and to review the legislative framework. The conclusion of this phase of work is necessary before taking final decisions about the best way to end the practice. We are considering various options and will outline in due course how the Government intends to proceed with an effective and proportionate response.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ **Access to Work Programme: Kickstart Scheme**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[120929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to integrate the Access to Work fast track scheme into the Kickstart scheme.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[120974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to integrate the Access to Work fast track scheme into the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* Job placements created through the DWP's Kickstart Scheme are normal jobs, and so young people finding work through the Kickstart Scheme can get advice from their Work Coach about making the transition into employment. This may include support with the Access to Work process.

Young people who are successful in securing a job offer through Kickstart, and submit their application to Access to Work within 4 weeks of their start date, will have their application automatically prioritised by Access to Work.

### ■ European Social Fund: Disability

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[118131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on the operation of employment projects for people with disabilities of the end of their access to the European Social Fund.

**Mims Davies:**

In the Spending Review, the Chancellor announced the introduction of a UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will succeed EU Structural Funds and help to level up and create opportunity for people and places across the UK. The government will publish a UK-wide investment framework in 2021.

### ■ Jobseeker's Allowance: Coronavirus

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[121221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of removing the time limit on claims of new jobseeker's allowance for the duration of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mims Davies:**

There have been no discussions with Cabinet Office colleagues on extending eligibility for contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance during the covid-19 outbreak.

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.

### ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Danny Kruger:**

[\[117396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish (a) a list of all organisations that have been awarded funding under the Kickstart scheme and (b) details of the number of placements each organisation has created since the start of that scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

As of 20/11/2020, the DWP's Kickstart scheme has received 4'783 total applications. So far, applications covering 23'934 vacancies have been approved. Once approved, employers and organisations are sent a grant agreement of terms and conditions for Kickstart funding.

Below is a list of organisations who have been approved for funding from the DWP's Kickstart scheme and that have returned their grant funding agreements as of 23/11/2020.

COMPANY NAME	NUMBER OF VACANCIES
Hales Group Limited	39
MOLINARE TV & FILM LIMITED	37
Park Homes (UK) Ltd	30
Black Sheep Utilities Ltd	30
iSmash UK Trading Ltd	56
Airfi Networks Services Limited	30
Blueline Learning Ltd	30
Intelligent Transformation Limited	30
Lionheart Security Services LTD	30
Modo Creations Limited	30
RGE Engineering Ltd.	32
Purpol Marketing Ltd	50
Specialist Care Team Ltd	33
The Boxing House Ltd.	30
MYBE Awards	30
Aspen Health	30
Boundary Mill Stores Limited	71
Compass Group PLC	50
Cordant Recruitment	65
David Lloyd Leisure	130
DealBerry Limited	40

COMPANY NAME	NUMBER OF VACANCIES
Enginsoft	40
Event Support Team Ltd	100
EXPD8 LIMITED	305
Macc Care	90
O'Neill and Brennan Construction Ltd	500
Rising Stars Property Solutions	100
Robinson Manufacturing Limited	35
Tenstar Personnel Limited	150
The HALO Kilmarnock Ltd	200
TRG LOGISTICS LTD	75
Yorkshire College of Beauty Ltd	32
AA Zentivus Ltd	30
AIR RESOURCES LIMITED	30
Angel Guard Limited	30
Bauer Radio Limited	30
Crouch Logistics Ltd	30
F M CONWAY LIMITED	30
Link Academy Trust	30
Hollowood Chemists Limited	30
MARCUS EVANS LIMITED	30
MPS Care Ltd	30
Nightingale Group Limited	100
Reed Specialist Recruitment Ltd	50
The Claxson Group Limited	30
Hometrust Care Ltd	30
Maritime Academy Trust	30

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COMPANY NAME	NUMBER OF VACANCIES
The Trade Centre Group PLC	30
Whistl UK Ltd.	30
Yorkshire Repak Limited	30
CAPITA PLC	60
LADBible Group	30
Q Care Ltd	40
University of Wolverhampton Multi Academy Trust	40
Berneslai Homes Ltd	30
Corona corporate Solutions Ltd	30
NDH CARE LTD	34
Peninsula Care Homes Ltd	30
Reynold 123 Limited	34
Search Consultancy Limited	30
The Calico Group	30
Williams & Co	40
Bolloré Logistics UK Ltd	30
Internet Fusion Ltd	45
Learning Curve Group Limited	30
Pilgrim's Pride UK Ltd	60
The Northam Care Trust	30
Heritage Taverns Ltd	30
Oliver Marketing Limited	30
Wincanton Holdings Ltd	120
Places For People Group Limited	41
The Gym Limited	30
Portakabin Limited	30

