



## Daily Report

Wednesday, 2 December 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 December 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 02 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

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Air Pollution

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[120181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the devolved regions on reducing levels of (a) carbon dioxide, (b) nitrous oxide and (c) methane in the atmosphere across the UK.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

There are regular discussions between the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and counterparts in the Devolved Administrations at official and ministerial level on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and these discussions will continue.

#### ■ Buildings: Heating

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[121789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the Building and Heat Strategy.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in the coming months, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings.

These actions include the deployment of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating as part of an ambitious programme of work required to enable key strategic decisions on how we achieve the mass transition to low-carbon heat and set us on a path to decarbonising all homes and buildings.

#### ■ Business: Electricity and Hydrogen

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[120154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits for businesses of using (a) hydrogen and (b) electricity as a fuel source.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

There are a range of fuels and technologies that could play an important role in decarbonising energy use for business and industry including hydrogen, electrification, heat networks and biogas. Our understanding of the respective roles of hydrogen and electricity continues to develop informed by internal and external analysis, innovation and demonstrator projects.

We already have a number of policies and programmes that support business and industry to decarbonise, including Climate Change Agreements, energy audits under the Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme (ESOS), the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund and the Industrial Heat Recovery Support Programme, as well as our wide-reaching Energy Innovation Programme. For example, the £20m Industrial Fuel Switching competition aims to stimulate early investment in fuel switching processes and technologies, such as biomass, hydrogen and electricity, as part of our innovation programme to support the decarbonisation of heavy industry.

■ **Carbon Emissions and Renewable Energy: Manufacturing Industries**

**Ruth Jones:**

**[120140]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to support UK-based manufacturing of (a) renewable and (b) low carbon technologies.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

As set out in my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the government will unlock private sector investment to accelerate the deployment of existing technology, such as retrofitting the UK's building stock and electrification of vehicles, while advancing newer technologies such as carbon capture and low-carbon hydrogen.

Key measures include making significant investment in offshore wind and modern ports and manufacturing infrastructure to expand the share of generation from renewables; providing up to £525 million to bring forward both large-scale nuclear and invest in the development of advanced nuclear technologies; £1 billion to support the establishment of carbon capture and storage in four industrial clusters; and investing £1.3 billion in charging infrastructure to accelerate the mass adoption of electric vehicles ahead of ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: International Men's Day**

**Philip Davies:**

**[120003]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

This Government is committed to levelling up opportunity and ensuring fairness for all - regardless of gender or background. 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 taken across the Government to support this work.

This work ranges from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, looking at outcomes for the whole population. This includes ethnic minorities and White British people, as well as preparation for an Employment Bill which, subject to further consultation, will make flexible working the default unless employers have good reason not to. We are also 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.

The Department marked International Men's Day with an online 'Being Real About Men's Mental Health' event, which all staff were invited to attend. We also shared resources with all Departmental staff on Movember and men's health via the intranet, with links to websites offering advice and support.

## ■ **Electricity and Hydrogen: Environment Protection**

**Marco Longhi:**

**[120155]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the (a) medium and (b) long term environmental effects of (i) hydrogen and (ii) electricity as energies across their sourcing dispensing and consumption cycles.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

BEIS has undertaken a number of studies looking at the environmental performance of hydrogen and electricity in a number of scenarios. The comparative environmental advantages of each depend on how they are produced ('green', 'blue' or 'grey' hydrogen and renewable or fossil fuel electricity generation) and the end use for the energy vector (for example in transport or heating applications). The studies do not differentiate between medium and long-term environmental effects.

## ■ **Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**

**Jane Stevenson:**

**[121919]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will increase the financial support available for the hospitality sector in tier 3 covid-19 restriction areas.

**Paul Scully:**

We are providing hospitality businesses in Tier 3 areas with a wide package of support to help them through the current crisis. This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, government-backed loans, Local Restrictions Support Grants and additional funding provided to Local Authorities to support businesses.

We have extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until March 2021, where small and large employers will be eligible to apply for a Government grant of 80% of workers' salaries up to £2,500 a month.

Businesses can continue to access our loan schemes, now extended, defer VAT payments previously due in March, and benefit from business rates holidays, a moratorium on eviction for commercial tenants and the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme. We have also made available grants of up to £3,000 for businesses required to close in the current period of national restrictions, and businesses required to remain closed in Tier 2 or Tier 3 will receive the same level of support.



Grants are also available from the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) scheme, which is a discretionary fund to support businesses which are not legally closed but severely impacted Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions, with funding of up to £2,100 per 28 days.

On 1 December, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced an additional £1,000 Christmas grant for 'wet-led pubs' in tiers 2 and 3.

## ■ Job Creation: Coventry

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[120065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support job creation schemes in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Across Coventry and Warwickshire, government is investing a total of £131.84 million across three Local Growth Deals. This investment is set to create up to 4000 new jobs, alongside wider benefits in housing, skills, business growth and infrastructure development. Projects supported include activity at Coventry City College which will provide apprenticeship opportunities and a package of investments to help maximise the economic benefits of the upcoming City of Culture and Commonwealth Games.

Earlier this year, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was awarded £66m from the Getting Building Fund for a wide range of projects that will deliver a much-needed boost to the local economy, with the potential to create over 2,800 new jobs. Investments included £3.8m for the Commonwealth Economic Legacy project at Ricoh Arena in Coventry North East, and £1.77m for Coventry's Very Light Rail project.

## ■ Living Wage

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[120142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the level of compliance of businesses with payment of the National Living Wage.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government is committed to cracking down on employers who fail to pay the minimum wage. We are clear that anyone entitled to be paid the minimum wage should receive it.

We set out our assessment of non-compliance with the National Living Wage (NLW) and National Minimum Wage (NMW) in BEIS' NMW Enforcement and Compliance Report. In 2019, approximately 1.5% of all UK employee jobs were paid below the relevant minimum wage rate. Updated estimates for 2020 will be provided in our next iteration of the report, which will be published in due course.

The Government remains committed to enforcing the minimum wage. We have more than doubled the budget for the minimum wage enforcement and compliance (rising to £27.5 million for 2020/21, up from £13.2 million in 2015/16), and continue to demonstrate good progress in enforcing workers' entitlement to the minimum wage.

## ■ Living Wage and Pay

**Kim Johnson:**

[\[120162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has a timetable for (a) bringing forward legislative proposals in support of the real living wage and (b) allocating resources to provide pay rises for key workers.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced during his Spending Review increases to the National Living Wage (NLW) and National Minimum Wage (NMW) to come into force from 1 April 2021. These increases mean that a full-time worker earning the NLW will be over £345 better off over the year, and allow the Government to make progress towards its long-term ambition for the NLW to reach two-thirds of median earnings by 2024. The Government remains committed to supporting low paid workers, including key workers, and so is continuing with an increase to the NLW this year.

In July, the Government delivered a significant real-terms pay increase to 900,000 public sector workers across 9 workforces. For 2021/22, we will target resources where they will have the most benefit. The NHS Pay Review Body and Doctor and Dentist's Review Body will make their recommendations as usual next year. We will also protect the lowest paid, with 2.1 million public sector workers earning less than £24,000 receiving a minimum £250 increase.

## ■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[120141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to support the automotive sector.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government is determined to ensure that the UK continues to be one of the most competitive locations in the world for the automotive sector.

We have provided comprehensive support during the pandemic, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the trade credit insurance guarantee, and tax deferrals. In total, we have provided almost £2.5 billion in COVID Corporate Financing Facility support to the automotive sector.

The Government has invested around £1.5 billion to support the research, development, and manufacture of zero and low-emission vehicles to date. This investment has created thousands of jobs in the sector and its supply chain, saved millions of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, and has helped the UK to lead the charge towards a low carbon automotive future.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently announced in his 10 Point Plan nearly £500 million through the Automotive Transformation Fund over the next four years in order to develop and embed the next generation of cutting-edge automotive technologies in the UK.

We are also investing around £2.5 billion to support the roll-out of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles through grants for plug-in cars, vans, HGVs, taxis, and motorcycles. In addition, we are investing in schemes to support the delivery of chargepoint infrastructure to homes, workplaces, on residential streets, and across the wider roads network.

### ■ **Shipping: Living Wage**

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

**[121850]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the planned timescale is for seafarers to receive the National Minimum Wage, announced on 1 October 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

The National Minimum Wage (Offshore Employment) (Amendment) Order 2020 came into force on 1 October 2020. It extended the National Minimum Wage (NMW) to all seafarers working domestically in the UK territorial waters. Changes apply regardless of where the vessel is registered or the nationality of the seafarers, provided they are working domestically in the UK territorial waters.

If seafarers believe they are not being paid the NMW, they should contact HMRC who will consider every complaint they receive, call the ACAS helpline (0300 123 1100), or use the online helpline tool for free, confidential advice about their rights and entitlements.

### ■ **Social Rented Housing: Carbon Emissions**

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

**[121790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings his Department has had with social housing providers on what is required to decarbonise the UK's existing social housing stock.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Department has had a number of meetings at both a Ministerial and official level with individual social landlords, local and regional networks, and representative bodies to discuss improving the energy performance of social housing, including as part of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund demonstrator and the Green Homes Grant scheme.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

**[121791]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the long-term funding

measures needed to support the decarbonisation and retrofit of the UK's existing social housing stock.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Our Manifesto committed to a £3.8 billion Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund over 10 years.

The Summer Economic Update announced a £50 million fund to demonstrate innovative approaches to retrofitting social housing at scale. The Demonstrator project is a short-term investment to learn lessons and innovate. A further £60 million has been allocated at the Spending Review (SR) to continue the development of the scheme into next year, in line with Manifesto commitments, and further funding will be confirmed at the multi-year SR.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Cabinet Office: International Men's Day

**Philip Davies:**

[\[120002\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Cabinet Office promoted a number of virtual events to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020, this included an event regarding Men & Mental Health.

### ■ Civil Servants and Ministers: Conflict of Interests

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[121865\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring (a) Ministers, (b) civil servants and (c) Special advisors to declare potential sources of (i) influence or (ii) conflict of interest from foreign states.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Ministerial Code, the Civil Service Code (including the Civil Service Management Code), and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers set out the requirements on declaring and managing conflicts of interest. The various Codes are published on GOV.UK.

### ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[120125\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what risk assessment he has made of allowing three households to mix during the period of lifted covid-19 restrictions from 23 to 27 December 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[120127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what risk assessment he has made of allowing three households to meet in restaurants and pubs during the period of lifted covid-19 restrictions from 23 to 27 December 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

I refer the hon. Member to the [written statement](#) made by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 25 November.

## ■ Elections: Travellers

**Cat Smith:**

[\[120075\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Local Authority 2018 Voter ID trials Equalities Impact Assessment in Bromley, what steps his Department is taking ahead of the national roll-out of Voter ID to ensure access to voting for the Traveller and Roma community is not limited.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to PQs [104752](#) and [100441](#).

## ■ Paracetamol: Overdoses

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[120048\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have died due to an overdose of paracetamol in each of the last five years.

**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 PQ120048 [PQ120048.pdf]

## ■ Veterans: Medals

**Carol Monaghan:**

[\[121860\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Advisory Military Sub-Committee will report on their decision on the case for service medals for veterans who were present at British nuclear tests.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Further to the [answer given to PQ 90166](#) on 21 September 2020, there is an independent process for the consideration of historic medal claims through the Advisory Military Sub-Committee. Each case is carefully considered, and details of cases must remain confidential until the decision-making process is final. Campaigners can be assured their case is under review and recommendations will be made as soon as possible.

**■ Weather: Deaths****Jon Trickett:**[\[120796\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many excess winter deaths there have been in each year since 2010.

**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 PQ120796 [PQ120796.pdf]

**DEFENCE****■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[119978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will provide a breakdown of how the £16.5 billion to be allocated to his Department under the Spending Review 2020 will be spent.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The defence of the UK must always be led by the threats we must deter and defeat. The settlement we have received will set our Armed Forces up for the next decade. However, we will still have to take hard decisions to ensure we're spending our defence budget in the most effective way. Work to finalise the Integrated Review and how this settlement will be used is ongoing. We are in the final phase and are focused on aligning our ambition with our resources.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Ice Skating: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[119981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the level of risk of covid-19 transmission in ice skating rinks where (a) hygiene and (b) social distancing measures are followed.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

As the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions will end on Wednesday 2 December, and gyms and sport facilities will reopen across all tiers.

Outdoor skating rinks can stay open across all tiers and indoor skating rinks can open in Tiers 1 and 2. Unfortunately in Tier 3 areas indoor skating rinks will remain closed, because these areas have a very high or rapidly rising level of infections, so tighter restrictions will be in place.

## ■ Rugby: Coronavirus

**Tracey Crouch:**

[\[121830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to make a decision on the timescale for the resumption of grassroots rugby during the period of covid-19 restrictions.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

However, as the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions will end on Wednesday 2 December. This will allow both rugby union and rugby league to resume in accordance with their return to play guidance. Higher risk activity such as scrums have been removed from both codes of the game to ensure the risk of transmission is reduced.

## ■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

**Jonathan Gullis:**

[\[121929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on distributing the tampon tax to support women and girls.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

To date more than £62 million of VAT on sanitary products has gone to good causes supporting women and girls, through the Tampon Tax Fund. The successful applicants to the 20/21 round of the Tampon Tax Fund were announced on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) on Friday 27th November 2020 and funding will be distributed in due course.

## ■ Sports: Females

**Fay Jones:**

[\[119389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to minimise the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on women's sport.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

It is vital that we continue to strive for greater equality and opportunity in sport. I am keen that we maintain the focus on women's sport and build on the fantastic progress made in recent years. In May I wrote to major sporting bodies setting out my expectation that momentum in women's and girl's sport would not be lost because of



the pandemic. I followed this letter up with a meeting in June where the sporting bodies and Women in Sport (a charity whose aim is to campaign for increased representation and visibility of women and girls in all aspects of sport) detailed their plans to increase participation levels. I also met with Baroness Sue Campbell in November to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on women's football. I am committed to helping women's sport come out of the current crisis stronger than ever and we will continue to work closely with the sector to ensure that happens.

## ■ Television Licences: Fees and Charges

**Marco Longhi:**

[121392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to make an assessment of the effectiveness of the TV licence fee.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The BBC's funding model is agreed with the BBC as part of the Royal Charter. It was last considered as part of Charter Review 2015-16, following which the Government committed to maintain the licence fee funding model for the BBC for the duration of the current Charter period, until 2027.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the BBC and the wider public service broadcasting system adapt to a fast changing market, remaining at the heart of our world class TV sector. We have been clear that, ahead of the next Charter Review process, we will undertake a detailed look at the future of the TV licence model itself.

The Government recently announced the formal opening of the process to agree the level of the licence fee from 2022. This will determine the BBC and S4C's public funding for at least 5 years from April 2022. The full announcement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/negotiations-on-the-future-cost-of-the-tv-licence-kick-off>

## ■ Tennis: Coronavirus

**Scott Mann:**

[119303]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Department plans to publish guidance on the safe reopening of tennis clubs at the end of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**Scott Mann:**

[119304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when her Department plans to publish on the safe reopening of archery clubs at the end of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**Scott Mann:**

[119305]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to publish guidance on the safe reopening of golf clubs at the end of the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.



**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

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

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

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

Further guidance has been published today on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-grassroots-sports-guidance-for-the-public-and-sport-providers) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-grassroots-sports-guidance-for-the-public-and-sport-providers> )

**EDUCATION****■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[117347]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the financial implications of covid-19 related expenditure for (a) schools and (b) colleges.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department appreciates the continued and significant efforts by schools and their staff to keep schools open this term. Returning to school full time has been vital for children's education and wellbeing, and has rightly been a national priority. The latest published figures show that over 99% of state-funded schools are open. The Department published guidance to support schools to welcome back all children full-time. The guidance can be viewed at:

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

On 27 November, the Department announced a new COVID-19 workforce fund for schools and colleges to help them remain open. It will fund the costs of teacher absences over a threshold in schools and colleges, for those with high staff absences that are also facing significant financial pressures. The fund will help schools and

colleges to meet the cost of absences experienced during the period from the beginning of November until the end of this term. More information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-support-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-pandemic>.

Schools have also continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in the 2020-21 financial year, £4.8 billion in 2021-22, and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20. This includes an additional £780 million this year and £730 million next year for high needs, taking total high needs funding to over £8 billion.

As stated in our guidance, schools should use their existing resources, including these funding increases, when making arrangements to support children this term. Ministers and officials continue to engage regularly with school leaders and their representatives on a wide range of issues around COVID-19, including discussions in relation to costs faced by schools at this time. The Department will continue to review the pressures schools are facing into next term.

The Department appreciates the continued and significant efforts by further education (FE) colleges and all staff to keep colleges open this term. We recognise the financial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on FE colleges and have protected grant funding to the FE sector, worth over £3 billion for a full year, through paying scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019-20 financial year and paying allocations for 2020-21 in line with the national profile. This year, the Department has increased investment in education and training of 16 to 19 year olds by £400 million, including an increased base rate, and more funding for high cost and high value subjects. We have also brought forward £200 million of the £1.5 billion for capital funding in colleges. For other providers with contracts with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, we set up a Provider Relief Scheme.

For colleges in significant financial difficulties, the existing support arrangements remain in place, including short-term emergency funding. The Department has also adapted and opened the College Collaboration Fund to support colleges to respond to current challenges, and we have announced the 20 colleges whose bids were successful.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has announced an extensive and unprecedented package of support measures for businesses and employees. FE colleges can apply to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for non-grant-funded employees, which has been extended until March 2021.

The Department is working closely with colleges to monitor the financial impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak and ensure that any colleges facing financial difficulties are able to access relevant support. Financial forecasts for the current year were submitted by colleges in July, and updated cashflow projections are due to be provided this month.

## ■ History: Curriculum

**Kim Johnson:**

**[120170]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has taken steps to develop a de-colonised curriculum.

**Nick Gibb:**

All state-funded schools (including academies) in England are required to teach a broad and balanced curriculum from the ages of 5 to 16, which includes English, Mathematics, science, religious education, and relationships, sex and health education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum#programmes-of-study-by-subject>. The reformed National Curriculum, taught from September 2014, has been developed to match or exceed the standards set in the highest performing jurisdictions. Whilst the National Curriculum creates a minimum expectation for maintained schools, it does not represent everything that a school should teach, nor does it set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. Teachers have freedom over precise details so they can teach lessons that are right for their pupils. The Government does not have plans to make further changes to the National Curriculum.

## ■ Pupils: Coronavirus

**Wes Streeting:**

**[115737]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number and proportion of pupils not attending school as a result of (a) testing positive for covid-19, (b) being suspected of having contracted the covid-19 virus, (c) self-isolating having had a potential contact with a confirmed case of covid-19 and (d) their school having been closed for reasons relating to the covid-19 outbreak for all state-funded (i) primary, (ii) secondary and (iii) special schools in each (A) region and (B) local authority area in the latest period for which such information is available.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department intends to publish regional and 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>.

**■ Pupils: North of England****Andrew Gwynne:** [\[121823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with universities on ensuring that pupils from schools in the north of England do not miss out on places at high-ranking universities as a result of having to self isolate due to the covid-19 outbreak at the time of interviews or entrance exams.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government is working closely with partners across the education sector, and with higher education providers, to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and the disruption it has caused to young people's education, including for those who will be taking exams and applying to university next year.

