



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 December 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 10 December 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Court of Appeal: Sentencing

Bob Blackman:

[\[910047\]](#)

What criteria she uses when referring sentences to the Court of Appeal.

Michael Ellis:

The Law Officers have the power to refer a sentence for review if it appears to us to be not just lenient, but unduly lenient. It is a power we exercise personally, based on our legal assessment of the facts and merits of each case. The court ultimately decide on the case, but we refer cases in the public interest where in our judgment they appear unduly lenient.

■ Crown Prosecution Service

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[910031\]](#)

What recent assessment she has made of the potential effect on the CPS of the UK leaving the EU (a) with and (b) without a deal.

Suella Braverman:

The CPS has worked with other prosecutors, law enforcement, the courts, and the Home Office to ensure that effective international cooperation with EU Member States on extradition, gathering of evidence and asset recovery can continue after the Transition Period.

Extensive preparation has taken place to prepare for the outcome of the negotiation and there are well-prepared and well-rehearsed plans in place – which include producing guidance and training for prosecutors. The CPS has also engaged extensively with EU counterparts in order to safeguard existing and new cases.

■ Legal Profession: Voluntary Work

Saqib Bhatti:

[\[910044\]](#)

What steps she has taken to support the pro bono community throughout the covid-19 outbreak.

Michael Ellis:

I am proud to be one of Government's Pro Bono Champions and show my support for the pro bono community.

I heard from members of my Pro Bono Committee in September about the impact of the pandemic on their services, and the resilience and flexibility they have shown in the face of such adversity.

This is not the first time the legal profession has stepped forward to help in a crisis, and I would like to put on record my gratitude to all those who have volunteered their time and expertise during this difficult time.

■ Rule of Law: Brexit

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[910058\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential effect of the end of the transition period on the rule of law.

Suella Braverman:

The Government has been working hard to ensure a smooth end to the transition period that gives effect to the referendum result. It will continue to work with the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee and final decisions are expected in the coming days.

The duty of the Law Officers is to ensure that the Government acts lawfully at all times. I take that responsibility seriously, and that will not change after the end of the transition period, regardless of whether we reach negotiate a deal with the EU.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Artificial Intelligence: Weaver Vale

Mike Amesbury: [\[126124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of locating the National Artificial Intelligence Centre At Sci-Tech, Daresbury in Weaver Vale constituency as part of the Government's levelling up policy.

Amanda Solloway:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has announced an ambitious modernisation of the Armed Forces supported by more than £24 billion over the next four years, including at least £6.6 billion for R&D.

This commitment includes a new agency for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to accelerate the research, development, testing, integration and deployment of world-leading AI and Autonomous Systems.

This investment will underpin the UK's enduring technical edge and status as a global science superpower. A decision has yet to been made about the agency's location.

Furthermore, the Government's unprecedented commitment at the last Budget to increase public investment in R&D to £22 billion by 2024 to 2025 will boost economic performance outside of London and the South East and level up across the country.

This investment builds on the achievements under the Industrial Strategy AI and Data Grand Challenge and the AI Sector Deal.

Some of the Government's key investments across the country includes:

- [16 new AI Centres for Doctoral Training](#) at universities across all four regions of the country, delivering 1,000 new PhDs over the next five years.
- New prestigious Turing AI Fellowships. This includes [15 new Acceleration Fellowships](#) to accelerate the careers of our brightest AI researchers with the potential to be world-leaders in the next 5 years.
- Up to 2,500 places for AI and data science conversion courses starting this year. This includes up to 1,000 government-funded scholarships for students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Funded up to £50 million for five new AI Centres of Excellence for digital pathology and imaging, including radiology, using AI medical advances. Three recently received [a £50 million funding boost](#) to scale up work to support the long-term response to COVID-19.

Founding The Alan Turing Institute as the UK's national institute for data science and AI. Thirteen of the UK's best universities make up the Turing's core partners.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Jamie Stone:

[\[126193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that employers are maintaining a duty of care when deciding which of their employees to put on furlough during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

In relation to mental health and preventing work-related stress, we would encourage employers to talk to their employees to identify issues that may impact on their wellbeing and to jointly agree steps to mitigate them.

Employers have a duty of care when considering how decisions can impact on their employees' health and wellbeing. Although placing employees on the CJRS remains a business decision, the Government has enabled employers to furlough staff in certain situations, such as the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

Jamie Stone:

[\[126196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that employers are not neglecting their duty of care and their responsibility to article 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998 when deciding which of their employees receive furlough during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is a comprehensive, flexible and generous package of support for businesses. Any use of the scheme is a business decision to be made by employers.