COMPANY NAME	NUMBER OF VACANCIES
Unity Schools Partnership	65
Astute Ltd	31
Made To Order Limited	30
E-ACT	66
M&D Green Dispensing Chemist Limited	30
Aspire Defence Services Ltd	69
Suffolk's Libraries IPS Limited	30
Treloar Trust	30
Ronnies Limited	35
Vantec Europe Ltd	30
Tops Day Nursery Limited	37
Coppergreen Developments Ltd	41
Coffee1 Ltd	30
Moorhouse Group	30
Action Centres UK Ltd	30
SPECTRUM HEALTHCARE DOMICILIARY CARE LIMITED	30
Optima Care	30
Clipper Logistics PLC	105
Pre-school Learning Alliance	50
Peter Vardy Ltd	58
Rosebourne Limited	30
West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust	30
Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust	44
The Royal Mint	32
Osbourne Co-operative Academy Trust	30

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COMPANY NAME	NUMBER OF VACANCIES
Coate WATER Cre Company Ltd	80
J Murphy & Sons Ltd	52
Persona Care and Support Limited	30
Doncaster Culture & Leisure Trust	30
London North Eastern Railway Limited	38
Harris Federation	60
Aggregate Industries	39
Impact Education Multi Academy Trust	35
The Growth Company	31
Go Train Ltd	30
Furniture Resource Centre Limited	30
Key Care & Support	30
Saint John of God Hospitaller Services	30
MLL Telecom Limited	36
Brunelcare	42
Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	30
The Football League (Community) Ltd T/A EFL 475 Trust	
Muslim Council of Britain Charitable Foundation	90
HIT Training Ltd	48
One for the people limited	30
Casual Speakers Ltd	38

**■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification****Ruth Jones:**[\[120135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the effect of sanctions and conditionality on claimants of social security on (a) the health and well-being and (b) their ability to enter employment.

**Mims Davies:**

In response to the pandemic while we focused on a huge surge in claims ensuring we got money to those in need in a timely manner, we suspended the requirements of the claimant commitment. With the interventions and safeguards this Government has put in place, we were able to reintroduce Claimant Commitments from July. Any work related activity agreed by a claimant with their Work Coach as part of this Commitment, continues to be tailored in light of their circumstances. A range of factors, including people's physical and mental health, are always taken into full consideration to ensure it is reasonable and increases their chances of moving into work, if they are able, and if it is safe for them to do so.

We have not undertaken a recent assessment however our approach is flexible and responsive to the current climate and is regularly reviewed.

**■ Social Security Benefits: North East Fife****Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[121366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the value of unclaimed (a) housing benefit and (b) income support and income-related employment support allowance in North East Fife constituency.

**Guy Opperman:**

The information requested is not available. On 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020 the Department for Work and Pensions published the report "Income-related benefits: estimates of take-up: financial year 2018 to 2019". This provided figures on the value of some unclaimed benefits in Great Britain. However, sub-national figures are not published because of small sample sizes.

**■ Statutory Sick Pay: Endometriosis****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[121321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the current definition of statutory sick pay for people with endometriosis.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[121323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will bring forward proposals to amend the definition of statutory sick pay to ensure that people with endometriosis which can result in intermittent rather than continual symptoms are eligible for that support.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are sick or incapable of work. For SSP purposes, any periods of sickness which last for four or more days in a row, and are less than 8 weeks apart, are treated as linked and therefore count as one period of sickness. Once waiting days have been served, SSP is paid for all days of work missed because of sickness in any linked periods. The current definition supports employees who have fluctuating conditions who may take frequent, shorter absences from work as part of managing their health condition, such as endometriosis.

The government recently published a consultation in which we sought views on a range of proposals to reform SSP. Reform to SSP forms part of a wider package of proposals which seek to reduce ill-health related job loss and support disabled people and people with health conditions to stay in and thrive in work.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[121322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the three year limit in respect of continuous periods of sickness for statutory sick pay on people with endometriosis.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable for up to 28 weeks per sickness absence. Sickness absences which are less than 8 weeks apart count as the same period of sickness. This supports employees who have fluctuating conditions, such as endometriosis, who may take frequent, shorter absences from work as part of managing their health condition. Individuals will no longer be eligible for SSP after a continuous series of linked periods which lasts more than 3 years. In a new period of sickness, employees are eligible for 28 weeks of SSP.