Universities understand the unprecedented difficulties that students have faced this year. Whilst, as autonomous institutions, they are in charge of their own admissions arrangements, the government has asked that universities be as flexible as possible. We will continue to make every effort to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on young people's education, so that they are well placed to progress to the next stage of their lives, wherever they live and whatever choices they make.

**■ Schools: Coronavirus****Kate Green:** [\[115642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number and proportion of schools that are (a) fully and (b) partially open in each region of England.

**Kate Green:** [\[115643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools had one or more pupils self-isolating in each region of England on 12 November 2020.

**Kate Green:** [\[115645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of pupils on roll were in attendance in state-funded schools in each region of England on 12 November 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

We collect data on both the open status of schools and number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment on a daily basis. This data is published from this collection 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>. Data is published from 9 September 2020, but prior to 12 October 2020 information on pupils isolating was not collected.

The Department intends to publish regional and 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>.

**Margaret Greenwood:**

**[115706]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) pupils and (b) teachers attending (i) primary, (ii) secondary and (iii) special schools in each (A) region and (B) local authority area in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will publish that data on a monthly basis.

**Nick Gibb:**

We collect data on both the open status of schools and number of schools that have indicated they have sent children home due to COVID-19 containment on a daily basis. This data is published from this collection 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>. Data is published from 9 September 2020, but prior to 12 October 2020 information on pupils isolating was not collected.

The Department intends to publish regional and local authority level data on 15 December. Also, 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 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>

**Jane Hunt:**

**[120174]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure there is enough space in schools to accommodate all students in line with covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

**Nick Gibb:**

It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time. Being at school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing.

The leaders and staff of education settings have been doing an extraordinary job to remain open, keep settings safe, and provide education. Schools have implemented a range of protective measures to minimise risk of transmission.

The Department published guidance to support schools to welcome back all children from the start of the autumn term. The full guidance is available through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Schools should continue to undertake risk assessments and implement the system of controls set out in this guidance. The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining the distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on children's ability to distance, the lay out of the school, and the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary schools).

Schools should look to maximise the use of their site and any associated available space. The Department does not, however, consider it necessary for schools to make significant adaptations to their site, because class sizes have been able to return to normal and spaces used by more than one class or group can be cleaned between use. Following a risk assessment, some schools may determine that small adaptations to their site are required. This will be at the discretion of individual schools, based on their particular circumstances.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances, and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

## ■ Secondary Education: Coronavirus

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[120193]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure regular covid-19 testing takes place in secondary schools for (a) students and (b) staff.

**Nick Gibb:**

Keeping schools and colleges open is one of the Government's highest priorities. Testing capacity is the highest it has ever been. The UK's daily COVID-19 testing capacity passed the 500,000 mark on Saturday 31 October and testing capacity continues to expand to help meet demand over the winter period. All essential workers continue to have access to priority testing via the online booking portal. This includes all education and childcare workers, including support and teaching staff, social workers, and specialist education professionals. In addition to this, the Department is supplying COVID-19 test kits directly to schools and further education

colleges for both staff and students who develop the symptoms of COVID-19 and face significant barriers to accessing a test through other routes.

The Government is also committed to introducing mass asymptomatic testing using new technologies to minimise the risk of infection spread in our communities. Pilots have begun in a small number of secondary schools and colleges using new Lateral Flow Devices that deliver fast, on-site results. The pilots cover secondary school students and staff. These pilots will help us better understand how this new technology can be operationalised for further roll-out in schools and nurseries to ensure we protect those at high risk, find COVID-19 cases, and help enable us to return to as normal a way of life as possible.

### ■ Secure Accommodation

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[121848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer on 28 June 2018 to Question 156433, how many additional places for children in secure accommodation were achieved through his Department's £40million capital grants programme for secure accommodation; how much of that £40million budget he plans to spend by 31 March 2021; and if he will provide a breakdown of how the capital grants were spent.

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[121849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to section 7.3 of the Spending Review 2020, what estimate he has made of the number of additional places in secure children's homes that will be made available through the £24 million announced for such homes; and what the planned timescale is for making those places available.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department's capital grants programme for the current spending review period will, once completed, increase available placements by 17 beds across the secure children's home estate. This includes some beds which are for use as 'step-down' provision. The grants programme has, in total, funded approximately 130 projects across the estate. We expect that the budget will be spent in full by March 2021, however, the completion of some projects has been delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Applications for grants were assessed and awarded to various projects which ensured secure children's homes could continue to operate in safe, secure, and well-functioning buildings, and that children needing a secure placement have their education, welfare, and well-being promoted and supported by the home's environment.

On 25 November 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced as part of the Spending Review that the government will provide £24 million during the 2021/22 financial year to start a new programme to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure children's homes. This will provide high quality, safe homes for some of our most vulnerable children, and will mean children can live closer to their families and support networks, in settings that meet their



needs. This is the most significant one-year investment in the secure children's homes estate in the last 10 years. We will set out further details in due course.

■ **Students: Coronavirus**

**Esther McVey:**

**[120040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of university students on their needs in the context of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on university education.

**Michelle Donelan:**

On 18 August, a higher education (HE) taskforce made up of various sector representatives was launched to initially advise on HE admissions. The scope of the taskforce has since been extended to include discussions on broader COVID-19 related challenges faced by the HE sector and students. We are aware of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on students' mental health, wellbeing, and future life chances, and must do all we can to mitigate its effects. Several taskforce subgroups have looked at these areas in more detail.

The student mental health subgroup, for instance, had representatives from the Student Minds charity and the Office for Students (OfS) to discuss responses from students. The group also heard from a current second year student who attended to share their personal experience and thoughts directly.

I also regularly meet with the National Union of Students and have engaged in several Facebook live sessions organised by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service where I have had the opportunity to discuss with students the issues affecting them the most, as well as engaging with students through the student panel of the OfS, virtual visits and The Student Room.

We will continue to work with the sector and student representative bodies and engage students, as our top priority for January will be the welfare of students, staff, and the communities around higher education providers.

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[121031]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that Jewish university students can return home to their families during the covid-19 outbreak for Hanukkah between 10 and 18 December 2020.

**Michelle Donelan:**

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

On 11 November 2020, the department published guidance on plans for student movement at the end of term, outlining what providers should do following the end of the national restrictions on 2 December, and how this affects students, irrespective of their religious denomination.



To ensure that students can be home at the end of the autumn term, but also reduce any transmission risk, the government is asking that students return home once the national restrictions have been lifted, in a “student travel window” lasting from 3-9 December. This should be in line with specific arrangements put in place by their HE provider.

The guidance on student movement at the end of term is available here:

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

## ■ Union Learning Fund

**Jon Trickett:** [120798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people have obtained qualifications using the Union Learning Fund since 1998.

**Jon Trickett:** [120799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many people obtained qualifications using the Union Learning Fund in 2019.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Unionlearn and the Union Learning Fund provides very little training and education itself, but instead supports, encourages and mentors individuals to undertake learning. In most cases, the actual learning is funded through the Adult Education Budget.

In the financial year 2019/20, our grant to the Union Learning Fund allowed Unionlearn to support 189,094 people in learning. The learning itself is provided by a range of providers including colleges, independent training providers and others. The type of learning is very wide and covers informal Adult Community Learning, basic skills, continuing professional development, as well as learning which leads to a formal qualification. We do not keep records on the actual qualifications gained.

## ■ Universities: Repayments

**Esther McVey:** [120039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the (a) accessibility and (b) effectiveness of the university refund procedure.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Higher education (HE) providers are autonomous institutions and as such they are responsible for providing clear systems for handling students' complaints and appeals, including requests for refunds. The university's formal complaints procedures should be easily accessible and available on the university's website. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly, and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns.

Where a student completes the formal complaints process and they are dissatisfied with the outcome, they can take a complaint to the Office of the Independent

Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA offers a free service to students and can review complaints from students made against a higher education provider.

All higher education providers registered with the Office for Students provider must co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the OIA and make students aware of their ability to use the scheme. The OIA is independent of the government, and as such, is responsible for case allocation and timing. The OIA's 'Good Practice Framework on Handling Complaints and Appeals' states that HE providers should normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal complaints process: [oia-good-practice-framework.pdf \(oiahe.org.uk\)](https://oiahe.org.uk/oia-good-practice-framework.pdf).

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: International Men's Day

**Philip Davies:**

**[120001]**

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

**Victoria Prentis:**

Every year, International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight how outcomes for men and boys can be improved and the important work going on every day to address this. This year's theme was "Better health for men and boys". Defra group marked this day with a blog by our Deputy Gender champion, Mark Thompson. Mark highlighted the inclusion agenda for men, in particular mental health issues and how our networks help and support employees. In addition, our newly formed Gender Board has raised the need to engage men better in gender equality conversations.

Linked to this year's theme, details of the ASK TWICE campaign were shared with employees. The campaign is specifically aimed at men, and is part of the national [Time To Change](#) initiative led by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness which aims to change the way we think about, and take action on, mental health problems.

In addition to supporting International Men's Day this November, across Defra group we support many UK gender-based initiatives, including Movember. One example is a panel discussion on International Men's Day itself, hosted by our Women's Network and the Defra Movember campaign. During this session various Equality, Diversity and Inclusion network leads discussed a range of subjects related to male stereotypes: e.g. men's health, mental health, fatherhood and how to support men in the workplace. These sessions reflected the fact that these issues affect everyone: colleagues, friends, husbands, wives, partners, families and organisations. Another example this November has been the Defra Cancer Network partnering with our Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Network to run two online events highlighting how different aspects of cancer may affect individuals across gender lines. These events were supplemented by the sharing of personal stories of prostate cancer across the group via blogs, with the objective of tackling stigma around men's health issues.

This content featured links to useful information with messages encouraging employees “if in doubt, get it checked”.

To complement these network-led sessions, groups have been set up on our internal Yammer pages. Examples include #Team EA Movember which provides an opportunity for employees to fundraise and the Movember page for anyone wanting to join the conversation, or to become a Movember Workplace Ambassador. We have also started an anonymous WhatsApp group, providing a safe place for men to talk with others who are currently suffering or have previously suffered from cancer or mental health problems.

Finally, we use other opportunities throughout the year to raise and address issues of concern to men. For instance, Defra group marked Carers’ Rights Day on 26 November in support of men with caring responsibilities. Through our HR policies and standard work practices, Defra group continues to ensure all men have access to flexible working and shared parental leave, giving them the opportunity for work-life balance and the ability to take time away from the workplace to fulfil their caring responsibilities.

Defra organisations recognise that talking is important. We appreciate that for many people it is easier to simply say “I’m OK” than to admit they have problems. In recognition of our differences, Defra group is committed to finding ways that enable anyone and everyone to reach out for help, regardless of their gender identity - whether cis, trans, fluid or non-binary.

## ■ Hunting: Dogs

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[120045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many instances of hunting dogs hypoglycemia have been recorded in the UK in each of the last five years.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The information requested is not available. There is no requirement for hunting dogs hypoglycemia to be reported to the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

## ■ Poaching: Confiscation Orders

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[120069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Game Act 1831 to provide the police and courts with greater forfeiture and confiscation powers in relation to (a) vehicles and (b) dogs for poaching offences.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[120070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Game Act 1831 to remove the limit on fines that can be imposed for poaching offences.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[120071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Game Act 1831 to enable the recovery of kennelling costs from people convicted of poaching offences.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government takes wildlife crime seriously and that is reflected in the penalties provided by legislation. Poaching is one of the UK's six wildlife crime priorities, which are set by the UK Wildlife Crime Tasking and Co-ordination Group.

The Game Act 1831 forms only one part of a wider set of legislative measures to protect wildlife and biodiversity from poaching and other harm. Offences under it carry a level 3 fine, with the maximum currently being £1,000. There are currently no plans to change this.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Carbon Emissions: International Cooperation

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[120198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government is making through international co-operation on achieving net zero carbon emissions.

**James Duddridge:**

Tackling climate change is a key priority for the UK. The Government is committed to working with countries across the world to unlock their renewable energy potential and support their transition towards net zero emissions.

The Government provides extensive support for countries to tackle emissions and cope with the impacts of climate change. Since 2011, we have supported 66 million people to cope with climate change and avoided 31 million tonnes of emissions thanks to our international climate finance - which we have committed to doubling to £11.6 billion between 2021/22 and 2025/26.

### ■ Coronavirus: Technology

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[121843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support the mandatory use of WHO COVID Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) by including working with the C-TAP as a condition of receiving UK public funding to support with research into covid-19 medical technologies.

**Wendy Morton:**

We agree that the world urgently needs access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and other health technologies to enable an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

## ■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[121844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support the realisation of guaranteed global vaccine access for (a) vulnerable groups and (b) frontline health workers by committing to share a portion of the covid-19 vaccines that the UK Government obtains through advanced purchase agreements with the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment, from the first vaccine shipment.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK will deliver on its commitment to global equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines through our commitment to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC). The UK is the largest funder to the COVAX AMC with a commitment of up to £548 million. This will contribute to 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines for 92 developing countries in 2021, and immunisation for up to 500 million people (subject to vaccines successfully securing stringent regulatory approvals).

Ensuring frontline health workers globally have access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will be a critical part of accelerating an end to the pandemic. The UK supports the role of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) as the lead technical partner in COVAX to provide robust guidance on specific COVID-19 vaccine use strategies to ensure maximum public health and wider impact. This includes the prioritised access to vaccines for health and social care workers and other vulnerable groups.

## ■ **Egypt: Detainees**

**Wayne David:**

[\[121820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Egyptian counterpart calling for the immediate release of Gasser Abdel-Razek, Karim Ennarah and Mohammed Basheer from detention in that country.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is deeply concerned about the arrest of Gasser Abdel Razek, Mohammed Basheer and Karim Ennarah. We continue to raise our concerns with the Egyptian authorities both in London and in Cairo, including around alleged mistreatment in detention. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue directly with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November. We are working closely with partners in the international community who share our concerns. All human rights defenders should be able to work without fear of arrest or reprisals.

**Wayne David:**

[\[121821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) treatment and (b) access to legal assistance of Gasser Abdel-Razek, Karim Ennarah and Mohammed Basheer in detention in Egypt.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is deeply concerned about the arrest of Gasser Abdel Razek, Mohammed Basheer and Karim Ennarah. We continue to raise our concerns with the Egyptian authorities both in London and in Cairo, including around alleged mistreatment in detention. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue directly with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November. We are working closely with partners in the international community who share our concerns. All human rights defenders should be able to work without fear of arrest or reprisals.

■ **Gibraltar: Brexit**

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[121861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his European counterparts on Gibraltar's inclusion in the UK's negotiations on its future relationship with the EU.

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[121862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the future trade relationship of Gibraltar with the EU.

**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.

■ **Gibraltar: UK Relations with EU**

**Bob Stewart:**

[\[121226\]](#)

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.

### ■ **Iraq and Turkey: Security**

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[120856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making representations to the Governments of Turkey and Iraq on the need for co-operation and dialogue between those countries to (a) tackle terrorism, (b) help ensure regional security and (c) help protect civilians in that region.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK has discussed the need for ongoing dialogue with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. We will continue to raise the need for cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism, ensure regional security and protect civilians.

### ■ **Libya: IRA**

**Ian Paisley:**

[\[121839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his planned timescale is for the (a) consideration and (b) publication of the (i) scoping and (ii) final report of William Shawcross on Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism.

**James Cleverly:**

The Government is carefully considering the internal scoping report that Mr Shawcross has produced in order to do justice to the important, complex and sensitive issues it covers.

### ■ **Nagorno Karabakh: Peace Negotiations**

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[121831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote a plan for enduring peace, stability and economic development in Nagorno-Karabakh; and with which international partners he is taking those steps.

**Wendy Morton:**

A peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be essential to ensure the stability and economic development of the region. The UK Government supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs France, the United States and Russia in this regard. The Foreign Secretary and I remain in regular contact with international partners, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and the Co-Chairs.



## ■ Overseas Aid

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[121236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made a recent assessment of the UK's position on a list of countries for international development spending as a proportion of GDP.

**James Cleverly:**

Using the latest official figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (for 2019), the UK will be the second most generous Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending country in the G7 as a percentage of our national income in 2021 based on a 0.5 per cent commitment. We will spend more of our national income in percentage terms than the US, Japan, Canada or Italy.

The full list of OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries and their ODA spending as a proportion of Gross National Income in 2019 can be found in our Statistics on International Development publication in Table C4:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/920071/Table-C4.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920071/Table-C4.ods)

## ■ Somalia and Somaliland: Overseas Aid

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[120187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Official Development Assistance allocated to (a) Somalia and (b) Somaliland.

**James Duddridge:**

UK assistance supports the shared security and prosperity of all Somalis across Somalia, and including in Somaliland. Delivering aid in Somalia is notoriously challenging. We safeguard and monitor our investments through third party monitors, a dedicated call centre and regular evaluations. Somalia faces a protracted humanitarian crisis with over 5.9 million people in need of assistance. In 2020 UK Aid has provided 2.4 million vulnerable Somalis with life-saving cash assistance, nutrition, health, shelter and clean water. UK Aid is also helping to make a long-lasting tangible difference to the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable across Somalia, and including in Somaliland, by delivering sustainable programmes improving governance and security; infrastructure and health systems; and by helping create jobs and economic growth.

## ■ Somaliland: Foreign Relations

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[120186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent meetings he has had with members of the Somaliland Government.



**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[120188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Somalia on the status of Somaliland.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[120192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to establish an embassy in Somaliland.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK maintains a permanent presence in Somaliland through the British Office in Hargeisa which was established in 2012. UK officials engage with the Somaliland government on an ongoing basis on a broad range of issues.

The UK does not recognise Somaliland as an independent state. UK policy remains that it is for Somaliland and the Federal Government of Somalia to decide their future, and for neighbours in the region to take the lead in recognising any new arrangements. We continue to support and encourage dialogue between the two parties.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Abortion: Drugs

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**

[\[115492\]](#)

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

**Helen Whately:**

The Government have had eleven meetings with abortion providers to monitor the safety of abortion pills taken at home since 30 March 2020.

The Department continues to closely monitor the impact of the temporary approval for women's homes to be classed as a place where both sets of medication for early medical abortion can be taken up to 10 weeks gestation. Officials have regular meetings on abortion issues more generally at which the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Care Quality Commission and abortion service providers are present and the safety of abortion pills taken at home may have been discussed at these meetings in addition to the meetings outlined.

### ■ Abortion: Northern Ireland

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[110836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women have accessed the Northern Ireland abortion scheme for terminations in Great Britain; and what the cost to the public purse has been of that scheme since 31 March 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The number of women who have had terminations in England and Wales from January to June 2020 and who are resident in Northern Ireland is 323. Of these, nearly all will have been funded through the United Kingdom Government funded Northern Ireland abortion scheme.

The cost of supporting women travelling from Northern Ireland to England to access abortion services in 2020/21 is not yet known and will not be available until after the end of the financial year.