Should businesses make use of the CJRS – or indeed choose not to use it – employees retain all their usual employment rights, including protection against discrimination of any form. All employers must honour all their legal obligations, and

the Government will continue to use normal channels to ensure laws such as the Human Rights Act 1998 are respected.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [\[126197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to prevent the closure of businesses in the hospitality industry as a result of the covid-19 tiered system of restrictions.

Paul Scully:

We are engaging regularly with the hospitality industry to understand their concerns and to help them through this difficult time. The Government has provided an unprecedented package of support for businesses in the hospitality sector. Measures include the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until March 2021, grant and loan schemes, the ability for businesses to defer VAT payments, and business rates holidays.

■ Imports: Carbon Emissions

Sir Mike Penning: [\[125964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has in place to report carbon emissions embedded in imports when reporting UK carbon emissions statistics.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK follows the agreed international approach for estimating and reporting greenhouse gas emissions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, which is for countries to report the emissions produced within their territories.

The Climate Change Act defines UK emissions as being those of greenhouse gases from sources within the UK, consistent with international reporting practice.

There is no internationally agreed approach to measuring consumption emissions. Estimates of imported emissions in particular are associated with greater levels of uncertainty than estimates of UK-based territorial emissions. These emissions do not, therefore, include emissions from the manufacture of goods imported into the UK, which are reported in the country of manufacture, as this would risk double counting. Accounting for emissions produced within each country's own border in line with international accounting standards, therefore allows for direct comparison of the UK's emissions with other countries.

Nevertheless, the UK is at the forefront of measuring consumption emissions with statistics published annually and policies developed to reduce emissions. Emissions on a consumption basis (i.e. including emissions embedded in imports) fell by 21 per cent between 2007 and 2017, and by 3 per cent between 2016 and 2017.

■ Medicine: Research**Neale Hanvey:** [\[122900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what funding he has allocated to support charity-funded medical research.

Amanda Solloway:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Central Ayrshire on 1st December 2020 to Question [121276](#).

■ Wind Power**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[126049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support deployment of infrastructure at ports to facilitate an increase in offshore wind capacity.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently announced on £160 million of new funding towards investment to upgrade ports and infrastructure, to ensure UK ports have the necessary facilities and capabilities to meet the future needs of offshore wind developers.

The expected rapid deployment of offshore wind across the UK, Europe and globally over the next decade, together with the increasing size of turbines, means that there is a need for a major expansion in manufacturing capacity in the coming years.

The 'Offshore wind manufacturing investment support scheme' aims to accelerate the development of large-scale manufacturing portside hubs, which could see financial support to strengthen the UK's offshore wind manufacturing capability, creating employment and investment in both coastal communities and the wider supply chain.

Following the Request for Information in October 2020, the Department has now launched a formal competitive process on a single large coastal manufacturing site for the offshore wind industry. This would generate manufacturing clusters where several large-scale producers can co-locate.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Brexit: Publicity****Emily Thornberry:** [\[124147\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding his Department has allocated for advertising on digital channels as part of the information campaign on preparations for the end of the transition period, launched on 13 July 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[124148\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding his Department has allocated for radio advertising as part of the information campaign on preparations for the end of the transition period, launched on 13 July 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[124149\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding his Department has allocated for TV advertising as part of the information campaign on preparations for the end of the transition period, launched on 13 July 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[124150\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much funding his Department has allocated for advertising in print media as part of the information campaign on preparations for the end of the transition period, launched on 13 July 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to PQs [121394](#) and [33512](#).

■ Civil Servants: Pensions

Grahame Morris: [\[125986\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to ensure that legal action will not be taken against the pensioners affected by inaccurate payments by civil service pension scheme administrator MyCSP in cases identified by the Internal Control Framework Review.

Grahame Morris: [\[125987\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the monetary value is of the underpaid pensions by civil service pension scheme administrator MyCSP in cases identified by the Internal Control Framework Review.

Grahame Morris: [\[125988\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to overpaid pensions by civil service pension scheme administrator MyCSP in cases identified by the Internal Control Framework Review, what assessment has been made as to the (a) sums involved, and (b) cost-effectiveness of recovering those sums.

Grahame Morris: [\[125989\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to overpaid pensions by civil service pension scheme administrator MyCSP in cases identified by the Internal Control Framework Review, how much has been paid in compensation awards to affected pensioners through Internal Dispute Resolution to date.

Julia Lopez:

Pension schemes are only allowed to make payments that are “authorised payments” (those payments that members are legitimately entitled to under the scheme).