Where an individual's SSP entitlement has ended, they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance when their SSP ends, depending on individual circumstances.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[121324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of eligibility for statutory sick pay from the fourth day of sickness on people with endometriosis; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of paying statutory sick pay from the first day of sickness for people with that condition.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are sick or incapable of work. It is paid by employers at £95.85 per week for up to 28 weeks in any one period of entitlement.

SSP is designed to balance support for an individual when they are unable to work because of sickness with the costs to employers of providing such support. SSP is paid from the fourth day of sickness for absences not related to COVID-19 to avoid an employer facing the burden of paying for all minor absences. The rules apply to all

employees where they meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of the nature of their health condition.

For SSP purposes, periods of sickness for four or more days in a row are known as a Period of Incapacity for Work. Periods of Incapacity for Work are linked and treated as one period of sickness, if the gap between them is not more than eight weeks. Where an employee has two or more linked periods, SSP is paid from the first day in the linked period. This is because waiting days will have been served in the earlier period. The linking rules add protections to both employers, by imposing limits on their liability to make payments, and to employees by not penalising those who suffer from reoccurring health problems, such as endometriosis.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Christian Matheson:**

**[119264]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of universal credit claimants who have been transferred from legacy benefits are receiving (a) more, (b) the same and (c) less financial support than they were receiving in the legacy benefits.

**Will Quince:**

The information requested is not available because claimants who naturally migrate to Universal Credit will do so because they will have had a significant change in their circumstances which previously would have led to a new claim to another existing benefit. In these situations, it has always been the case that the assessment of their new benefit will be based on their new circumstances and under the rules of their new benefit. We do not centrally collate the number of claimants that have made a new claim to Universal Credit as a result of such a change in circumstances.

For people considering claiming Universal Credit, we have updated our information on gov.uk and on understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk where links to independent benefit calculators can also be found.

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[120051]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her Department's policy is on the frequency with which work coaches are expected to meet clients on universal credit.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* The frequency of interventions that Universal Credit Work Coaches undertake with claimants is determined by the individual circumstances of the claimant, the duration of their claim, and the level of support required at that particular time. Since Covid restrictions began earlier this year, claimants have been supported by Work Coaches applying a more flexible approach, using their knowledge of the customer and the local situation to determine whether support should be provided in person, by phone or through digital channels. Our job centres have remained open so that vulnerable customers needing face to face support have been able to access it.

## ■ Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit: Coronavirus

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[120867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of (a) universal credit and (b) working tax credit have been affected by the benefit cap as a result of the temporary increase made to those benefits in response to the covid-19 outbreak; and how many children are resident in the households of those claimants so affected.

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[120868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate the Government has made of the number of (a) kinship carers and (b) children raised in kinship care that have been affected by the benefit cap as a result of the temporary increase made to welfare benefits in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* i) Entitlement to Working Tax Credit provides an exemption to the application of the benefit cap. Therefore, no benefit cap implications apply to Working Tax Credit claimants. There are a range of exemptions for when the cap should not be applied, including exemptions for the most vulnerable claimants who are entitled to disability benefits and carer benefits. Information relating to Universal Credit claimants affected by the benefit cap as a result of the temporary increase made to Universal Credit in response to the covid-19 outbreak is not readily available, and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

ii) No estimate has been made of the number of kinship carers or children raised in kinship care households that have been affected by the benefit cap as a result of the temporary increase made to welfare benefits. The Government acknowledges the immense value of care given by family and friend carers who look after children whose parents are unable to provide the necessary care themselves. The Special Guardian's Allowance which may be awarded to a kinship carer to support the long term placement for children is disregarded when calculating the benefit cap.

Claimants can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment from their Local Authority if they need additional help with rental costs. Kinship carers are listed in Local Authority Guidance as one of the priority groups for Discretionary Housing Payments.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Defence: National Security

**John Healey:**

[\[120780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 30 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Jeremy Quin:**

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

~~This review is ongoing, and its findings are being used to inform the Government's broader Integrated Review, the conclusions of which will be announced in the new year.~~ **Work continues on the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy which is Defence-led but brings in the views of other departments across Government. The review is ongoing and its findings are being used to inform the Government's broader Integrated Review, the conclusions of which will be announced in the new year.**

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

**John McDonnell:**

[\[117169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of information available on the rates of infection and transmission of covid-19 in educational settings.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 25 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department regularly reviews advice from Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), Public Health England, the Office for National Statistics and other sources to ensure our policies are guided by the most up to date scientific evidence. SAGE have committed to publishing minutes and papers following meetings on a regular basis and we will continue to work closely with them, keeping the guidance under review as we continue to monitor the situation over the winter.