**■ Air Pollution: Public Health**

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[116388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Royal College of Surgeons on the effect of poor air quality on public health.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[116389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health on the effect of poor air quality on public health.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[116390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Royal College of Nursing on the effect of poor air quality on public health.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[116391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Royal College of General Practitioners on the effect of poor air quality on public health.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[116392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Royal College of Emergency Medicine on the effect of poor air quality on public health.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department has engaged with the Royal Medical Colleges frequently. For example, the Chief Medical Officer has engaged with the Royal College Presidents on a fortnightly basis since January 2020 to share information and brief them on our health priorities. More specifically the Department, through Public Health England (PHE), held discussions with the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health about the effects of indoor air quality on health whilst developing the report 'The inside story: Health effects of indoor air quality on children and young people', published in January 2020 and was a named co-author.

PHE also previously held discussions with the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health about the effects of poor air quality on health whilst developing the report 'Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution', published in February 2016 and was a named co-author.

## ■ Anaemia

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[118598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress he has made on the delivery of NICE guidelines on the diagnosis and treatment of pernicious anaemia.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has been asked to develop a guideline on pernicious anaemia and is currently recruiting for topic experts for this guideline. NICE is working to an expected publication date of March 2023, however this date is subject to change.

## ■ Barts Health NHS Trust: Fire Prevention

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[117968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a three-year investment programme agreed in 2017 with the London Fire Service to upgrade fire safety in Barts NHS Trust was delayed as a result of limits on capital funding available to the Trust.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department has provided emergency funding to Barts NHS Trust, including £6.1 million in 2019-20 for fire safety works. A significant portion has been carried out and work is scheduled to March 2022, with work designed to ensure clinical services can continue during construction work.

## ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[120150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) providing medical cannabis through NHS prescriptions and (b) funding private prescriptions in the interim; and what barriers remain to providing medical cannabis through NHS prescriptions since the law was changed in November 2018.

**Jo Churchill:**

Since November 2018, two cannabis-based prescription medicines - Sativex – for the treatment of spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients, and Epidyolex – for the treatment of seizures associated with two rare forms of epilepsy, have been made available for prescribing on the National Health Service, where clinically appropriate. This follows clear demonstrated evidence of their safety, and clinical and cost effectiveness.

We continue to work hard with the health system, industry and researchers to improve the evidence base for other unlicensed cannabis-based medicines, and to implement the recommendations of NHS England and NHS Improvement's review on barriers to accessing unlicensed cannabis based medicinal products. This includes the design of clinical trials and the establishment of a national patient registry.

**Alex Norris:**

[\[121342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Food Standards Agency on the steps it is taking to educate consumers on the safety of unauthorised products containing CBD.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 December 2020]:* CBD products currently on the market is contrary to the requirements of the Novel Foods Regulations. A proportionate approach to enforcement has been taken in the short term but manufacturers must apply to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) by the end of March 2021 to begin the authorisation process. From that time, only products with validated applications in the pipeline will be allowed on the market.

In the meantime, on the basis of advice from the independent United Kingdom Committee on Toxicity, the FSA has publicly advised that an average adult should not consume more than 70 milligrams per day and vulnerable groups should not consume these products.

## ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[109365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for his policy on visiting care homes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 4 November 2020]:* Our policy is informed by expert advice to ensure it is based on the latest international and domestic evidence. We have worked closely with a range of social care stakeholders in developing our policy on visiting care homes during the pandemic.

We will continue to monitor the evidence, and ensure best practice is reviewed and can be applied as we amend our care home visiting guidance to reflect the national situation, and account for the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to vulnerable residents and social care staff.

Plans are currently being developed to allow specific family and friends to visit care homes supported by testing. We have begun rollout of visitor testing, and aim to have nationwide visitor testing by Christmas.

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[115808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of using Leeds as a pilot area for testing visitors at care homes for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

The trial began on 16 November across 20 care homes in three local authorities: Cornwall, Devon and Hampshire. Testing for visitors is being rolled out across England from 2 December.

**■ Carers: Coronavirus****Colleen Fletcher:**[\[106373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) access to support services for and (b) the (i) mental and (ii) physical health of unpaid carers; and what steps his Department is taking to support unpaid carers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

We have provided additional funding to extend the Carers UK phone line for unpaid carers to access support, advice and information. We have also worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance to support the recovery of day respite. Through the Government's Infection Control Fund, we have also extended some of this funding to be used to support day services adopt infection control measures to help them reopen safely.

**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[109414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a person residing in a tier one covid-19 area may continue to provide informal social care to relatives that reside in a tier two area.

**Helen Whately:**

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

As was the case in March, a specific set of exemptions to the requirement to stay at home. This includes providing care or assistance to a vulnerable person.

**■ Children: Autism****Carla Lockhart:**[\[112157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support children with autism and food aversions to improve their diet.

**Helen Whately:**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines entitled 'Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: support and management' describes the support, treatment and help that health and care professional can provide to autistic children and young people. We advise commissioners to follow these guidelines. The guidelines do not currently advise on food aversion although guidelines are updated periodically.

The NHS Long Term Plan aims to tackle the causes of morbidity and preventable deaths in people with a learning disability and for autistic people. As part of this, NHS England will pilot the introduction of a specific health check for autistic people aimed at improving health outcomes.

## ■ Community Care

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[95149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding by Sense that a third of disabled people and their families have not had social care or support services reinstated since covid-19 lockdown restrictions have been lifted; and what steps the Government will take to reintroduce that community social care.

**Helen Whately:**

We are aware that during the national lockdown a range of community social care providers ceased provision of services. In July, the Social Care Institute for Excellence published guidance on the safe re-opening of services.

In addition, a proportion of the £546 million Infection Control Fund extension announced in September can be used by local authorities to fund expenditure on Infection Prevention and Control measures needed to safely reopen day and respite services.

## ■ Community Care: Coronavirus

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[110774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 103474 on Community Care: Coronavirus, when the pilot to test professionals who visit care homes is planned to end; and how that pilot will be assessed.

**Helen Whately:**

The pilot began on 26 October 2020 and is expected to last four weeks.

We are working with the pilot sites to gather learning and establish the most effective way of testing professionals who move in and out of care homes.

We will continue to review our social care testing strategy for adult social care in light of the latest evidence and testing capacity.

## ■ Community Care: Disability

**Abena Oppong-Asare:** [\[95760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of Sense Forgotten families campaign; and if he will take steps to ensure the reintroduction of community social care services for disabled people that have ceased during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

We are aware that during the national lockdown a range of community social care providers ceased provision of services. In July, the Social Care Institute for Excellence published guidance on the safe re-opening of services.

In addition, a proportion of the £546 million Infection Control Fund extension announced in September can be used by local authorities to fund expenditure on Infection Prevention and Control measures needed to safely reopen day and respite services.

**■ Community Health Services: Finance****Justin Madders:**[\[115710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what responsibility health and social care partnerships have for determining local funding priorities.

**Edward Argar:**

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are clinically-led statutory National Health Service bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of high-quality healthcare services that meet the needs of their local population. In England, it is CCGs who are responsible for deciding how to best use their budgets to make sure they are delivering high quality care to their patients. They do this by developing strategic clinical plans covering a wide range of healthcare services based on their local population needs using their knowledge and links to the community in which they work.

In order to plan their commissioning decisions, local authorities and CCGs, through Health and Wellbeing Boards, use Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies to agree local priorities for local health and care commissioning.

**■ Coronavirus****Henry Smith:**[\[109296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he estimates the evidence-based model to predict risk of death or hospitalisation from covid-19, which has been developed by the University of Oxford, will be in use in the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have been using the University of Oxford's 'OpenABM-Covid19' model for several months and it is used alongside other estimates and projections of hospital admissions including those provided via the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling.

**Mr Steve Baker:**[\[109322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to remove from his communications extreme covid-19 scenarios used for illustration purposes; and if he will make a statement.



**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[109328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to improve the characterisation of statistical uncertainty in his public communications on covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 November 2020]:* The Government is committed to transparency in order to build public trust throughout the pandemic. Slides and data from press conferences are published on GOV.UK and Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies papers are routinely released once any related policies are no longer in development.

As part of this process, the Government is committed to making clear and meaningful presentation of data and estimates. This includes explaining relevant strengths and limitations of estimates, such as the extent of any uncertainty or potential biases, to support the public's use and interpretation of the information.

Alongside other analyses, these may sometimes form part of the information and evidence informing the Government's decision-making. As part of the Government's commitment to transparency, all slides from press conferences, and the data behind them are published on GOV.UK.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Barnet**

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[119189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish his plans for delivering covid-19 vaccinations to people living in the London Borough of Barnet.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Health Service is ready to deliver a COVID-19 vaccination programme as soon as it is authorised for use by the medicines' regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. The health and social care system is working together to ensure that the vaccines are delivered safely and efficiently to the public and detailed planning is underway building on the NHS's expertise delivering immunisation programmes including the flu vaccination programme.

#### ■ **Coronavirus: Contracts**

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[116550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure the award of Government contracts to Medpro Ltd complied with procurement guidelines.

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[116551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to evaluate the effectiveness of the contracts awarded by the Government in response to the covid-19 outbreak before awarding further contracts.



**Patrick Grady:**

[\[116552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to review the process for awarding Government contracts related to the covid-19 outbreak in response to the report of the National Audit Office, published on 18 November 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2020]:* Contracting authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 using a direct award of a contract without a competitive tender process. The great majority of personal protective equipment (PPE) contracts let by the Department – including that for Medpro Ltd - were direct awards.

Suppliers are evaluated by Departmental officials on their financial standing, compliance with minimum product specifications and ability to perform the contract. Contracts are awarded by the appropriate Departmental accounting officer in line with Departmental policy and procedures. All contracts have clauses in them that allow the Department to seek redress if the company supplies faulty products or misses delivery dates.

The Department assesses the market conditions for procuring supplies related to any procurement, including those relating to COVID-19, in accordance with procurement guidance and regulations. Where any procurement meets the tests for the use of a direct award then that approach will be used. Where it does not, other approaches will be considered.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Death**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[110100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people who have died from covid-19 who would have died within 12 months in the event that they had not contracted covid-19.

**Ian Mearns:**

[\[110116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of excess deaths due to lack of access to (a) diagnosis and (b) treatment during the covid-19 outbreak restrictions since 16 March 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 5 November 2020]:* The Department and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) jointly produced the paper 'Direct and Indirect Impacts of COVID-19 on Excess Deaths and Morbidity: Executive Summary' for the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies in which the ONS estimated that of the 32,000 COVID-19 deaths, which occurred between 21 March and 1 May 2020, 25,000 of them were deaths that would not have occurred otherwise within 12 months. Therefore, 7,000 of the 32,000 COVID-19 deaths are deaths which would have likely occurred within 12 months, had they not contracted COVID-19.

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Esther McVey:** [109334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate SAGE has made of the infection fatality ratio for infection by SARS-CoV-2.

**Esther McVey:** [109335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what infection fatality ratio was applied in the Imperial model used to estimate casualties from covid-19 in the UK.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

These data are published online at the following link:

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

**Stephen Hammond:** [113037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that disinfectant products on sale to the general public for use on reducing the risk of transmission of covid-19 meet the required high clinical standards and are effective against covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 12 November 2020]:* I have been asked to reply.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has advised that consumer law requires traders to provide consumers with information on the main characteristics of goods. This information must be accurate and not misleading. Consumers may also request information from the retailer when making a purchase and the retailer would be required to provide this accurately under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

**■ Coronavirus: Drugs****Emily Thornberry:** [119205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 October 2020 to Question 98182, what stocks of (a) meropenem, (b) doxycycline, (c) fentanyl, (d) morphine, (e) midazolam and (f) levomepromazine are currently in the Essential Medicines Buffer Stock.

**Emily Thornberry:** [119206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2020 to Question 90069, what stocks of (a) paracetamol, (b) ibuprofen, (c) salbutamol inhalers and (d) amoxicillin are currently in the Essential Medicines Buffer Stock.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Essential Medicines Buffer Stock (EMBS) is one of a number of medicines stockpiles held by the Government. The EMBS supports the National Health Service

in the event of a pandemic or other health emergency by ensuring the continued availability of medicines that are in routine use within the NHS in the event that the supply chain is interrupted.

Volumes of the requested medicines currently held in the EMBS are shown in the following table. The original EMBS contracts ended in October 2019 and the current ones expire on 31 March 2021.

VOLUMES IN EMBS (PACKS/SINGLES)	ON 24 NOVEMBER 2020
meropenem	17,701 packs (10 in each pack)
doxycycline	NIL
fentanyl	NIL
morphine	14,321 packs (12 in each pack)
midazolam	NIL
levomepromazine	NIL
paracetamol	2965,503 packs (100 in each pack)
ibuprofen	NIL
salbutamol inhalers	2,600,000 (single inhalers)
amoxicillin	NIL

#### ■ Coronavirus: Erith and Thamesmead

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

**[91169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps people in Erith and Thamesmead constituency should take in the event that they have covid-19 symptoms but are unable to access a covid-19 testing kit.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 September 2020]:* The Department has worked to build testing capacity Erith and Thamesmead, currently operating sites at Erith Road and Aberly Street car park alongside other facilities such as mobile testing units and home testing across south east London.

COVID-19 test sites are opening regularly across the United Kingdom, currently there are 675 sites in operation. Home testing kits are available daily for those who need them.

**■ Coronavirus: Health Services****Kate Osamor:** [\[105488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all calls to the Coronavirus Response Service are recorded.

**Edward Argar:**

All calls to the COVID-19 Response Service are currently recorded, in line with core NHS 111 service policy.

**■ Coronavirus: Hospitals****Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[116698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 102204 on Coronavirus: Hospitals, how many people requiring (a) treatment for covid-19 and (b) a CT scan have been treated at the NHS Nightingale Yorkshire and the Humber Hospital since that hospital opened.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2020]:* NHS Nightingale Yorkshire and the Humber has not treated any inpatients with COVID-19.

NHS Nightingale Yorkshire and the Humber has been used to treat patients requiring a computed tomography scan. As of 22 November 2020, 3,025 scans have been completed.

**■ Coronavirus: Northern Ireland****Colum Eastwood:** [\[115844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the covid-19 vaccines purchased by the NHS will be provided to Northern Ireland.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* The United Kingdom Government has committed to purchasing COVID-19 vaccines on behalf of the UK. As health is a devolved matter, the Government is working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure successful deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine across the whole of the UK. This includes considerations of planning and key decisions which will need to be aligned across the devolved administrations. The Government will distribute available COVID-19 vaccines on an equitable basis across the UK.

**Colum Eastwood:** [\[115845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when covid-19 vaccines purchased by the Government will be available in Northern Ireland.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* As health is a devolved matter, the United Kingdom Government is working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure successful deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine across the whole of the UK.

We are preparing for the delivery of any potential COVID-19 vaccination programme as quickly as possible. The scale of what is deployed when will depend on a safe and effective vaccine being available.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Physiotherapy**

**Darren Jones:**

[\[115774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including soft tissue therapy in those medical practices permitted to continue operating during covid-19 restrictions.

**Edward Argar:**

No specific assessment has been made.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[118570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that people who are self-isolating during the covid-19 outbreak can access prescribed medication without leaving home.

**Jo Churchill:**

Patients who are self-isolating are encouraged to see if their medicines can be collected from the pharmacy or dispensing practice and delivered by family, friends, a carer or a volunteer. The NHS Volunteer Responders programme offers help to anyone who needs to self-isolate for any reason. Patients can also make use of distance or online selling pharmacies.

Currently there is a medicine delivery service for clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) patients commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement from community pharmacies for the duration of the national lockdown. If no family, friends, carers or volunteers are available, then the pharmacy will organise for the medicines to be delivered to CEV patients through this service.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Scotland**

**John Lamont:**

[\[115764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking with the Scottish Government to develop a communications campaign to promote the uptake of covid-19 vaccines.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are working closely with the devolved administrations to enable there to be an aligned approach to COVID-19 vaccine communications across the United Kingdom. We are developing communications campaigns to increase confidence in the safety of vaccines and the COVID-19 vaccine in particular and support the operational deployment when a vaccine is ready. We engage with communications teams from

Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland directly to coordinate this activity and agree communications coordination.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Martyn Day:** [\[113601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to record the vaccination status of people who have received the covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2020]:* The careful and accurate recording of vaccination status is incredibly important both in terms of ensuring priority cohorts are offered the two doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccination and to ensure robust surveillance systems are in place to support patient safety.

The National Health Service National Immunisation Management System (NIMS) will be used as the national register of COVID-19 vaccinations. At the point that someone receives their COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccinating team will record it and this information will go onto the NIMS system and onto a patient's general practitioner record.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[115488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what procurement arrangements he is putting in place for businesses wishing to provide logistical support to the planned covid-19 vaccination programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* The National Health Service is ready to deliver a COVID-19 vaccination programme as soon as it is authorised for use by the medicines' regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. As part of the extensive planning, the NHS is working with all stakeholders, including the United Kingdom logistics industry, to be ready to mobilise when a vaccine becomes available. NHS England and NHS Improvement are utilising existing Crown Commercial Services and NHS procurement frameworks to identify suppliers for all goods and services required to support delivery of non-vaccine goods and services to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's cohorts.

**John Lamont:** [\[115766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether each approved covid-19 vaccine will be distributed across the UK according to population.

**Jo Churchill:**

As health is a devolved matter, the United Kingdom Government is working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure successful deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine across the whole of the UK. This includes considerations of planning and key decisions which will need to be aligned across the devolved administrations. The Government will distribute available COVID-19 vaccines on an equitable basis across the UK.

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[118572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the capacity of the primary care network in Cheshire to deliver the covid-19 vaccination to (a) priority groups in December 2020 and (b) the broader population in March 2021.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* The National Health Service has vast experience delivering widespread vaccination programmes and an enormous amount of planning has taken place to ensure our health service stands ready to roll out a COVID-19 vaccine. Primary care networks will play an important role in delivering COVID-19 vaccinations to priority groups as well as the broader population. General practitioner practices will be expected to co-ordinate and deliver COVID-19 vaccinations at scale in primary care network groupings, working in collaboration with commissioners, regional operations and other local providers to develop and implement a local delivery plan.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[119363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if any changes have been made to the interim advice on priority groups for covid-19 vaccination published by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on 25 September 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has been reviewing data on clinical risk factors associated with serious disease and mortality from COVID-19. The JCVI updated its interim advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination on September 25 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-25-september-2020/jcvi-updated-interim-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination>

This advice remains under constant review by the Committee and will be updated at the appropriate time after considering the latest evidence on COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[120024]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to provide people who have received a covid-19 vaccination with a personal record of that vaccination; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The careful and accurate recording of vaccination status is incredibly important both in terms of ensuring priority cohorts are offered the two doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccination, and to ensure robust surveillance systems are in place to support patient safety. The National Health Service National Immunisation Management System (NIMS) will be used as the national register of COVID-19 vaccinations. At the point that someone receives their COVID-19 vaccine, the vaccinating team will record



it and this information will go onto the NIMS system and onto a patient's general practitioner record.

However, we first need to improve understanding of the any potential COVID-19 vaccine in order to fully understand the potential of providing a personal record of vaccination to those who have received it, as part of our future COVID-19 vaccine roll-out-strategy.

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

**[120183]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to categorise unpaid carers as a priority group when the covid-19 vaccine is rolled out.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 December 2020]:* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise Government on which vaccine(s) the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. The committee, in their interim advice, have advised that the vaccine first be given to care home residents and staff, followed by people over 80 years old and health and social workers, then to the rest of the population in order of age and clinical risk factors in the initial phase. The prioritisation could change substantially if the first available vaccines were not considered suitable for, or effective in, older adults.

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

## ■ Coronavirus: Wales

**Darren Jones:**

**[115773]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will work with the Welsh Government to bring forward specific travel guidance for researchers and students at Welsh universities who are resident in England and require laboratory access to complete their qualifications.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We continue to work closely with colleagues in the devolved administrations including in the Welsh Government on the implications of guidance about travel during national restrictions.

In England until 2 December, people should avoid travel outside their local area, unless for permitted reasons. These reasons include work and education, therefore enabling researchers and students to access the laboratory when necessary and complete their qualification. If this would include travelling to Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, they should refer to the specific rules in place there.

## ■ Day Centres: Coronavirus

**Tom Tugendhat:**

**[109473]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the need to prevent mixing of households during covid-19 restrictions, what guidance he has given to local authorities where an individual's assessed need under the Care Act 2014 states that they should attend more than one local day centres.

**Helen Whately:**

We recognise the importance of day centres for many vulnerable people.

Whilst we have not published specific guidance advising local authorities about individuals' attendance at more than one local day centre, there is a range of other guidance material available. Guidance published on GOV.UK on 3 November outlines that support groups, including day centres, which are formally organised in order to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support in person, can continue to meet with up to 15 participants.

## ■ Dementia

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[110744]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of social isolation on the cognitive skills of dementia sufferers.

**Helen Whately:**

Guidance on the national restriction states that although people are required to stay at home, there are exemptions to reduce risk of isolation. These include allowing people to form support bubbles and to provide care to vulnerable people. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november>

## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence

**Jeremy Hunt:**

**[119210]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many officials work in the correspondence unit in his Department.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* The Department's Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries (MCPE) unit has a baseline establishment of 51 staff. This is inclusive of correspondence, Freedom of Information (FOI), Subject Access Requests and the call centre.

In 2019 the Department received 29,800 correspondence cases and 1,068 FOI requests. This year, to 23 November 2020, we have received 69,555 correspondence cases and 2,326 FOI requests. This significant increase in volume has been driven by interest in the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to this the Department has temporarily increased resources in the MCPE unit and there are now 111 members of staff.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: International Men's Day**

**Philip Davies:** [\[119999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

The Health and Wellbeing Team, part of the Department's Human Resources function, ran a 60 minute radio show for Departmental staff featuring three guest male speakers from across the Civil Service. In addition, the male Head of Wellbeing wrote a blog published on the Department's intranet on the challenges that men often face in the modern world, with links on how to access emotional and mental health support.

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

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[119972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date his Department's Parliamentary Question Performance Recovery Plan was completed; and if he will place a copy of that plan in the Library.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* The Parliamentary Questions Recovery Plan is an iterative document that is constantly being updated and therefore a finalised document is not available. I set out further detail on the steps we are taking in response to the hon. Member's question on 19 November, Official Report, columns 461-471, and I have also written to the Chair of the Procedure Committee.

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[121019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Questions 116658, 116659 and 116660 tabled on 17 November 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answers to Questions 116658, 116659 and 116660.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[121829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 109284 on Care Homes: Coronavirus tabled by the hon Member for Brighton, Pavilion on 30 October 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that 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.

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

#### ■ **Dogs: Coronavirus**

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[118139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the recent trial of training dogs to detect covid-19 was successful.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* Officials are working with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on the COVID-19 dogs trial. The trial is approaching the end of Phase 1 which seeks to evaluate the dogs' ability to detect COVID-19 in humans. The results from Phase 1 will require further validation and officials are working with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to understand where and how Phase 2 trials could be undertaken if evidence proves satisfactory.

#### ■ **Emergency Calls: Coronavirus**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[102201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff at emergency call operating centres have tested positive for covid-19 since March 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department does not hold the information in the format requested.

#### ■ **General Practitioners: Coronavirus**

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[105482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what training was given to Covid-19 Clinical Assessment Service general practitioners prior to the commencement of their roles in August 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

All general practitioners who support the COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Service (CCAS) are required to complete essential training on a range of subjects before starting their role.

This training includes:

- safeguarding;
- a senior clinician module;
- CCAS Self-Assessment Framework;
- COVID-19 Breathlessness – Clinical Triage Support Tool; and
- training on the system used to take a patient's history and make clinical notes.

**■ Health Professions: Training****Kim Johnson:**[\[120159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reinstating paid placements for trainee doctors, nurses and, midwives during the second wave of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government is not planning any further paid placements for healthcare students during the COVID-19 outbreak. We are working with Health Education England and healthcare providers to make sure students do placements as planned and critically, gain the knowledge and skills they need to learn for their qualification.

Eligible medical, nursing and midwifery students will continue to receive payments from the Student Loans Company. Eligible nursing and midwifery students can also access the Learning Support Fund from the NHS Business Services Authority, which includes a non-repayable grant of at least £5,000 for travel and dual accommodation expenses and parental support. Eligible medical students in England can access the NHS Business Services Authority's funding in the final year of their degree.

**■ Health Services and Social Services: Coronavirus****Rosie Cooper:**[\[120837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Prime Minister's Health and Social Care Taskforce.

**Edward Argar:**

Ministers and officials across the Department have engaged with the Health and Social Care Taskforce on a regular basis. Officials joined the Taskforce's weekly Steering Group meetings from July to September. In addition, there were frequent working-level conversations between Departmental and Taskforce officials on a wide range of health and social care policy issues.

**Justin Madders:**[\[120885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions (a) he or (b) his officials have had with the Prime Minister's Health and Social Care Taskforce.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* Ministers and officials across the Department have engaged with the Health and Social Care Taskforce on a regular basis. Officials joined the Taskforce's weekly Steering Group meetings from July to September. In addition, there were frequent working-level conversations between Departmental and Taskforce officials on a wide range of health and social care policy issues.

## ■ Health Services and Social Services: Staff

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[111542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of morale among staff in the (a) NHS and (b) social care system during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps his Department is taking to improve the (a) morale and (b) wellbeing of healthcare workers.

**Helen Whately:**

Throughout the pandemic, three million people who work across the health and social care system have showed tremendous dedication to providing the highest quality of care and support to all those who need it. We have put in place a comprehensive package of health and wellbeing services including helplines for counselling and support and a free range of well-being apps. We published a NHS People Plan in July that is entirely focused on making the National Health Service the best place to work, prioritising issues that matter to staff such as health and wellbeing, flexible working and creating a compassionate and inclusive workplace culture. For staff in social care, we have introduced a new CARE Workforce website and app, which provides timely information and signposting to support, all in one place.

## ■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

**Julie Elliott:**

[\[121251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the additional costs required to administer 27 separate bi-lateral reciprocal healthcare arrangements in the event that the UK does not negotiate a pan-EU reciprocal arrangement after 31 December 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 1 December 2020]:* The cost of administering either bilateral reciprocal healthcare agreements with European Union member states or an EU-wide agreement on reciprocal healthcare will depend on the scope and content of either type of agreement.

Negotiations with the EU Commission on the future relationship on social security coordination, which includes reciprocal healthcare, are still ongoing. It is therefore not possible to make such an assessment.

## ■ Hospital Beds: Private Sector

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[119279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September to Question 97626 on Hospital Beds: Private Sector, and with reference to the report entitled Investigation into government procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic, published by the National Audit Office on 18 November, when the 26 contracts for the use of private sector beds will be published.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* A Contract Award Notice in respect of each of the 26 individual contracts entered into by NHS England with independent sector hospital providers was published on 16 October 2020 by the Official Journal of the European Union.

The Contract Award Notice is an estimate of the payments to each provider until their termination from the national contract or until the contract ends on 31 December 2020. These payments are estimates based on agreed criteria as they are subject to final additional review and validation. These do not take place until after the contracts are terminated.

**Hospitals: Construction****Karin Smyth:**[\[119281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October to Question 97634, on Hospitals: Construction, whether the revised process for approving business cases referred to in that Answer has been published.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* The business case review and approvals process has not been published but is communicated to all trusts as part of discussions regarding business cases.

**Karin Smyth:**[\[119282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer dated 8 October to Question 97635 on Hospitals: Construction, what information has been published on the progress to date of the 40 hospital building projects and other capital schemes.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* On 2 October we announced that 48 hospitals will be built by 2030 with 40 schemes confirmed and a remaining eight to be determined following a future competition. The delivery of these schemes will be led through a national programme that will ensure trusts are fully supported to build the next generation of intelligent healthcare facilities, as well as to embed within the National Health Service a long-term capability for future capital investment. Four of the hospitals named in the announcement are already in construction.

Progress on the development of other significant capital schemes will be publicised locally by trusts, by their annual reports or websites. For example, sustainability and transformation partnership funding has been publicised by Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group in the establishment of a new practice in Weston-Super-Mare.



## ■ Hospitals: Visits

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[118047]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for the Government's guidance on family visits to hospital patients who are seriously ill as a result of covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

The coordination of writing the hospital visitors guidance was undertaken by NHS England and NHS Improvement's clinical cell supported extensively by the National Clinical Director and Head of Nursing for End of Life Care.

The development of the guidance was overseen by a multidisciplinary group including colleagues from the following teams in NHS England and NHS Improvement: children and young people (including the National Clinical Director); mental health; learning disability and autism; maternity; patient and public involvement; and end of life.

The latest guidance, published 13 October 2020, is available at the following link:

[https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0751-visiting-healthcare-inpatient-settings-principles-131020\\_.pdf](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0751-visiting-healthcare-inpatient-settings-principles-131020_.pdf)

## ■ Integrated Care Systems

**Jeremy Hunt:**

**[117963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to assist (a) local authorities and (b) the NHS to implement integrated health and care services.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* Promoting integrated care is a priority for the Government. We have already made progress in facilitating integrated health and care services through the development of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). NHS England have set out their goal that all sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) will become ICSs by April 2021. So far, 18 out of 42 STPs have developed into ICSs.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is the national policy driving forward the integration of health and social care in England. The BCF requires National Health Service clinical commissioners and local authorities to make joint plans and pool budgets for the purposes of integrated care, providing a context in which they can work together, as partners, towards shared objectives.

## ■ Intensive Care: Hospital Beds

**Mr David Davis:**

**[116380]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2020 to Question 109164, whether the NHS plans to publish backdated data on critical care capacity from when publication ceased.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 November 2020]:* There is no intention of publishing backdated data on critical care capacity.

■ **Learning Disability and Autism: Coronavirus**

**Helen Hayes:** [\[114979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide consistent guidance on visiting rights during the covid-19 outbreak to the families of autistic people and people with learning disabilities living in residential care, supported living and hospital settings.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[114980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) autistic people and (b) people with learning disabilities living in residential care, supported living and hospital settings are able to receive visits from close family members as much as possible during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Hayes:** [\[114982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak and the restriction of visitors on the wellbeing of autistic people and people with learning disabilities living in residential care, supported living and hospital settings.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2020]:* We recognise the particular challenges visiting restrictions pose for people with learning disabilities and autistic adults, and their loved ones, and we understand how important these visits are.

For care homes, we published guidance on 5 November to enable COVID-19-secure visits to take place for care home residents while national restrictions are in place. We are currently trialling visitor testing and plan to roll this out nationally to allow more visiting opportunities.

In supported living settings, managers and carers should suggest safe ways to host visitors, risk assessing individual settings and vulnerabilities, and considering the risks to others in shared accommodation. Families wishing to visit their loved ones in supported living or residential care settings should also follow the national guidance on meeting others safely, including guidance on support bubbles.

■ **Maternity Services: Coronavirus**

**Luke Pollard:** [\[114317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of women affected by restrictions on maternity services during the covid-19 outbreak in each month since March 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department does not record this data.

**■ Medical Treatments: Coronavirus****Dr Kieran Mullan:****[112130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that NHS patients do not experience significant delays in getting treatment during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 12 November 2020]:* Throughout the pandemic, patients have been encouraged to come forward for the treatment that they require. National Health Service providers are working hard to continue the recovery of services alongside preparations for winter and dealing with the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic by making full use of available capacity both in the NHS and in contracted independent hospitals.

To support the NHS, the Prime Minister announced £3 billion of extra funding, ensuring the retention of Nightingale hospital surge capacity and continued access to independent hospitals capacity to help meet patient demand. Should a patient's planned care be disrupted by COVID-19, trusts, working with general practitioner practices, have been asked to ensure that they provide clear communication to patients about how they will be looked after, and who to contact in the event that their clinical circumstances change.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Mr John Baron:****[114786]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 1 September 2020 and follow-up correspondence of the 29 September 2020 and 22 October 2020 on constituent Ms Fox.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 17 November 2020]:* We replied to the hon. Member's letter on 24 November 2020.

**■ Mental Health Services****Jeremy Hunt:****[117964]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to accelerate access to psychological therapies for adults with long-term common mental health conditions.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* We continue to expand access to talking and psychological therapies through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. Data from 2019/20 shows that there were 1.69 million referrals to

IAPT in England and 1.17 million people started a course of treatment within this year. In addition, we continue to meet our waiting time targets for IAPT. Latest figures for August 2020 indicate that 89.1% of people completing treatment waited less than 6 weeks against a target of 75% and 97.8% waited less than 18 weeks, against a target of 87.5%.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

**[120969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the new National Institute for Health Protection will take on Public Health England's responsibilities in relation to the Wellbeing for Education Return programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* Alongside the transition process to support full and formal establishment of the National Institute for Health Protection in 2021, we are considering the best future arrangements for Public Health England's wider public health and health improvement functions. We will bring forward proposals in due course but are not envisaging any changes to where those responsibilities will sit before spring 2021.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Finance

**Olivia Blake:**

**[118137]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the £10.2 million announced in June 2020 for mental health charities to support adults and children affected by the covid-19 outbreak, how and to whom that funding was allocated; and what steps he is taking to monitor the effectiveness of the spending of that funding.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* We have provided £10.2 million of grant funding to mental health charities to date, consisting of:

- £5 million allocated to the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund, which has been distributed to the 134 organisations listed at the following link:

[www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/coronavirus-mental-health-response-fund/coronavirus-mental-health-response-fund-england#collapse8ae81](http://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/coronavirus-mental-health-response-fund/coronavirus-mental-health-response-fund-england#collapse8ae81) ;

- £4.2 million allocated to 10 charities from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's £750 million Coronavirus Voluntary and Community Sector Fund. Of this, the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund has been allocated an additional £230,000; and

- £1 million, inspired by ITV's Help Our Helplines campaign, that is still to be distributed through the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund over the coming weeks.

Funding from the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund has been distributed to mental health charities by a grant competition led by Mind and the Mental Health Consortia. These grants are monitored by a governance group, which includes Departmental officials.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Internet

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[120970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Public Health England's Every Mind Matters webpage and signposting to support will be transferred over to the new National Institute for Health Protection website.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* Alongside the transition process to support full and formal establishment of the National Institute for Health Protection in 2021, we are considering the best future arrangements for Public Health England's wider public health and health improvement functions. We will bring forward proposals in due course but are not envisaging any changes to where those responsibilities will sit before spring 2021.

## ■ Mental Health: Coronavirus

**Olivia Blake:**

[\[118135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Centre for Mental Health's analysis entitled, Covid-19 and the nation's mental health: October 2020, published on 1 October 2020; and what steps he is taking to provide support for those with poor mental health as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* The National Health Service has supported people with their mental health throughout the pandemic and continues to do so. On 23 November, we published our Wellbeing and Mental Health Support plan for COVID-19, which sets out the support available for people in the context of a second wave and the winter months. In addition, we have announced that the NHS will receive around an additional £500 million next year to address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need, and invest in the NHS workforce.

## ■ NHS 111: Coronavirus

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[102135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 96968, what support experienced clinicians have provided to call handlers recruited to the NHS 111 covid-19 Response Service.

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[105484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 99681 on NHS 111: Training, how many hours of face-to-face training call handlers recruited to the Coronavirus Response Service were required to receive before they were permitted to answer live calls to that service.

**Edward Argar:**

As with National Health Service 111 call handlers, there are clear and robust governance arrangements in place for call handlers working in the NHS 111 COVID-19 Response Service. If a clinical assessment is required, the call is transferred to a clinician for full assessment. There are also clinical supervisors on hand to support call handlers should they need it.

In the first wave of COVID-19, all recruited call handlers received two full days of training. This included training on safeguarding, the referral and escalation process, and soft skills telephone training, as well as role play calls. Following this they undertook an assessment before commencing live call handling.

**■ NHS 111: Training****Kate Osamor:**[\[105485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 99681 on NHS 111: Training, who was responsible for auditing call handlers recruited to the Coronavirus Response Service in advance of those call handlers completing their training for that service.

**Edward Argar:**

Each provider of the COVID-19 Response Service is responsible for auditing their call handlers to ensure competency. South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust also has oversight and governance of the COVID-19 Response Service.

**Kate Osamor:**[\[105486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 99681 on NHS 111: Training, what form the audit of Coronavirus Response Service call handlers took in advance of those call handlers completing their training for that service.

**Kate Osamor:**[\[105487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he takes to monitor the performance of call handlers working on the Coronavirus Response Service.

**Edward Argar:**

All call handlers in the COVID-19 Response Service have a competency check completed by the service provider before they take live calls. Following this, three calls per call handler are audited each month. The audits are reviewed weekly by the clinical governance, operations, and training teams, and any learning fed back to staff.

**■ NHS Trusts: Subsidiary Companies****Karin Smyth:**[\[120891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 September 2020 to Question 97629, what assessment he has made of the benefits to

patients of NHS trusts managing their estates and property through a wholly owned subsidiary company.

**Edward Argar:**

Current NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance on the creation of Wholly Owned Subsidiaries considers the specific aims of the business case for National Health Service trusts managing their estates and property through a wholly owned subsidiary company. Trusts are asked to certify that they have considered a detailed options appraisal before deciding that the proposed subsidiary transaction aligns with wider system plans and is at least financially neutral for the wider system. Trusts must also demonstrate that the proposed transaction delivers benefits for patients and for the trust and that the subsidiary is the best vehicle to deliver these benefits.

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[120892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on NHS Property Services of NHS Trusts setting up wholly owned subsidiary companies to manage their estates and property.

**Edward Argar:**

National Health Service trusts and foundation trusts occupy about a third of NHS Property Services' estate as tenants. The Company provides facilities management and other estates services to these properties; the trusts provide elements of these services to NHS Property Services themselves in many cases and these may be delivered through Wholly Owned Subsidiary Companies in areas where these have been established. It is for individual NHS trusts to decide on the best contracting model for the delivery of these services.

■ **NHS: Staff**

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[113107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS staff are (a) absent through illness and (b) self-isolating as a result of covid-19 as of 9 November 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 12 November 2020]:* NHS England and NHS Improvement collect sickness absence data on staff contracted by the NHS. The figures report the number of COVID-19 related absences of staff, either through sickness or self-isolation.

The latest available figures show 82,021 total absences of staff either through sickness or self-isolation on 4 November 2020. Of these 31,129 were reported as COVID-19 related.

■ **Nurses: Students**

**Maria Eagle:**

[\[117937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS Learning Support Fund is available to all (a) new and (b) continuing degree-level nursing students.