The Department will adjust and adapt our approach as necessary if more evidence becomes available.

The Department collects daily data on the open status of schools, the number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment, the number of pupils absent because they have suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, and the number of pupils asked to isolate due to contact with a potential case.

The data from this collection is published at a national level as part of the official statistics series. The publication can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Public Health England also collects data on infection, incidence, and COVID-19 cases overall and publishes weekly data on COVID-19 incidents by institution, including educational settings. This can be found here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/936672/Weekly\\_COVID-19\\_and\\_Influenza\\_Surveillance\\_Graphs\\_w47.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936672/Weekly_COVID-19_and_Influenza_Surveillance_Graphs_w47.pdf). It shows COVID-19 clusters or outbreaks by educational setting, including colleges and universities. Age-range data is also available from the Office for National Statistics here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveyspilot/20november2020>. This shows age-range positive test rates, including for academic school Year 12 to age 24.

**The department intends to publish school workforce attendance data from the new year. This data will be included as part of the publication 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (Covid 19) outbreak'.**

The Department is continuing to review what we publish in our weekly dataset, alongside the quality of data we collect.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ High Speed Two: Disclosure of Information

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[104007]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many non-disclosure agreements have been entered into by HS2 Ltd; and if he will list the parties to those agreements.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 October 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Andrew Stephenson:**

Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are used to protect both HS2 Ltd's information and the information of the other signatory party and are in accordance with typical

business practice. These agreements help to avoid placing homes and businesses in unnecessary blight, protect commercially sensitive information of both parties and the personal information of those potentially affected by any proposed changes to the scheme. HS2 Ltd's Register shows 342339 such agreements have been put in place. As this number changes on a frequent basis as the project develops and new agreements are added to the Register we do not intend to publish a list of the parties at the present time.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Section 7(4) of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011

**Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith):**

**[[HCWS615](#)]**

Today, the Government publishes in draft the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 (Repeal) Bill, which is required to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 (FTPA), and in doing so revive the prerogative power to dissolve Parliament.

The Bill makes express provision that the dissolution prerogative is to be revived to ensure legal, constitutional and political certainty around the process for dissolving Parliament. There will be an ouster clause in the Bill to reinforce the long standing position that the exercise of the dissolution prerogative is not reviewable by the Courts.

The Bill retains certain aspects of the FTPA to ensure the continued operability of our electoral system. The Bill does not change the 25 working day period between dissolution and polling day. The Bill also contains provision to fix the maximum length of a Parliament at five years, thereby returning to the pre-FTPA position.

There will also be provision made in the Bill to give the Prime Minister the discretion, within clearly defined limits, to set a new polling day in the event of the demise of the Crown. Under Section 20 of the Representation of the People Act 1985, in the event of the demise of the Crown after a proclamation summoning a new Parliament, polling day is postponed by a fortnight. The 1985 Act provides no discretion or flexibility to further alter the date of the poll and had demise occurred after the dissolution of Parliament for the 2019 election the polling day would have been postponed to 27 December (the day after Boxing Day). In these very unlikely circumstances, the Prime Minister has the discretion to move the polling day up to seven days either side of this default fourteen day postponement.

I am also depositing in the libraries of both Houses a draft document setting out the Government's initial thinking on the non-legislative constitutional principles that will need to underpin the exercise of the prerogative powers to dissolve Parliament. The Government would welcome the joint committee and other parliamentary select committees giving consideration to these underpinning conventions.

The FTPA was a departure from the long-term constitutional norm, whereby the Prime Minister could seek an early dissolution of Parliament. It was passed with limited scrutiny, and created parliamentary paralysis at a critical time for our country. This Bill, in returning our constitutional system to the pre-FTPA status quo ante, will enable the Government, within the life of a Parliament, to call a general election at the time of their choosing, and allow the people to decide on their Government.

It is vital that this important part of our constitutional settlement is given careful consideration and we welcome the forthcoming scrutiny of the draft Bill to ensure that what replaces the FTPA is subject to greater scrutiny.