**Maria Eagle:**

**[117938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether students residing in England will be eligible for an award from the NHS Learning Support Fund if they choose to undertake a qualifying degree level course at a university in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* The Government introduced the new, non-repayable, training grant, an extension of the Learning and Support Fund (LSF), of at least £5,000 per academic year in September 2020, for all eligible new and continuing pre-registration nursing students, studying at English universities. Continuing students on the NHS bursary are not eligible for the LSF package.

Students ordinarily resident in England choosing to study at a higher education provider in one of the devolved administrations are not eligible for the LSF. Student support arrangements for healthcare students residing in England but studying in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are set out in detail at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/who-qualifies#content>

## ■ Prescription Drugs

**Sir George Howarth:**

**[116401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 5 August 2020 to Question 72910 on Drugs: Expenditure, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the guidance on prescribing over-the-counter items on health outcomes.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department has made no assessment. In March 2018 NHS England and NHS Improvement published 'Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for Clinical Commissioning Groups'. This includes a general exception enabling prescribers to continue to prescribe where the clinician considers that patients' ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability.

Prescribing trends and spend for each item within the scope of this guidance is monitored by commissioners on an on-going basis which, alongside further analysis of the underlying data and impact, will inform any update of the guidance.

## ■ Protective Clothing: Procurement

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[119401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is Government policy to publish the (a) number and (b) type of personal protective equipment items procured through Government contracts.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 26 November 2020]:* The Government is committed to meeting the legal obligations and its own transparency guidelines in publishing Contract Award Notices (CANs) and the associated contracts for all the contracts it has entered into for the procurement of personal protective equipment in response to COVID-19.

To date, 89% of the CANs have now been published and over 50% of the contracts can be found on Contracts Finder at the following link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/>

Delays in publishing this information have been due to the resources available within the Department given the vast increase in the volume of contracts that have had to be processed.

**Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment****Grahame Morris:****[121230]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 October 2020 to Question 92759 and with reference to the Spending Review 2020, what funding will be allocated for the replacement of NHS linear accelerator radiotherapy machines.

**Grahame Morris:****[121231]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a proportion of the Spending Review 2020 commitments of (a) £1.5 billion allocated to ease existing pressures in the NHS caused by the covid-19 outbreak and (b) £559 million to support the modernisation of technology across the health and care system will be allocated to upgrade radiotherapy machines that are over 10 years old.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 1 December 2020]:* Following the outcome of Spending Round 2020, spending plans for individual budgets in 2021-22 will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

**Respite Care: Coronavirus****Emma Hardy:****[111606]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that families caring for disabled adults can access respite care during the November 2020 covid-19 lockdown.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government recognises respite care services are, to many, a means of ensuring they are able to continue to provide the support to their friends, family and those they care for. We have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance to help providers safely restart respite services. The Government's Infection Control Fund can be used to support day services adopt infection control measures.

In addition, the regulations on the new national restrictions continue to allow for:

- a vulnerable person to go to someone's house in order to give the main carer respite;
- someone to enter the vulnerable persons house to give the main carer respite; and
- support groups to continue and as such formally organised groups of up to 15 can continue to meet. Day services are covered by the term 'support group'.

## ■ Self-harm

**Jeremy Hunt:** [\[115552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available for young people and adults who self-harm during the covid-19 pandemic; and how much the Government spent in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020 on self-harm prevention.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 19 November 2020]:* We do not have data on how much funding was spent specifically on self-harm prevention in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

National Health Service mental health services have remained open for business throughout the pandemic. Our community, talking therapies and children and young people's services have deployed innovative digital tool to connect with people and provide ongoing support. For those with severe needs or in crisis, all NHS mental health providers have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines.

## ■ Social Services: Coronavirus

**Jon Trickett:** [\[110056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many social care workers have died from covid-19 (a) in total and (b) since 1 August 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

Mortality data from the Office for National Statistics shows that 307 deaths involving COVID-19 among social care workers were registered in England, and 14 in Wales, between 9 March 2020 and 12 October 2020. This data was published on 27 October 2020.

## ■ Social Services: Training

**Jeremy Hunt:** [\[120020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to improve training and support for social care staff (a) on infection control and (b) in other areas.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* The Adult Social Care Winter Plan outlined the latest National Health Service clinical support offer, which includes support for care

homes and social care through primary care and community services and the rollout of the Enhanced Health in Care Homes model; and professional leadership and expert advice on infection prevention and control where needed.

The Plan extended the Infection Control Fund until March 2021. This means we have now ringfenced over £1.1 billion for the care sector to take key steps to improve infection prevention and control.

## ■ Tobacco: Sales

**Paul Holmes:**

[\[97046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, for what reason Public Health England has suspended its investigation into the selling of cigarette products which contain menthol flavourings; and for what reason those products have not been removed from the market.

**Jo Churchill:**

The investigation is currently going through the process in accordance with the European Union Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/779. The Government has made a commitment to comply with the EU's Tobacco Products Directive until the end of the transition period. We await the outcome of this and will then assess if there are further steps for the UK to take regarding this matter.

This Government is committed to addressing the harms from smoking and has set an ambition to make England Smokefree by 2030 with plans to achieve this to be set out next year.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Automatic Number Plate Recognition

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[110203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much additional funding will be allocated in the next Spending Review to the National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS); how much overspend has occurred in the programme to date; how many missed deadlines have occurred in the programme to date; what plans she has to ensure public confidence in the delivery of the NAS; and what recent assessment she has made of the effect of that performance on the operation of the police services.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The National Automatic Number Plate Recognition Service (NAS) is a national system replacing the current National ANPR Data Centre (NADC), used by Police Forces to interrogate ANPR data.

The department has submitted a bid to HMT as part of the spending review process and we are in active discussions about the amount of money that we should be investing in the National ANPR Service (NAS), both centrally and out to individual

forces. We have shared with the Treasury the full cost of NAS and its potential replacement for the forthcoming year and for subsequent years, including what will flow centrally and what will flow through individual forces. We expect a decision on the funding settlement from HMT this month.

Programme costs are separated into 3 categories; first the cost of building and rolling out the NAS infrastructure, software and any related changes to the force systems; second costs for the programme team and; third the cost to maintain NAS system and its legacy system, National ANPR data centre (NADC). The costs for delivering the new NAS system is by far the most significant and, subject to commercial negotiation, the annual cost of NAS service following the commercial negotiations is likely to amount to c. £15 million per year and takes into account the costs of keeping legacy systems in place until the Minimal viable product (MVP) is delivered in Spring 2021 and programme costs. The negotiation has achieved future years reduction on service costs which benefit policing long term.

The current programme overspend is approximately £6.9m for this financial year and considers the costs of delivering the MVP and any programme costs. The additional in year costs are to focus on delivering the critical MVP, but an overall reduction in service costs has been achieved over the lifetime of the new contract presently being negotiated.

The programme set itself an original target of transitioning all users from the current NADC system and legacy local systems by Autumn 2020. We are now targeting a MVP in Spring 2021 with the legacy NADC system being retired in Spring 2022 once all forces have been transitioned across to NAS. Since the award of the G-Cloud contract in 2018 to the current delivery partner there have been 3 key releases to date. The current release is forecast to be 7 months later than originally planned.

Both during and since the programme reset in May 2016, where a review of the critical objectives of the programme that were set April 2015, it has undergone extensive assurance both internally within the department and externally through Cabinet Office, GDS and HMT.

The programme continues to build confidence in the delivery of the NAS through regular engagement with our Programme User Group and it's subgroups, as well as, weekly update meetings with the NPCC ANPR Portfolio Change Lead. Programme teams also manage regular contact with forces and LEAS to provide updates in addition to weekly briefing notes to provide updates and progress. The SRO is in discussion with the ANPR Portfolio Lead about establishing a group of senior police representatives to manage the NAS roadmap into the future.

The Department remains committed to completing the delivery of NAS, realising the benefits of NAS and delivering police effectiveness and operational efficiency savings. These include cashable reduction in running costs through the decommissioning of legacy systems and a wide range of broader benefits such as reducing the time to identify a vehicles of interest, public time savings, improved searches and better intelligence sharing.

## ■ Emergency Services Network: Rural Areas

**Sally-Ann Hart:**

[\[121042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department is making on the development and roll out of the Emergency Services Network; and when rural communities will be able to connect to that network in order to have mobile connectivity in areas where there is otherwise none.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office's Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), is building a new Emergency Services Network (ESN) to replace the current Airwave network used by the Emergency Services as well as a range of other users.

The software that ESN runs on is being provided by Motorola Solutions and the infrastructure is being built by EE; created by upgrading their existing network, including deploying more 4G radio frequencies in rural areas.

To maximise coverage for the emergency services the government will build 292 further sites in the most remote and rural areas of Britain. These sites will also form part of the Shared Rural Network.

To support ESN, we need to activate these masts before ESN goes live for emergency services users. Detailed plans are still being refined but we currently expect ESN to be fully operational during 2025. As individual masts are activated as part of the ESN programme, they will be available to EE's commercial customers immediately, even before ESN itself is live. Wherever possible, we have chosen a "future-proofed" design for these mast structures, meaning that they can be easily upgraded to allow access by all of the UK's commercial mobile operators to improve coverage to communities.

ESMCP remains a complex and challenging programme. Over the past year, core elements of the technology have been delivered. The 'push-to-talk' solution now works with ESN devices connected to EE's commercial network. The Air-to-Ground solution, interworking with Airwave and Control Room integration have all been successfully demonstrated. A 'data only' service is also in operational use by an increasing number of emergency services users. The programme is now working to complete development of the core technology, and deliver additional coverage including for rural areas and London Underground. We currently expect to switch off Airwave during 2025 once we have completed the technology delivery and proving and then deployment to users.

## ■ Emergency Services: Staff

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[121386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of offences against emergency workers in (a) Dudley, (b) Sedgley and (c) Gornal and Woodsetton.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Our brave workers across the emergency services do an extraordinary job in the most difficult situations, keeping us safe, day in and day out. It is absolutely unacceptable for them to be assaulted.

The Home Office collects data from police forces on police recorded crime including "Assaults on a constable" and 'Assaults with injury on an emergency worker other than a constable'. Data for 'Assaults with injury on an emergency worker other than a constable' is only available from April 2020 to June 2020.

Data is broken down by Police Force Area and Community Safety Partnership Area, including Dudley. Data is not collected at ward level. The latest data for the year ending June 2020 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

Assaults specifically against emergency workers are punishable by up to 12 months in prison and could be charged as common assault. We have also announced our intention to double the maximum sentence for assaults on emergency workers, from 12 months to two years, showing our commitment to ensuring these attacks are not tolerated.

**■ Heathrow Airport****Steve Double:****[120898]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average passenger queue times at the UK border at Heathrow Airport over Summer 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

Operational pressures at Heathrow in July, August and September 2020 resulted in periods where wait time service level agreements (SLAs) have not been met. As you know, Border Force undertake 100% checks on everyone arriving in the UK and there will be occasions when large amounts of passengers arrive in an un-forecast short space of time, resulting in a longer wait. Like all public services operating throughout this unprecedented global pandemic, there have been additional pressures placed on Border Force, but the safety of the public and our staff remains our priority.

As well as being guided by social-distancing measures in relation to the number of officers that could be deployed on the Primary Control Point, a significant number of passengers had failed to complete the Passenger Locator Forms required as part of the health measures at the border processes. Ensuring that these forms are completed is an important part of the protection of the UK in respect to being able to complement the Government's track and trace programme should anyone on a flight or entry route later discover to be infected with Coronavirus; and the ability for PHE and the police to follow up in-country if required.



If travellers refuse to provide their contact details, they could be fined. In addition to their routine checks, Border Force Officers conduct spot checks on passenger locator forms. The failure of passengers to complete the passenger locator form and the ensuing increase to transaction times has been compounded by the commercial decision made by Heathrow Airport Limited to terminate their contract with Omniserv, who performed vital customer service roles in the arrival halls. This included directing passengers to the correct queue, directing passengers to Border Force Officers on the passport control, and hosting the e-Passport Gates. With no replacement for these roles, passenger flow and throughput has been detrimentally impacted.

On top of this, airlines are adopting focussed marketing and pricing campaigns to stimulate the revival of the aviation sector. For the same reasons, Heathrow Airport Ltd has allocated several new airlines arrival slots at Heathrow. The cumulative effect of these measures has been to make travel to the United Kingdom more affordable and accessible to passengers changing their demographic. This means an increase in those passengers requiring further examination by a Border Force Officer in order to keep our country safe.

## ■ Home Office: Marketing

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[118080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much her Department has spent on (a) communications, (b) advertising and (c) marketing since 1 March 2020.

**James Brokenshire:**

Data on expenditure categories are published within the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts (ARA). However, this data is only published once the accounts are closed and the figures have been audited by the National Audit Office (NAO).

The NAO's role is to inspect and agree with the accounts and this data may be subject to change, therefore due to the risks of releasing current year data that is yet to go through the typical due diligence conducted by the NAO may result in us misleading Parliament.

Information on the above expenditure categories for the current financial year will be collated and made available in the 2020/21 Home Office Statement of Accounts.

## ■ Homicide: Gender Recognition

**Philip Davies:**

[\[119996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many murders there have been where the victim was recorded as being transgender in each year for which information is available.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects data on homicide and murder offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, including the sex of victim. However, data on the gender identity of victims of murder is not collected centrally. Police forces may hold these data at the local level.

Information on homicide Offences recorded by the police are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2019>

## ■ Immigrants: Finance

**Stephen Timms:** **[106890]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department of 8 October 2020, Official Report, column 223WH, what progress her Department has made on improving the time taken to determine applications for exemption from the No Recourse to Public Funds condition.

**Chris Philp:**

Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply, for free, to have their NRPF condition lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if they are destitute or at risk of destitution, if the welfare of their child is at risk due to their low income, or where there are other exceptional financial circumstances.

Change of conditions decisions are being prioritised and are being dealt with compassionately. This approach is working. Data published in November shows that 85% of change of condition applications have been granted and the average time taken to make a decision is now just 17 days, down from 45 days in the previous quarter.

Local authorities, who have been allocated more than £6.4 billion to help them respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, may provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution.

## ■ Immigration: Colombia

**Christian Matheson:** **[121857]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to introduce visa-free entry to the UK for holders of Colombian passports.

**Kevin Foster:**

The UK keeps its visa system under regular review. Decisions on changes are always taken in the round, and reflect key facets of the bilateral relationship with the country concerned. These will vary globally, but often include security, compliance, returns, and prosperity.

There are no current plans to change the visa requirements for citizens of Columbia.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Stella Creasy:**

**[121248]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the November 2020 document entitled EU Settlement Scheme – Home Office Looked After Children and Care Leavers Survey 2020, if she will publish the dataset and methodology for that survey; and whether she plans to work with local authorities and other partners to increase the application rate of vulnerable children to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office intends to publish the dataset underpinning the Home Office Looked After Children and Care Leavers Survey 2020 publication in due course. The methodology and data processing steps will be described in notes accompanying this dataset.

The Home Office is providing extensive support to local authorities and Health and Social Care Trusts in light of their statutory responsibilities for this cohort. This is to ensure these children and young people, like other vulnerable groups, get UK immigration status under the EU Settlement Scheme, and the secure evidence of this status which the scheme provides.

## ■ Immigration: Finance

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[121872]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children of (a) families with no recourse to public funds, (b) Zambrano carers, (c) families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and (d) families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction.

**Chris Philp:**

THE HOME OFFICE DOES NOT RECORD CASES BY FAMILY MEMBER STATUS AND THEREFORE CANNOT PROVIDE THE INFORMATION ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VISA-HOLDING CHILDREN WHOSE FAMILY HAVE NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS. IN THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 2020, THERE WERE 336,925 EXTENSIONS OF STAY IN THE UK GRANTED, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH WOULD HAVE THE NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS (NRPF) CONDITION IMPOSED. SEE EXE\_01:

[HTTPS://ASSETS.PUBLISHING.SERVICE.GOV.UK/GOVERNMENT/UPLOADS/SYSTEM/UPLOADS/ATTACHMENT\\_DATA/FILE/938919/EXTENSIONS-SUMMARY-SEP-2020-TABLES.XLSX](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938919/extensions-summary-sep-2020-tables.xlsx)

The Home Office does not hold data on how many Zambrano carers or families with a right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the ECHR that have no recourse to public funds are currently leave holders in the UK. Furthermore, we do not record information on families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989,

although such information if provided would be taken into consideration for Change of Circumstances and Fee Waiver applications.

■ **Immigration: Health Services**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

**[121822]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 27 November 2020 to Question 119191, if she will provide refunds for payments of the immigration health surcharge made prior to 31 March 2020 by people working in the (a) health and (b) care sector.

**Kevin Foster:**

Following the announcement in May that health and care workers would no longer be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge, the policy was backdated to 31 March to bring it in line with the introduction of visa extensions for health and care workers.

Health and care workers who paid the health surcharge to cover the period from 31 March 2020 onwards may be eligible for a refund. Refunds will not be made for the period prior to 31 March 2020.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

**[121901]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of offering Indefinite Leave to Remain to healthcare workers and their families who have been employed under a temporary work visa during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

Workers from overseas in the NHS and wider health and care sector have made a huge contribution in tackling COVID-19 and the Government has taken unprecedented measures to ensure the sector is supported fully, including free 12-month visa extensions for those working in eligible occupations in health and social care.

Individuals working in healthcare, on a route which leads to settlement, will be able to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) for themselves and their family, providing they meet the requirements, including a period of lawful residence in the UK without excess absences, sufficient knowledge of the English language and life in the UK. In sponsored work routes, settlement relies on applicants having worked in their sponsored job for five years.

In addition, we are granting immediate indefinite leave to remain (ILR), free of any charges, to family dependants of migrant NHS, health and care workers who unfortunately lose their lives as a result of contracting COVID-19.

## ■ Mukhtar Ablyazov

**Damian Collins:**

**[119227]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the US Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's (FinCEN) files on the alleged crimes of Mukhtar Ablyazov; and whether her Department has requested further information from FinCEN on Ablyazov's use of British banking institutions with American branches.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Home Office does not confirm or comment on individual operational matters. The UK is internationally recognised as having some of the strongest controls worldwide for tackling money laundering and terrorist financing. As a global financial centre, we are determined to go further to crack down on illicit finance and financial exploitation, to protect our security and prosperity.

## ■ Refugees: Children

**Robin Millar:**

**[120148]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps (a) Aberconwy and (b) the UK can take to provide additional support for refugees through (i) the National Transfer Scheme and (ii) other measures.

**Chris Philp:**

We are grateful to over 110 local authorities who have participated in the voluntary National Transfer Scheme. Through this scheme in excess of 1,000 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) have been transferred to other local authorities, relieving pressure on areas who look after large numbers of UASC.

We have recently undertaken an informal consultation with local authorities on proposals to improve the NTS and are carefully considering the responses to this.

We are also grateful to the over 340 local authorities who have volunteered to resettle in excess of 25,000 vulnerable refugees under our schemes since 2015. If other local authorities wish to support these schemes, we would encourage local government officials to speak with their Strategic Migration Partnership for more information and guidance.

Many individuals, charities and community interest groups have also provided practical support for over 440 refugees through the UK's community sponsorship scheme, including providing accommodation and teaching English.

If members of the public would like to offer their support, either through donating goods, services or their time locally, they should visit the Help Refugees page at <https://helprefugees.campaign.gov.uk/> where information about the types of support local authorities require can be found. The website also contains practical advice on becoming a community sponsor and signposts to refugee charities and voluntary organisations.

**■ Retail Trade: Abuse****Nadia Whittome:****[120196]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure retail workers are protected from abusive customers.

**Kit Malthouse:**

*Last year the Home Office ran a call for evidence on Violence and Abuse Toward Shop Staff to understand further the issue and the measures which may help prevent these crimes. The Government published a response to the Call for Evidence in July. Action the Government is taking to reduce violence and abuse experienced by shop workers is set out in the response, which is available here:*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/violence-and-abuse-toward-shop-staff-call-for-evidence>

*The Government is also working closely with the National Retail Crime Steering Group (NRCSG) to address key issues highlighted by taking forward a programme of work focused on:*

- Developing communications for both employees and employers to make clear that violence and abuse of shop workers is not tolerated;*
- Developing a best practice guide that aims to support staff in reporting these crimes when they occur to ensure that a suitable response can be delivered;*
- Looking at barriers to effective data sharing between businesses and the police to ensure that information can be used to better understand the problem; and*
- Looking at how to better provide support to victims.*

**■ Travellers: Caravan Sites****Robin Millar:****[120147]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the Government response to the consultation Strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments; and what the timetable is for implementing the conclusions of that response.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We made a clear manifesto commitment to act on the issue of unauthorised encampments and I remain determined to ensure police have the powers they need.

I intend to publish our response to the consultation and to bring forward legislation later this session.

## ■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

**Adam Holloway:**

[\[109221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of whether the UK regulatory framework is sufficient to facilitate fast and effective use of counter UAV technology by the Government.

**James Brokenshire:**

To ensure police have the powers required to effectively tackle drone misuse by authorising the use of counter UAV technology, The Home Office have been supporting the Department for Transport as they lead in developing and introducing the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft (ATMUA) Bill. The ATMUA Bill gives Police, Senior Prison Officers and Civil Nuclear Constabulary the ability to authorise the use of counter UAV technology to protect the public and Critical National Infrastructure sites.

The ATMUA Bill will develop new norms of safe drone use while enabling an effective operational response to drone misuse.

## ■ Visas: Married People

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[121292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on household income of circumstances in which the UK national sponsoring a spousal immigration visa application falls ill, and is unable to work, and their spouse has no recourse to public funds.

**Chris Philp:**

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

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

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

Support is also in place for those with mortgages. Borrowers who have been impacted by coronavirus and have not yet had a mortgage payment holiday will be entitled to a six month holiday, and those that have already started a mortgage payment holiday will be able to top up to six months without this being recorded on their credit file.

Furthermore, migrants on spousal visas are permitted to work in the UK in order to support themselves and their family, and UK nationals who are unable to work are entitled to apply for government support.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely



from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

The Government has provided additional funding for the devolved administrations under the Barnett formula as part of the wider government response. Funding provided to local authorities under the Covid-19 emergency response will be paid through a grant that is not ring-fenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how this funding is spent.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Building Safety Fund

**Kim Johnson:**

[\[120166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that managing agents and building owners have sufficient time to implement an effective stage 1 schedule for Building Safety Fund support.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 115485 answered on 24 November.

**Kim Johnson:**

[\[120168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to ensure that leaseholders do not bear the costs of remedial works when their managing agent or building owner is unsuccessful in their application for Building Safety Fund.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is clear that it is unacceptable for leaseholders to have to worry about the cost of fixing historic safety defects in their buildings that they did not cause.

It must be recognised that it is the responsibility of building owners – not Government or the tax-payer – to ensure their buildings are safe for leaseholders and other residents. Building owners should consider all routes to meet costs, protecting leaseholders where they can – for example through warranties and recovering costs from contractors for incorrect or poor work.

The department is working on proposals to protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs caused by historic building safety defects, on which we will be providing an update.

### ■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: International Men's Day

**Philip Davies:**

[\[120010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Luke Hall:**

MHCLG believes that no one should suffer unfair treatment because of their gender. As such, it conducts internal communications activity around International Men's Day as it does with other awareness days.

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

This work includes preparation for an Employment Bill which, subject to further consultation, will make flexible working the default unless employers have good reason not to; and 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.

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

**■ Private Rented Housing****Jane Hunt:**[\[120175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of current legislation in ensuring enforcement action can be taken against private landlords who reside overseas and who are not fulfilling their legal obligations to tenants.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Housing Act 2004 gives powers to local authorities to regulate and enforce standards in the private rented sector. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 further introduced civil penalties of up to £30,000 and banning orders for use against the worst and most persistent offenders. Legislation also extended rent repayment orders which require a landlord to repay rent when they have not complied with the law.

We have also given local authorities strong powers to undertake urgent repairs where they identify health and safety hazards or poor conditions. If landlords do not comply, or if the risk is high enough, local authorities can carry out the remedial works themselves and recover the costs.

Enforcement action to ensure a property is safe for a tenant to live in can be taken when the landlord resides overseas. For example, absent landlords, including those overseas, may be subject to prosecutions and Banning Orders.

**■ Rented Housing: Coronavirus****Peter Kyle:**[\[121868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) credit rating of renters and (b) rental market.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic which is supporting the rental market by enabling renters to sustain tenancies and continue paying rent.

Our comprehensive support package includes a range of support for businesses to pay staff salaries, including through the furlough scheme which has now been extended to March 2021. We have also strengthened the welfare safety-net with billions of additional pounds, including increasing Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates so that they cover the lowest 30 per cent of market rents.

For those renters who require additional support, there is an existing £180 million of Government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments made available this year, an increase of £40 million from last year and which is for councils to distribute to support renters with housing costs. Our approach continues to be informed by a range of data sources and the Government continues to keep this matter under review.

**■ Towns Fund: Wigan****James Grundy:**[\[120176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether Wigan Council applied to the Towns Fund.

**James Grundy:**[\[120177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department received applications from Wigan Council for funding from the Towns Fund for projects in Leigh constituency.

**Luke Hall:**

An initial 101 towns were selected to submit proposals for Towns Deals as a part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. There was no application process.

Wigan is, however, one of 101 places shortlisted for the Future High Streets Fund. We are now in the final stages of the assessment process and expect to announce the outcome of that competition before the end of the year.

Levelling up continues to be at the heart of this Government's agenda and that is why at Spending Review, we announced a new £4 billion Levelling Up Fund which will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Agricultural Products: Japan

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[121797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, what steps agricultural producers will be required to take to apply for a Geographical Indicator for products entering the Japanese market; whether there will be an additional process for Japanese approval of geographical indicated status of those products; and will if she will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) includes a new provision allowing more world-famous British products to receive protected recognition in Japan.

Under CEPA, it has been agreed that all eligible British products will be put through Japan's Geographical Indicator (GI) approval process automatically.

UK businesses will not need to navigate the Japanese administrative system on their own to get their iconic UK goods protected under the CEPA. The UK government will put forward new GIs for protection in Japan on behalf of UK producers, saving time and money for UK businesses.

The UK will provide Japan with our list of around 70 UK GIs in January. All of these GIs will go through examination and opposition procedures as set out in the domestic law of Japan. Unless there are exceptional circumstances this should only take about 5 months.

### ■ Animal Products: Imports

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[120836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her overseas counterparts on determining the equivalence of production and welfare standards of products of animal origin intended for export to the UK.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

A number of the trade agreements we have signed or agreed in principle, including the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, contain commitments to enter into consultations with the aim of achieving agreements on recognition of the equivalence of specified sanitary and phytosanitary measures. We shall be free to pursue those and other opportunities arising from future agreements and our membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), following the end of the Transition Period.

The Government remains committed to promoting robust food safety standards nationally and internationally, to protect consumer interests and ensure that consumers can have confidence in the food they buy.

**■ Dairy Products: Canada****Gareth Thomas:** [\[120769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has secured a specific Tariff Rate Quota access for UK dairy products exported to Canada as part of the recently announced continuity agreement; and if she will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK-Canada Trade Continuity Agreement will provide certainty and security for UK and Canadian businesses. This includes cheese producers who will still be able to export cheese to Canada tariff-free after the 1st January 2020.

The UK has secured continued access to the “European Union (EU) reserve” part of Canada’s World Trade Organisation (WTO) quota. This maintains the main route to market in Canada for UK cheese exporters and provides scope for exports to grow over time. There is no bilateral quota in the agreement.

Full details will be released once the agreement has been signed.

**■ Department for International Trade: Credit Unions****Gareth Thomas:** [\[121127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to require her Department and its agencies to provide a payroll deduction service to allow staff to save more easily with a credit union; and if he will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

I can confirm that the Department for International Trade (DIT) and UK Export Finance currently do not offer a payroll deduction service to enable staff to join a credit union. Staff can still make arrangements to contribute to a credit union via direct debit.

**■ Department for International Trade: International Men's Day****Philip Davies:** [\[120005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade is committed to ensuring fairness for all - regardless of gender or background. International Men’s Day offers an opportunity to highlight how outcomes for men and boys can be improved and to talk about some of the work going on every day across Government to do this.

To mark International Men’s Day, the department undertook a range of events, including a virtual event held by the Gender network, mentoring sessions for male members of staff by the Permanent Secretary, and a conversation for men from the department hosted by the Second Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary

also spoke at two virtual Civil Service-wide events, including the Cross-Government Gender Network event.

## ■ Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[120943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2020 to Question 91998 on Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees, what steps UKEF is taking to conduct that extensive due diligence, including environmental, social, and human rights due diligence and consideration of climate change; and whether that due diligence includes an assessment of potential scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions from those projects.

**Graham Stuart:**

The projects referred to in the response to Question 91998 are still under consideration, and we cannot comment on potential transactions for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) has a specialist environmental, social, and human rights (ESHR) team that reviews relevant projects for such risks and impacts (including consideration of climate change) prior to UKEF taking a decision on support. ESHR reviews are undertaken in strict alignment with international frameworks for managing such ESHR risks and impacts, namely the OECD Council Recommendation on Common Approaches for Officially Supported Export Credits and Environmental and Social Due Diligence (OECD Common Approaches) and Equator Principles, which was updated in July 2020 to strengthen requirements related to climate change and human rights. The ESHR team undertakes these reviews to be satisfied that relevant projects should comply with applicable local and relevant international laws, and align with international ESHR standards, before support is provided. Where UKEF provides support to such projects it undertakes on-going ESHR monitoring over the period of that support.

Where a relevant project is identified as having a high potential impact on the environment and/or social matters/human rights, UKEF publishes Category A notices to inform stakeholders of its consideration of such a project.

Furthermore, from 1 April 2020, UKEF has committed to consider how it will take account of climate change within its decision-making processes across *all* its products. This consideration will be proportionate to the risks and impacts associated with the projects and its support.

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[120944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 18 November 2020 to Question 91998 on Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees, what each project comprises; and who the project developer in the host country is for the two projects in Brazil.

**Graham Stuart:**

The projects referred to in the response to Question 91998 are still under consideration by UK Export Finance, and no decisions have been made. It is our policy not to comment on potential transactions for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

**■ Intellectual Property: Coronavirus****Sarah Champion:**[\[121845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy to support the proposed WTO waiver on IP protection, as proposed by India and South Africa, to support the global scale up of covid-19 medical products such as treatments and vaccines.

**Greg Hands:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave on 25 November to Question UIN 115822.

**■ Pipelines: East Africa****Kate Osamor:**[\[120945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether UKEF is making an assessment of the potential merits of providing financial support for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline.

**Graham Stuart:**

UK Export Finance (UKEF) has been approached on the project referred to, and no decision has been made. It is not UKEF policy to comment on potential transactions for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

**■ UK-Africa Investment Summit****Matthew Pennycook:**[\[120946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish a list of businesses and business representatives (a) invited to and (b) attending the UK-Africa Investment Summit being hosted by the UK in January 2021.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Department for International Trade (DIT) plans to host a virtual Africa Investment Conference in January 2021. This is not a second UK-Africa Investment Summit. This conference is a business engagement event intended to demonstrate our continued commitment to being Africa's investment partner of choice, and to showcase the positive impact of new and existing UK investments in Africa.

This virtual event is not invitation-only. We plan for a range of UK and African businesses and institutions to participate online.



**JUSTICE****■ David Sparrow****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[120021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of Norwich Coroner's Court in relation to the death of David Sparrow at HMP Norwich.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The safety of those in our care is our absolute priority, and every death in custody is a tragedy. My condolences are with the family and friends of Mr Sparrow.

Mr Sparrow's death was the subject of an independent investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, and an inquest at Norwich Coroner's Court that has recently concluded. We are committed to learning from such investigations and using their conclusions to inform our work to reduce the number of deaths in custody. We accepted and acted upon the eight recommendations of the PPO investigation into Mr Sparrow's death, and we are carefully considering the findings of the inquest. We understand that the Coroner may send a prevention of future deaths report, and if such a report is received we will consider the matters of concern raised in it and respond within the statutory time limit.

**■ Hare Coursing****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[120066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the Sentencing Council on guidance for magistrates on dealing with illegal hare coursing offences prosecuted under the Game Act 1831.

**Chris Philp:**

Ministers meet the Chairman of the Sentencing Council regularly to discuss a range of issues related to sentencing. The Sentencing Council meets on a monthly basis to discuss matters relating to sentencing and guidelines and a representative of the Lord Chancellor attends those meetings. Officials in the MoJ also meet regularly with members of the Office of the Sentencing Council and discuss a wide range of issues.

**■ Hare Coursing: Prosecutions****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[120067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department will set out clear guidance for prosecutors and magistrates on the use of Community Impact Statements and of expert witnesses in cases of illegal hare coursing prosecuted under the Game Act 1831.

**Chris Philp:**

Guidance for prosecutors on hare coursing and community impact statements is issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions under the superintendence of the Attorney General.

There is guidance for courts on community impact statements at paragraph VII H of the Criminal Practice Directions issued by the Lord Chief Justice.

The Criminal Procedure Rules about introducing expert evidence in criminal cases are in CrimPR Part 19 and there is guidance for courts at paragraph V 19A of the Lord Chief Justice's Criminal Practice Directions.

## ■ Homicide: Gender Recognition

**Philip Davies:** [\[119998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convicted murderers were recorded as being transgender in each year for which information is available.

**Lucy Frazer:**

DATE	NUMBER OF SERVING PRISONERS CONVICTED OF MURDER REPORTING AS BEING TRANSGENDER
31 March 2016	9
31 March 2017	15
31 March 2018	16
31 March 2019	20

This data is not available prior to 2016 or currently available for 2020. Individuals may contribute towards totals in multiple years.

We expect all prisoners to be treated fairly, lawfully and decently, with their rights and safety properly respected. Thorough and appropriate assessment of risk is of paramount importance for the management of all those in our care, regardless of an individual's gender or any protected characteristic they may or may not have.

## ■ Ministry of Justice: International Men's Day

**Philip Davies:** [\[120011\]](#)

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

**Alex Chalk:**

International Men's Day offers an opportunity to highlight how outcomes for men and boys can be improved and to talk about some of the important work going on every day across Government to do this.

The Ministry of Justice marked International Men's Day with the following range of activities:

- Eight events for colleagues to mark International Men's Day lead by the Staff Networks. These events included an awareness building session on prostate cancer

and an intersectional event covering the support available to men who have suffered domestic abuse.

- Articles and blogs featured on the organisation's intranet to mark International Men's Day.

- Other activities across MoJ have included a workshop on men's health that signposted staff to useful information, links and other resources; the annual Men's Health and Wellbeing event where over 200 colleagues attended; and an awareness event preventing male suicide and self-harm.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Christian Matheson:**

**[909544]**

What steps the Government is taking to support the aerospace sector in Northern Ireland during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

This is clearly an uncertain time for many businesses, including those in the aerospace industry, a sector valued at over £1.8bn in Northern Ireland.

As well as the Furlough Scheme, the Government is supporting the UK's aerospace and aviation industries with over £8.5bn in grants, loans and export guarantees. UK Export Finance is supporting £3.5bn of sales in the next 18 months, and £2.1bn has been made available through the COVID Corporate Financing Facility.

Having met recently with both management and Unite union representatives, I am pleased that Spirit and Bombardier have completed a deal that will end uncertainty for some 3,000 employees. This is a major vote of confidence in Northern Ireland's highly skilled aerospace workforce.

**Robin Millar:**

**[909545]**

What steps his Department is taking to strengthen the Union.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

This Government is committed to strengthening the Union. The UK is a family of nations which shares cultural, social and economic ties that, together, make us safer, more secure, and more prosperous.

The Government is committed to levelling up the whole of the UK and we will take every opportunity to strengthen Northern Ireland's place within the Union, particularly as we approach its centenary year. This is something we have clearly demonstrated through the £2.8 billion previously provided to the Northern Ireland Executive to help fight coronavirus, along with the announcement last week by the Chancellor of an additional £918 million of funding for Northern Ireland for the incoming financial year.

The Government is clear that the UK must function as a single customs territory in practice as we operationalise the Protocol. That is why we have unequivocally

committed to unfettered access for Northern Ireland goods to the rest of the UK, as outlined in New Decade, New Approach and in the 2019 manifesto.

We have brought forward draft regulations which establish the definition of Qualifying Northern Ireland Goods, ensuring no changes in how Northern Ireland businesses move goods directly to the rest of the UK from 1 January 2021, and the UKIM Bill will ensure that qualifying Northern Ireland goods can continue to be placed on the whole UK market and prohibit checks and controls as goods move from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK.

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[909547\]](#)

What discussions he has had with (a) the Northern Ireland Executive and (b) Cabinet colleagues on increasing the number of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

We want Northern Ireland not only to recover, but to prosper, and - to do that - Northern Ireland needs a skilled and productive workforce. This Government recognises, and I know my hon Friend is a champion of the huge benefit of, apprenticeships in helping young people into employment and employers to invest in skills. I have been struck on my visits to Northern Ireland businesses how many already value apprenticeships as a means to recruit and foster new talent.

Apprenticeships are devolved in Northern Ireland and I welcome the steps that the Executive have taken through the Apprenticeship Recovery Package to help the apprenticeship system respond to the impact of the pandemic. I look forward to seeing how they will build on this as they work to maximise the potential of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland.

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[909548\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Northern Ireland Executive on a timeframe for bringing forward standalone legislative proposals on vexatious claims against veterans who served in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government has been clear that it will bring forward legislation to address the legacy of the Troubles which focuses on reconciliation, delivers for victims, and ends the cycle of investigations that has failed victims and veterans alike.

We remain committed to making progress, and engaging with the Irish Government, the Northern Ireland parties, and stakeholders from across the community on this issue.

**Catherine West:**

[\[909551\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the preparedness of (a) businesses and (b) communities for the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Jeff Smith:**

[\[909560\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the preparedness of (a) businesses and (b) communities for the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

It is essential that businesses and the wider public continue to take steps to prepare for the end of the transition period. We are working closely with businesses and communities to ensure that action is taken now.

As well as regular meetings of the Business Engagement Forum, led by my department, we are in constant contact with communities in Northern Ireland. Last month the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland chaired a roundtable with civic leaders from across Northern Ireland, facilitating a really valuable two-way dialogue on readiness. We will continue that dialogue to ensure that Northern Ireland is ready on 1 January 2021.