**Attachments:**

1. CP322 - Draft FTPA 2011 (Repeal) Bill [Draft Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 (Repeal) Bill (CP 322).pdf]
2. Dissolution Principles [2020.12.01 - Dissolution Principles.pdf]

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ The UK's Points-Based Immigration System

**The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Future Borders and Immigration (Kevin Foster):**

[\[HCWS614\]](#)

I am pleased to confirm the Government has today launched a number of immigration routes under the new UK points-based system, including the Skilled Worker route. This is a significant milestone and delivers on this Government's commitment to take back control of our borders by ending freedom of movement with the EU and replacing it with a global points-based system.

The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020, which received Royal Assent on 11 November, ends free movement on 31 December 2020 and paves the way for our new points-based system that treats EU and non-EU nationals equally.

Applicants for the new routes can now start to apply under the points-based system. EEA nationals who arrive in the UK before 31 December 2020 remain eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme. Over 4.2 million have already applied and others have until 30 June 2021 to do so.

The points-based system will work in the interests of the whole of our United Kingdom and prioritise the skills a person has to offer, not where their passport comes from. It will ensure we attract the brightest and best talent we need to contribute to our economy, our communities and our public services. It also forms a critical part of this country's economic recovery by ensuring investment in the UK domestic workforce and helping us create a high wage, high skill, high productivity economy is the focus of employer's recruitment activities.

Today's launch builds on the successful opening of the reformed Global Talent route in February, the Health and Care visa in August and the Student and Child Student Routes in October. In addition, as the Chancellor set out in the Spending Review last week, we are supporting the delivery of the new borders and immigration system with an additional £217 million of funding.

Ending free movement and introducing the points-based system is the first phase of our plans to transform the operation of our borders and immigration system. Additional routes will be opened in the coming months and our longer-term plans will further simplify,

enable and digitise our systems to put customers at the heart of a firmer, fairer and easier to navigate borders and immigration system.

■ **Consultation seeking views on changes to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 Codes of Practice**

**The Minister of State for Security (James Brokenshire):**

**[[HCWS613](#)]**

I intend to lay legislation in 2021 which will commence the Criminal Finances Act 2017 in Northern Ireland. As part of this, I will issue updated codes of practice under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 contains a comprehensive package of measures designed to make the recovery of unlawfully held assets more effective. The operation of certain powers within POCA are subject to guidance in various codes of practice issued by the Home Secretary, the Attorney General and the Advocate General for Northern Ireland, the Department of Justice and Scottish Ministers.

The existing codes of practice need to be updated to reflect my intention to commence the Criminal Finances Act in Northern Ireland, following consent from the Justice Minister, Naomi Long. The changes to the codes will not come in to force until the Criminal Finances Act has come in to force in Northern Ireland.

The Proceeds of Crime Act provides that before a revised code of practice is issued, I must consider any representations made and modify the codes as appropriate, and subsequently lay the codes before Parliament for approval. As such, I will launch a consultation today, 1 December, for eight weeks.

I intend to consult on changes to the following codes of practice:

1. The Investigation Code of Practice issued under s.377 of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which provides guidance for investigators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
2. The Search, Seizure and Detention of Property Code of Practice issued under s.195S of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which provides guidance in relation to certain reserved functions in Northern Ireland.
3. The Recovery of Cash: Search Powers Codes of Practice issued under s.292 of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which provides guidance for investigators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
4. The Recovery of Listed Assets: Search Powers Codes of Practice issued under s. 303G of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which provides guidance for investigators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Attorney General will also consult on changes to the Investigation Code of Practice issued under s.377A of the Proceeds of Crime Act, which provides guidance for prosecutors in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I will arrange for a copy of the consultation documents to be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Rail Update****Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):**[\[HCWS612\]](#)

Today (1 December 2020), we are announcing that £825 million of additional borrowing will be made available to the Greater London Authority (GLA) for the purposes of Crossrail. The GLA intend to repay this loan via London's Business Rate Supplement and from the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy. This agreement will ensure that the project continues to be funded.

The government remains committed to the rapid completion of the project, in a way that is fair to UK taxpayers, and has committed to financing the completion of Crossrail. However, London - as the primary beneficiary – must ultimately bear any additional costs. Crossrail Ltd is committed to reducing its funding shortfall, and will take all necessary steps to complete the project without requiring further additional funding. TfL is ensuring that further independent analysis of costs are carried out.