**■ Coronavirus: Christmas****Stephen Farry:**[\[121043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Irish Government on the co-ordination of Christmas 2020 covid-19 restrictions.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Northern Ireland Executive is leading Northern Ireland's Covid-19 response, in line with devolution arrangements.

To ensure a joined-up approach in our response, the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government are communicating at all levels. There have been regular discussions between Ministers and officials from the UK and Irish governments and from the Northern Ireland Executive throughout the pandemic and most recently about arrangements over the festive period. The Secretary of State met the Irish Foreign Minister on 23 November to discuss a range of issues, including covid-19 restrictions.

**■ EU Grants and Loans: Northern Ireland****Louise Haigh:**[\[120915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the average amount of European Structural Investment Funding was per year for Northern Ireland for the period 2014-20; and what the projected average of Shared Prosperity Fund funding will be for Northern Ireland per year.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The total European Structural and Investment Funds allocated to Northern Ireland for the 2014-2020 programme was about €752m. This includes the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Investment from EU Structural Funds is increasing in each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 21-22 compared to this financial year. We will ramp up funding so that total domestic UK-wide funding will at least match EU receipts, reaching around £1.5bn a year.

In addition, to help local areas prepare over 21/22 for introduction of the UKSPF, we will provide £220 million additional UK funding, including to Northern Ireland, to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches.

## ■ Exports: Northern Ireland

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[121058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to promote Northern Irish exports.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Northern Ireland is brimming with potential, including world-class goods and services and as a fantastic place to work, live and visit. Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, we saw exports from Northern Ireland increasing and we are confident this will be re-established.

The UK Government is committed to supporting the NI Executive to see economic growth return and we will work closely with the Executive so that Northern Ireland and its businesses can seize the opportunities ahead, including new trading relationships. An important part of this will be working with the Department for International Trade and with the Executive authorities, including the Department for the Economy and Invest NI to champion Northern Ireland around the world as we look to see Northern Ireland's exports increase.

Throughout the year ahead, and particularly in Northern Ireland's centenary year, the Government will be doing everything it can to support Northern Ireland's economic recovery and to promote its trade. As part of this, the Secretary of State is looking forward to welcoming the Board of Trade to Northern Ireland early next year.

## ■ Northern Ireland Office: International Men's Day

**Philip Davies:**

[\[120012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

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. To mark International Men's Day on 19 November and raise awareness, the Northern Ireland Office highlighted a number of events taking place through the organisation Men's Action Network (M.A.N), which supports and promotes men's health and wellbeing.

The Northern Ireland Office has active staff-led Diversity & Inclusion and Wellbeing networks and our strong message is that we want to see all people being treated fairly, regardless of gender, with Intranet communications highlighting the support available to men in the workplace including shared parental leave and Mental Health First Aiders.

**PRIME MINISTER****■ Prime Minister: International Men's Day****Philip Davies:**[\[120015\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what steps his Office took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Boris Johnson:**

In a message on my official twitter account, I recognised the incredible contribution men and boys make to our society, and, in recognition of the mental health problems that 1 in 8 men face, made clear that support is available.

**SCOTLAND****■ Exports: Scotland****Andrew Griffith:**[\[121049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps his Department is taking to promote Scottish exports.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

My Department works closely with the Department for International Trade (DIT) to ensure Scottish businesses and Scottish products are promoted across the Globe. DIT has recently launched a UK Trade Hub based in Edinburgh's Queen Elizabeth House to support Scottish businesses. This new Trade Hub will be dedicated to helping businesses in Scotland thrive and grow internationally, providing much-needed support for thousands of companies in these economically challenging times and helping businesses in Scotland recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

DIT has an extensive global reach and expertise that will add value to the services already provided by Scottish Development International (SDI). Businesses will be able to utilise the UK Government's global networks, expertise and influence, as well as world-leading credit agency UK Export Finance (UKEF), to grow their overseas trade and build back from the impact of coronavirus.

Trade is crucial to the UK's recovery from coronavirus and will be the foundation of our relationships across the globe after the transition period ends. I want to ensure that businesses in Scotland benefit from our new trade deals with the world's biggest markets, as we remove barriers they previously faced.

We have ambitious goals for British trade, and aim to have 80 per cent of UK trade covered by free trade agreements within the next three years. We have already agreed the UK-Japan Free Trade Agreement which has paved the way for more UK goods to be protected – increasing geographical indications (GIs) from just seven under the terms of the EU-Japan deal to around 70 under our new agreement.

This will not only mean that products like Scotch Whisky will enjoy continued protection under the agreement, but also additional products, such as Arbroath



Smokies and Stornoway Black Pudding could be protected in Japan from next year. This would allow producers in Scotland to have their products' unique heritage protected and could lead to improved recognition of key Scottish brands in the Japanese market.

The UK Government is also making strong progress in our negotiations with the USA, Australia and New Zealand. We are committed to working closely with the Devolved Administrations to deliver an independent trade policy that works for the whole of the United Kingdom.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Bicycles: Repairs and Maintenance

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[119977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many vouchers have been allocated under the Fix your Bike Voucher Scheme in (a) Greater London, (b) Bexley Borough and (c) Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency to date.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As of the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, there were 104,898 vouchers in total issued to addresses across England. Of this total, 18,919 vouchers were issued to addresses in Greater London; of which 394 were to addresses in the London Borough of Bexley; of which 171 vouchers to addresses in the Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency.

### ■ Crossrail: Transport for London

**Sir David Evennett:**

[\[119976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of effect of the Mayor of London's management of Transport for London finances on delays to Crossrail.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Crossrail Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Transport for London (TfL).

The Department remains fully committed to the delivery of Crossrail to get the railway fully open as soon and as safely as possible. The Government continues to work with Crossrail Ltd and TfL to support this.

### ■ Electric Vehicles: Hydrogen

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[120153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made a comparative assessment of the (a) costs and (b) benefits of (i) hydrogen and (ii) electricity as energy sources to power motor vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In 2018, the Department for Transport published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts

of a range of fuel and powertrain options for cars, vans, buses and heavy goods vehicles over the period to 2050, including battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. The Department is further assessing the potential role of hydrogen and electricity in vehicles and this will be published in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan by Spring 2021.

#### ■ **Large Goods Vehicles: Excise Duties**

**Andrew Bridgen:**

[R] [\[121841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to reform the road user levy after the end of the transition period to ensure parity between domestic and foreign hauliers.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The HGV levy was introduced to ensure a fairer arrangement for all hauliers, and is paid equally by UK and foreign hauliers. It is currently suspended until 1 August 2021, and we are considering reforms to it for when it is reinstated.

#### ■ **Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen**

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[120151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of hydrogen as a fuel to replace petrol and diesel in (a) motor cars and (b) heavy goods vehicles.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The transition to zero emission vehicles will help to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals, contribute to reducing poor air quality and contribute to economic growth in the UK by providing skilled jobs in the automotive sector. Our approach to delivering our long-term ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral and we are supporting hydrogen where the market favours its use. The Department's Transport Energy Model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts, including on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality, of a range of fuel and powertrain options for cars, vans, buses and heavy goods vehicles over the period to 2050, including hydrogen fuel cell.

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[120152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the viability of existing retail fuel stations (a) to include hydrogen as a fuel dispensed and (b) for hydrogen to replace petrol and diesel as the stored and dispensed fuel.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government is supporting development of the infrastructure for hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs), recognising that the market is at an early stage. The Government's £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is increasing the uptake of FCEVs and growing the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations. The programme is delivering new refuelling stations, upgrading some existing stations as well as deploying hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles. Government is

supporting public and private sector fleets to become early adopters through the £2m FCEV Fleet Support Scheme.

■ **Night Flying**

**Sarah Olney:** [\[121897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to introduce further restrictions on night time flights at UK airports.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department has today launched a consultation which will inform future decisions on night flight restrictions.

■ **Railways: Arundel**

**Andrew Griffith:** [\[121411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2020 to Question 105623, when he plans to announce a decision on the Arundel chord rail connection.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

A bid was made to the second round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund to restore the Arundel Chord. We announced outcomes for bids to Round 2 on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and feedback was provided in writing to sponsoring MPs. Our discussion and assessment found that while this proposal may be suitable for Ideas Funding in principle, the case needs strengthening. Officials in the Department are able to render assistance to scheme sponsors going forward.

■ **Railways: Coronavirus**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[120117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with rail operators to ensure people travelling over the Christmas period will be able to do so (a) safely and (b) whilst maintaining social distancing from other passengers.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[120118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with rail operators on the potential effect of reduced covid-19 restrictions over the Christmas period on the capacity of the rail network.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[120119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential readiness of the rail network and rail operators to safely facilitate passenger travel in the event of temporary changes in Covid-19 restrictions over the Christmas period.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department remains engaged with the industry, and continues to work closely with rail operators to ensure the railway is prepared to meet passengers' needs. Operators are reviewing their operational plans, and are taking all necessary steps to provide information and support for passengers. The industry is implementing measures to manage passenger flows at busy stations, including at locations that may be served by rail replacement buses during engineering works.

It is essential passengers continue to take all suitable precautions this winter. Families will need to make a careful judgement about risks, including that of travelling and visiting elderly relatives. As transport routes may be busier than normal, we strongly recommend that people plan their journeys and check for any disruption in advance. People should also book tickets online wherever possible, and operators are highlighting on their websites the services that are quieter or busier to enable travellers to make informed decisions.

The rail industry's ongoing process of assurance continues, and the department retains contact with industry partners, to monitor plans and provide challenge and support as necessary.

**■ Travel: Repayments****Kim Johnson:****[120169]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that travel companies and airlines comply with legislation and refund passengers whose flights or holiday packages have been cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Robert Courts:**

The Department has been clear that airlines and travel agents should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund if it is requested, and this should be done in a timely manner. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is routinely reviewing the refund policies and practices of all UK airlines, as well as a number of international airlines that operate flights to and from the UK. The CAA has utilised its review to influence airlines to change their processes and practices in order to improve performance in providing refunds. The CAA's actions have led to an improved quality of service and performance from most airlines. The CAA continues to work with carriers to drive down waiting times, while recognising the challenges businesses are facing.

Furthermore, the Competition Markets Authority (CMA) launched its Covid-19 Taskforce in April to identify, monitor and respond to competition and consumer problems arising from coronavirus and the measures taken to contain it. Where there is evidence that businesses have breached competition or consumer protection law, the CMA will take enforcement action if warranted.

**TREASURY****■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme****Stephen Crabb:****[119995]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the proportion of workers supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme who have been continuously in the scheme since it started in April 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

It is not possible to provide an answer to the question in the time available.

HMRC have published statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the latest release being published on 25 November 2020. These statistics include information on the number of employments supported since the scheme started in March 2020. The statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics>

**Owen Thompson:****[120083]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) cancel or (b) reduce the amount of national insurance and pensions contributions that employers are required to pay for employees using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

Some businesses will be affected by coronavirus more deeply and for longer than others, and the Government will seek to support these firms appropriately. This is why on 31 October the Government announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) would be extended until the end of March 2021, with eligible employees receiving 80% of their reference salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. Businesses will have flexibility to use the scheme for employees for any amount of time and shift pattern, including furloughing them full-time.

There will be no employer contribution to wages for hours not worked. Employers will only be asked to cover National Insurance and Employer pension contributions for hours not worked. For an average claim, this accounts for just 5% of total employment costs or £70 per employee per month.

Helping people save for their futures remains a key priority for the Government, and employers are still required to comply with obligations under automatic enrolment to enrol employees into workplace pensions and then make contributions. About 40% of employees using the CJRS are below the National Insurance Contribution and Pensions threshold, and therefore will have no employer costs in the CJRS. Furthermore, many small employers can benefit from the Employment Allowance for support with their National Insurance Contribution bill.

The Chancellor has always been clear that the Government would keep the situation under review, adapting its approach as the context evolved. In January, the

Government will review the CJRS policy, taking into account economic circumstances across the UK.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Directors**

**John McDonnell:** [\[119962\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of extending eligibility to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to include directors of small companies, who file their PAYE RTI annually; and if he will make a statement.

**John McDonnell:** [\[119964\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what consultation he undertook with directors of small companies, who file their PAYE RTI returns annually, on the design and introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**John McDonnell:** [\[119965\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason it was decided that directors of small companies who file their PAYE RTI returns annually should be ineligible for support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has seen 1.2 million employers apply to help to pay the wages of 9.6 million furloughed jobs. In light of the path of the virus, the CJRS has been extended until the end of March 2021 for all parts of the UK.

Those paid annually are eligible to claim, as long as they meet the relevant conditions including being notified to HMRC on an RTI real-time information submission between 20 March and 30 October. These cut-off dates allow as many people as possible to be included by going right up to the day before the announcement, balancing the risk of fraud that existed as soon as the scheme became public.

■ **Debts: Coronavirus**

**Charlotte Nichols:** [\[121395\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he will take to reduce levels of household debt resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Glen:**

The Government has delivered unprecedented support for living standards during this challenging time, protecting livelihoods with the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and with temporary welfare measures.

With the resurgence of COVID-19, the Government has extended the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme until 31 March 2021. Eligible employees will continue to receive 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500

per month. The Government has increased the overall level of the third grant under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to 80 per cent of average trading profits, meaning that the maximum grant available has now increased to £7,500.

The Government has provided Local Authorities with £500 million to support people who may struggle to meet their council tax payments this year. The Government expects that this will provide all recipients of working age local council tax support with a further reduction in their annual council tax bill of £150 this financial year.

These measures are in addition to the changes this Government has made to make the welfare system more generous, worth over £7 billion according to recent OBR estimates. This includes a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1 billion increase in support for renters through increases to Local Housing Allowance rates.

We have also worked with mortgage lenders, credit providers and the Financial Conduct Authority to ensure the financial sector provides support for people across the UK to manage their finances by providing payment holidays on mortgages and consumer credit products.

The Government has also provided unprecedented support for businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This support includes the Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme, Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme, Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Future Fund which, as of 15th November, have collectively supported over 1.4 million businesses with facilities worth more than £65 billion. The Chancellor has announced that the Government has extended the application deadline for these schemes to a single date, 31 January 2020, meaning that even more businesses will have access to financial support.

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

In May, the Government also announced the immediate release of £65 million dormant assets funding to Fair4All Finance, an independent organisation that has been founded to support the financial wellbeing of people in vulnerable circumstances. The funding is used to increase access to fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services for those in financial difficulties.

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



## ■ Directors: Small Businesses

**John McDonnell:**

[119963]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of directors of small companies, who file their PAYE RTI returns annually.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[120185]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many directors of small companies file their PAYE RTI returns annually.

**Jesse Norman:**

PAYE schemes that pay their employees annually all in the same tax month may register as an 'annual scheme'. Further information can be found on gov.uk at the following link (see section: Annual payroll scheme for PAYE):

<https://www.gov.uk/running-payroll/changing-paydays>.

Information on which PAYE schemes are operated by small companies and which are operated by other types of employer such as sole traders and partnerships is not readily available for all PAYE schemes.

Among all PAYE schemes, not just those that are operated by small companies, the number of registered PAYE schemes that were live on 8 October 2020 (the date this information was extracted) and were registered as an 'annual scheme' was 33,300.

## ■ ExcludedUK

**Martyn Day:**

[120084]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has had discussions with representatives of ExcludedUK on difficulties their members are having in accessing Government support during the covid-19 outbreak.

**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>.

**■ Fairgrounds: Coronavirus****Carolyn Harris:** [\[120081\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing financial support to travelling fairground operators who have been unable to operate due to covid-19 restrictions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has announced unprecedented support for individuals and businesses during the pandemic. The Government has recently extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until the end of March 2021, with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked. To support the self-employed, the percentage of trading profits covered by the forthcoming Self Employment Income Support Scheme grant from November to January have been further increased to 80 per cent, up to £7,500.

The Government has extended the temporary reduced VAT rate for hospitality and tourism to 31 March 2021. This will continue to apply to admission to attractions across the UK, including fairs, circuses and amusement parks.

**■ Health Services and Social Services: Coronavirus****Rosie Cooper:** [\[120838\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will publish the (a) terms of reference and (b) minutes of meetings of the Number 10 Health and Social Care Taskforce.

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[120839\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) terms of reference and (b) minutes of the meetings of his Health and Social Care Taskforce.

**Justin Madders:** [\[120884\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the the (a) terms of reference and (b) membership of his Health and Social Care Taskforce.

**Steve Barclay:**

The No10 and HM Treasury Health and Social Care Taskforce was made up of civil servants from a number of Government departments, who met on a daily basis as part of their policy development work, from the beginning of June through to the end of October this year.

**■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus****Emma Hardy:** [\[120126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to offer additional financial support to the hospitality industry operating in areas with Tier 3 covid-19 restrictions during December 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government understands that this is a very challenging time for the UK's hospitality and leisure sectors, and it recognises that the hospitality and leisure sectors have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

The Government is continuing to collect evidence on the impact of the pandemic on the hospitality industry and work with businesses and representative groups to ensure that support provided is right for this industry and the economy as a whole.

The Government has acted to deliver targeted support to these sectors through the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme, and a reduction in VAT for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions from 20% to 5% until 31 March 2021. In addition, the hospitality sector continues to have access to a range of Government support measures including, but not limited to:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), which has supported 1.4 million jobs across the hospitality sector, and which has been extended until the end of March 2021.
- A 12-month business rates holiday for all eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in England, saving around 350,000 ratepayers a combined £10bn.
- Cash grants of up to £3,000 per month to help businesses that are closed with their costs, including paying their supply chains.
- £1.1 billion of Discretionary Grant funding for local authorities to target support to the businesses that are most important to their local economy.
- A VAT deferral for up to 12 months.
- Access to affordable, Government backed finance through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBLS) for and larger firms, along with the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises. The deadline for applications to these lending schemes have been extended until 31 January 2021.

**■ Investment Income: Coronavirus****Gareth Johnson:****[120029]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent representations he has received on the potential merits of increasing financial support for people who are paid via dividends from their own companies in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The department has engaged with various stakeholders since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak with respect to company directors who are paid via dividends.

The Government's concern is about identifying what is operationally feasible, managing technical complexities and fraud risks, and ensuring that other schemes the Government has committed to are delivered in a timely way.

Company directors who are paid via dividends may still be eligible for various elements of the support available, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (in respect of their salary but not their dividends), Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

## ■ Levelling Up Fund

**Kate Hollern:**

**[121851]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the length of time the bidding process will take from the time of application to the allocation of funding through the Levelling Up Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Levelling Up Fund will be open to all local areas in England and allocated competitively. This will be a fast, streamlined process to directly fund local priorities. The Spending Review makes available up to £600 million in 2021-22. We will publish a prospectus for the fund and launch the first round of competitions in the New Year. Further funding will be spread over subsequent years up to 2024-25.

## ■ Northern Rock

**Patricia Gibson:**

**[121859]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to provide financial support or compensation to homeowners who are mortgage prisoners with Northern Rock Asset Management.

**John Glen:**

We remain committed to supporting as many borrowers as possible with inactive lenders move to a cheaper deal. The government has worked with the FCA to implement rule changes to its mortgage lending rules, removing the regulatory barrier that prevented some customers, who otherwise may have been able to switch, from accessing new products. Inactive lenders have now started contacting borrowers who have been struggling to switch, setting out that options may be available for them on the active market. I will monitor the situation and hope to see even more options available over the coming months.

The FCA recently confirmed additional options to support borrowers, including making intragroup switching easier and extending the window in which interest-only borrowers coming to the end of their term can continue making interest payments, without paying down the capital. These modified rules came into force on 23 October 2020. More information can be found here: <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/fca-confirms-measures-support-closed-book-and-interest-only-part-and-part-mortgage-borrowers>.

UK Asset Resolution (UKAR) – the owner of the Northern Rock Asset Management mortgage portfolio - has worked to help customers looking for a better deal with another lender by;

- waiving all early redemption charges;
- providing an online 'Deal Finder' tool which allows customers to search the market to find and compare mortgages from other lenders;
- partnering with Mortgage Force who have a panel of brokers who can give impartial, whole of market mortgage advice; and
- referring customers to specialist brokers, such as HUB Financial Solutions, where advice fees are waived.

It is also worth noting that Norther Rock Asset Management's Standard Variable Rate (SVR) has always been set in line with the SVRs of active lenders.

### ■ **Prostitution: Coronavirus**

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[121896\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken since the start of the covid-19 outbreak in March 2020 to financially support sex workers.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has put in place financial support for as many workers as possible during this period. This includes the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which supports self-employed individuals whose businesses have been adversely affected by COVID-19, subject to certain criteria.

Those without access to the SEISS may be eligible for other support, including a substantial increase to the welfare safety net, help with utility bills, and support for renters.

### ■ **Revenue and Customs Digital Technology Services: Tax Avoidance**

**Dean Russell:**

[\[120157\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason Revenue and Customs Digital Technology Services Limited (RCDTS Ltd) engaged contractors using disguised remuneration schemes until 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

Revenue and Customs Digital Technology Services Limited (RCDTS) has never participated in disguised remuneration tax avoidance schemes, for example by remunerating contractors through loans or payments to trusts. Since RCDTS engages contractors via agencies or via companies providing services, it is possible for contractors to use disguised remuneration without the participation or knowledge of RCDTS.

Any RCDTS contractor identified in the course of HM Revenue and Customs' compliance work as using a disguised remuneration scheme would be investigated in the same way as any other contractor. Where the use of disguised remuneration is found to be current, the relevant engagement is terminated with immediate effect.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Dispute Resolution

**David Mundell:** [\[119984\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have used HMRC's Alternative Dispute Resolution scheme through (a) arbitration and (b) mediation in each year since the introduction of that scheme.

**David Mundell:** [\[119986\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether prior to entering into HMRC's Alternative Dispute Resolution scheme, HMRC's officers provide their tax analysis to the taxpayer and answer questions that may arise from that analysis, to ensure that the parties enter into mediation.

**Jesse Norman:**

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a voluntary, informal process in which an impartial HMRC mediator actively assists parties to work towards agreement of a tax dispute.

ADR is one facet of HMRC's overall approach to dispute resolution, which is wherever possible to reach agreement with taxpayers through collaboration. The following is specific information relating to the ADR function only and therefore only forms part of the dispute resolution landscape in HMRC. HMRC do not currently offer arbitration as a means to resolve disputes.

For the period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2020, there have been 5467 applications for ADR. Of these, 2,641 were suitable for mediation and accepted into the ADR process with an average resolution rate of 86.8% across all years.

Throughout a compliance check HMRC will provide accurate, consistent and clear information to the taxpayer, including details of any assessments raised and explanations for any decisions HMRC make during the check. Should a taxpayer have any questions about the compliance check or an assessment, they should write to HMRC who will seek to clarify anything that is unclear. However, HMRC's approach also relies on a shared understanding of the full facts so that HMRC can understand the full nature of the tax risk and deal with it appropriately.

It is generally only when an impasse is reached between HMRC and the taxpayer that Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is considered. In some cases the full facts will have been established and the mediation will focus on the consequent tax analysis. But in some, the value of ADR will be to seek through mediation, a shared understanding of the facts and help the case progress on that basis.

## ■ Revenue and Customs: Standards

**David Mundell:** [\[119985\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on failures by HMRC to abide by the HMRC Litigation and Settlement Strategy when dealing with taxpayers; and what plans he has to introduce a statutory code or framework for HMRC's officers.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC and HMT Ministers receive representations on a wide range of matters. However, there have not been any formal representations regarding failures by HMRC to abide by the HMRC Litigation and Settlement Strategy when dealing with taxpayers.

A Statutory Framework already underpins HMRC, under which are various other commitments that ensure HMRC are open and transparent in the way officers conduct themselves. The Commissioners of HMRC have ultimate responsibility for every decision made in HMRC, although officers make day-to-day decisions on their behalf within an overall governance framework established when the department was formed. These governance processes are in place to ensure that HMRC deal with all cases fairly and in an even-handed manner.

The Tax Assurance Commissioner (TAC) is responsible for ensuring that HMRC have appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet those objectives and reports back to Parliament on an annual basis, in a report that is published. The latest report was published on 5 November 2020 as part of HMRC's Annual Report and Accounts 2019 to 2020.

HMRC are also developing one set of Professional Standards for civil compliance, the development of which was closely aligned to the work on revising HMRC's Charter. The Charter is a legal requirement and the Legislation states the Charter "must include standards of behaviour and values to which Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will aspire when dealing with people in the exercise of their functions". HMRC published a new Charter on 5 November 2020 after taking on feedback from a public consultation which ran between February and August 2020. The new Charter sets out responsibilities towards all of HMRC's customers, and it also includes surrounding guidance on GOV.UK which sets out rights to review and appeal.

**■ Test and Trace Support Payment****Dan Carden:****[121912]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with his Department on the potential merits of expanding the eligibility of the Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 for people required to self-isolate during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

Treasury ministers and officials have frequent meetings with their counterparts at the Department for Health and Social Care on a range of matters including the Test and Trace Support Payment. The Government is exploring plans to expand the payment to include those who are advised by the app to self-isolate because of close contact with somebody who has tested positive, and will set out further details in due course.



**Treasury: International Men's Day****Philip Davies:**[\[120007\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department took to mark International Men's Day on 19 November 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Treasury believes that no one should suffer unfair treatment because of their gender. As such, it conducts internal communications activity around International Men's Day as it does with other awareness days.

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

This work includes preparation for an Employment Bill which, subject to further consultation, will make flexible working the default unless employers have good reason not to; and 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.

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

**WALES****Business: Wales****Andrew Griffith:**[\[121408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the economic support available for Welsh businesses during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Simon Hart:**

I have regular discussions with my Rt hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the UK Government's support for jobs and businesses in Wales during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Wales is benefitting directly from UK Government support to enable businesses and employees to get through the covid-19 outbreak. Our Coronavirus Business Loan Scheme has supported over 1,600 Welsh businesses; we have backed 48,000 bounce back loans; our Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has protected over 401,000 jobs and our Self-Employed Income Support Scheme has helped over 113,000 self-employed people in Wales. The UK Government has also guaranteed £5 billion in further funding to the Welsh Government for 2020-21 to support its response to the virus.

At the Spending Review 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed an additional £1.3 billion for the Welsh Government for 2021-22, including £770m to

support the response to Covid-19. This demonstrates that we are taking the steps needed to support businesses in Wales and right across the UK.

■ **Exports: Wales**

**Andrew Griffith:**

[\[121057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps his Department is taking to promote Welsh exports.

**Simon Hart:**

My Department works closely with the Department for International Trade to support Welsh businesses and promote Welsh Exports. The UK Government is working to secure new opportunities through free trade agreements and market access agreements. The recently signed Japan and Canada trade agreements will give Welsh businesses greater opportunities to export. The UK Government has negotiated a return to market access to the USA for British beef exports which resulted in beef from Merthyr Tydfil being exported to the USA in September for the first time in over 20 years.

When COVID restrictions allow, I look forward to promoting Welsh exports in person.

■ **Wales Office: Credit Unions**

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[121139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he plans to require his Department and its agencies to provide a payroll deduction service to allow staff to save more easily with a credit union; and if he will make a statement.

**David T C Davies:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales (OSSW) is not an employer and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) provides employment services on our behalf. The MoJ does not actively promote credit unions and such schemes are usually promoted by the trade unions.

The MoJ offers financial wellbeing support and advice to staff as part of its wider employee benefits offer.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ **Bullying: Homophobia**

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[121915\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the Government still allocates funding to the Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Challenge Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Since 2016, we have invested £4m to support schools in preventing and addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, reaching 2,250 schools in England. This programme concluded in March 2020 and we are currently evaluating it.

In our 2019 Manifesto, we made clear our commitment to continuing to help teachers tackle bullying, including homophobic bullying, and the Government is continuing to fund anti-bullying projects. The Department for Education announced £750k of funding in June for three charitable organisations, including a project for victims of hate-related bullying. The Department for Education is also rolling out new inclusive statutory Relationships Education in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex Education in all secondary schools, so that children leave school prepared for life in modern, diverse, Britain.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Access to Work Programme

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[119975]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department collates data on the number of people in receipt of Access to Work support by (a) size of their employer, (b) age group, (c), gender, (d), ethnicity and (e) type of disability; and if she will make a statement.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Department does collate data on the number of people in receipt of Access to Work support by (a) size of their employer, (b) age group, (c) gender and (e) type of disability. Data on the number of people in receipt of Access to Work support by (d) ethnicity is not collected.

Where the data has been collated, this information has been provided below.

When answering your question, please note that we have interpreted “receipt of Access to Work support” as receipt of at least one Access to Work payment.

(a) The number of people in receipt of Access to Work payment by employer size in 2018/19 is:

TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE ACCESS TO WORK IN 2018/19
1 to 49	10,220
50 to 249	2,000
249+	23,610
Not recorded	410

Note that figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

For parts (b), (c) and (e), Table 8 of the Access to Work statistics shows the number of people who have received an Access to Work payment broken down by age group, gender and primary medical condition.

The latest Access to Work statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/access-to-work-statistics-april-2007-to-march-2020>

### **Background**

The number of people in receipt of Access to Work payment by employer size in 2019/20 is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

## ■ **Access to Work Programme: Job Entry Targeted Support**

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

**[120930]**

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 Job Entry Targeted Support scheme.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the Member for Ceredigion on 30 November 2020, UIN [120975](#).

## ■ **Covid Winter Grant Scheme**

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[119315]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department plans to take to raise awareness of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme to families of children eligible for free schools meals who will be able to receive support over the upcoming Christmas holiday.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[119987]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps families of children who are eligible for Free School Meals will need to take to access support from the Covid Winter Grant Scheme during the Christmas holidays.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[119988]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that families of children who are eligible for Free School Meals are aware of the need to access the Covid Winter Grant Scheme to receive food provision support over the Christmas holidays.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[119989]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to (a) inform families of children who are eligible for Free School Meals how to access support under the Covid Winter Grant Scheme and (b) support those families to access that scheme.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[119991]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department will take to ensure families with children who are eligible for Free School Meals access support under the Covid Winter Grant Scheme.

**Will Quince:**

The Covid Winter Support Grant is a new £170m fund which will enable local authorities in England to support vulnerable households this winter with food and key utilities. To ensure those most in need benefit from this funding, grants to local authorities are being made under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and carry conditions to ensure the primary focus of the scheme is on supporting vulnerable families with children affected by the pandemic, including but not restricted to households who are eligible for free school meals. Local authorities will develop their own criteria.

We have provided these grants to upper tier authorities, recognising they have the statutory responsibility regarding children and are well placed to identify and respond to local need. A wide range of data is already available to them to help target their support, including access to the benefits system, social services, health visitors and relationships with schools. Local authorities already have local welfare assistance responsibility and many have support programmes already in place. Jobcentres will share information with claimants about the support available in their local area.

Detailed guidance has been shared with local authorities and was published on gov.uk on 24 November: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-winter-grant-scheme>

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[119990]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the proportion of the support available under the Covid Winter Grant Scheme that will be granted to families with children who are eligible for Free School Meals.

**Will Quince:**

The primary focus of the £170 million Covid Winter Grant Scheme is on supporting vulnerable families with children affected by the pandemic, including, but not restricted to, families who are eligible for free school meals. As local authorities have flexibility to decide how best to identify and support those most in need in their local area, within the grant conditions, no such assessment has been made.

Detailed guidance for local authorities was published on gov.uk on 24 November.

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

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Credit Unions

**Gareth Thomas:**

**[121129]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to require her Department and its agencies to provide a payroll deduction service to allow staff to save more easily with a credit union; and if she will make a statement.

**Mims Davies:**

Payroll savings schemes are available to DWP employees.

DWP has existing arrangements with three of the UK's leading credit unions; COMMSAVE, HEY (Hull and East Yorkshire) and VOYAGER. These credit unions offer a savings facility and a range of ethical financial services to everyone who works for DWP.

The payroll savings scheme with credit unions is part of DWP's wider financial wellbeing toolkit, which is readily available to all employees through the staff intranet, and is promoted as part of our wider wellbeing offer.

DWP has no agencies, this response covers only DWP and does not extend to ALBs

**■ Employment: Poverty****Ruth Jones:**[\[120136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of in-work poverty.

**Ruth Jones:**[\[120137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of child poverty.

**Will Quince:**

Statistics on the number and percentage of people living in low income households over time, including children and those in work, are set out in the annual "Households Below Average Income" publication available here:

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

For children, this publication also shows trends in combined low income and material deprivation and combined severe low income and material deprivation

Published statistics cover the period from 1994/5 to 2018/19. National statistics covering the year 2019/20 are due to be published in March 2021. Pre-pandemic, in 2018/19, there were 100,000 fewer children in absolute low income than in 2009/10.

**■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus****Alex Norris:**[\[120983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has received on workplaces not being covid-secure since August 2020; and how long it took HSE to respond to each of those complaints.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* Between 1 August 2020 and 26 November 2020 HSE received a total of 7487 COVID concerns. As of 26 November, 5139 had been completed. 3998 of those resolved were dealt with by our Concerns and Advice Team, taking on average 3.35 days. The remaining 1141 completed cases were

investigated by regulatory inspectors and visiting officers, taking an average of 21.8 days to be closed out, meaning that all actions relating to the intervention had been completed. It is standard practice for the notifier to be contacted by HSE during the early stages of the investigation and again at its conclusion. HSE isn't able to provide details of the average period of time before initial contact is made because this data is not collected.

Notes:

(i) Investigations by inspectors and visiting officers are 'closed out' once all actions relating to the intervention are complete. This happens when HSE has evaluated the dutyholder's covid-secure control measures, taken any necessary enforcement action or provided advice, confirmed that sufficient action has been taken by the dutyholder to address any shortfalls and associated records completed on HSE's live operational database.

(ii) Figures were extracted from HSE's live operational database and provide the picture on the date of extraction (26 November 2020) and are subject to change.

## ■ Social Security Benefits

**Helen Hayes:** [120086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to section 96(A) of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, when she next plans to review the level of the benefit cap.

**Helen Hayes:** [120087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what research her Department (a) has conducted and (b) plans to conduct to understand the reasons for the increase from February to May 2020 in the number of households in London affected by the benefit cap.

**Helen Hayes:** [120088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households that claimed universal credit are due to see their grace period end in (a) November and (b) December and become subject to the benefit cap.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* i) Due to the early election taking place the levels of the cap were not reviewed in the last Parliament.

ii) DWP routinely collects data on capped households and publishes that information each quarter. The latest statistical release, published on 26 November 2020, shows the picture in August 2020 and includes household characteristics together with regional breakdowns supported by a narrative that provides insight into the data drivers. The latest statistical release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-cap-number-of-households-capped-to-august-2020>



iii) Information relating to households who will be newly affected by the Benefit Cap in November and December at the end of their grace period is not readily available, and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: EU Countries

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[120139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had on social security co-ordination between the UK and EU member states after December 31st 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Under the Withdrawal Agreement, the existing EU regulations on social security coordination will continue to apply after 31 December 2020 for individuals in scope of the Agreement. This includes UK nationals living or working in the EU by that date.

Negotiations with the EU on social security coordination for individuals who are not in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement, such as UK nationals moving to the EU on or after 1 January 2021, are continuing.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[120133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps her Department has taken to improve the timeliness of initial payments for universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

Despite unprecedented strain on the system, payment timeliness remains high, with over 98% of all claims receiving their payment in full and on time for the assessment period covering 11 June to 9 July 2020 (last published data).

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[120134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the monthly assessment period for universal credit takes into account a claimant's fluctuating income.

**Will Quince:**

Unlike the legacy benefit system, Universal Credit takes income and earnings into account in a way that is fair and transparent. The amount of Universal Credit paid reflects, as closely as possible, the actual circumstances of a household for each monthly assessment period, including any income and/or earnings reported by the employer during that period.

Monthly reporting allows Universal Credit to be adjusted on a monthly basis, which ensures that if a claimant's income falls, which results in a rise in their Universal Credit award, they will not have to wait several months to receive it.

**■ Universal Credit: Cancer****Sir George Howarth:****[120800]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions her Department has had with (a) MacMillan Cancer Support and (b) other charities on retaining (i) remote ID verification, (ii) flexible assessments and (iii) other recently introduced measures to help universal credit support people living with cancer.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I refer the honourable Member to the answer I gave on 14 September 2020, in response to question [86019](#).

**■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus****Jon Trickett:****[121156]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on making the £20 a week uplift in universal credit permanent.

**Will Quince:**

The £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit was announced by the Chancellor as a temporary measure in March 2020 to support those facing the most financial disruption as a result of the public health emergency. This measure remains in place until April 2021. As the Government has done throughout this crisis, it will continue to assess how best to support low-income families, which is why we will look at the economic and health context in the new year.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Union Learning Fund

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[119247]**

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

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 26 November 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Gillian Keegan:**

The main impact COVID-19 has had on the economy and workforce has been a rise in unemployment. We need to help these people reskill where necessary and re-enter into employment. The Union Learning Fund operates mostly through larger employers within unionised parts of the economy and is not designed to help those out of work – only ~~44%~~**2%** of people supported via the Union Learning Fund are unemployed.

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

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

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION

#### ■ Update on the Lifetime Skills Guarantee

**The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):**

[\[HCWS616\]](#)

The Lifetime Skills Guarantee announced by the Prime Minister in September promises to help people across the country get the skills they need at every stage of their life as we build back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, the Prime Minister announced the expansion of Skills Bootcamps, which are currently available in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, and the Liverpool City Region. These flexible courses last approximately 12-16 weeks, and give participants the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

I am now pleased to announce that Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, the Heart of the South West, and the Leeds City Region have today opened course registrations ahead of beginning delivery in January. These bootcamps will expand to cover not only digital skills like software development, digital marketing, and data analytics but also technical skills training such as welding, engineering, and construction.

This is only the start for this innovative approach to adult training. I can confirm that we will invest £43m through the National Skills Fund to extend Skills Bootcamps further across the country in 2021 increasing the national coverage of this new offer and trailblazing new skills to support our labour market and develop this model further.

We will continue to build on our wider plans for adult skills and I will update the House on our progress in due course. In the meantime, we will continue to engage closely with stakeholders as we progress and develop detailed plans for the National Skills Fund.