Any other payments made from the scheme that are not 'authorised' are referred to as 'unauthorised payments' and are potentially subject to unauthorised payment tax charges of up to 55% for members and the scheme. In most cases, overpayments would be considered unauthorised payments if not recovered.

Any potential recovery is carefully considered, including the cost effectiveness of doing so (e.g. the relative costs of recovering very small amounts). Members have the opportunity to submit evidence should they believe that either recovery should not take place or where they might require a longer repayment plan. Members overpaid and identified by the Internal Controls Framework Review (ICFR) were treated in the same way as other members where overpayments had occurred as part of business as usual.

We do not have a separate record for the total value of pension underpayments under the ICFR as these formed the majority of the rectifications needed, and members received topped up pensions accordingly as part of business as usual activities, rather than as part of a separate project to recover any amounts due.

To date £20,610 has been paid in compensation awards through the Internal Dispute Resolution process to pensioners affected by overpayments identified during the ICFR.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[126044\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Government will issue guidance to the general public on the implementation of covid-19 restrictions for the 2020-21 New Year period.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK Government continues to make every effort to communicate any policy changes as clearly and simply as possible to the public via our public information campaign. All updated guidance is published on gov.uk. Other guidance is produced by the devolved administrations.

Once the five-day Christmas window ends, normal rules on social contact in each tier or region will apply.

■ **Redundancy: Statistics**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[124330\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to publish regular redundancy statistics that combine age and sex data.

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 PQ124330 [PQ124330.pdf]

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS**■ Church Commissioners: Land****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[125956\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, if he will place in the Library a digitised map of all Church Commissioner landholdings.

Andrew Selous:

The land holdings owned by the Church Commissioners have to a large extent been registered with the Land Registry, and information on those holdings is publicly available via the Land Registry.

To compile and publish a digitised map of all land holdings in the manner requested would incur a disproportionate cost to the Church Commissioners.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus****Conor McGinn:**[\[126065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78846 on Armed Forces: Coronavirus, what progress he has made on making an assessment of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of recruitment to the (a) regular and (b) reserve armed forces.

James Heapey:

The position remains unchanged from the answer I gave on 1 September 2020 to Question 78846 to the hon. Member for Portsmouth South (Mr Morgan).

■ Type 31 Frigates: Exports**John Healey:**[\[125941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many meetings Ministers in his Department have held with stakeholders on potential Type 31e exports in the last 12 months; and on what dates those meetings were held.

Jeremy Quin:

Ministry of Defence (MOD) Ministers have regular engagement with stakeholders across Government and with our industry partners concerning potential Arrowhead

140 (AH140) export opportunities. MOD and UKDSE continue to actively support UK industry in pursuit of AH140 export orders.

All Ministerial meetings with industry partners are published on GOV.UK in quarterly transparency returns as part of the Government's commitment to publishing transparency information.

This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-with-external-organisations-in-the-ministry-of-defence>

■ War Widows: Pensions

Angela Crawley: [\[124242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress he has made on proposals for the reinstatement of war widows pensions for those who remarried; and when those proposals will be published.

Johnny Mercer:

The Government continues to examine alternative methods to see whether we can mitigate the impact to those survivors who had remarried or cohabited before the introduction of the 'Pensions for Life' changes in 2015. Much progress has been made and the issue remains a priority for the Ministry of Defence, though it remains very complex.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadband

Chi Onwurah: [\[126027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the remaining £3.8bn ringfenced for the UKs fibre rollout become available in the event that the sector demonstrates that rollout is progressing more quickly than is currently expected.

Matt Warman:

We remain committed to investing £5bn in bringing gigabit-capable coverage to the hardest to reach areas as part of our plans for nationwide coverage as soon as possible. We will continue to work closely with industry to develop our £5 billion programme and accelerate our delivery for these areas to bring forward additional spend, wherever possible.

■ Charities: Coronavirus

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[124795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what further funding will be made available to support small charities affected by the covid-19 outbreak, in addition to the £750 million announced in April 2020.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Small charities play an invaluable role in this country in providing public services and the government recognises the challenges and uncertainty that some small charities are dealing with, particularly those organisations that rely on trading or fundraised income

which have been hit by the covid-19 national restrictions.

The £750 million package will continue to support charities' and social enterprises' vital work in the fight against the coronavirus crisis over the winter period. In addition to this, an unprecedented package of measures across the economy has been set up to support people and businesses through this period of financial uncertainty. For example, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been, and continues to be a lifeline to a multitude of organisations, including charities. The Chancellor has announced that the government is extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until 31 March 2021 to support individuals and businesses who are impacted by disruption caused by COVID-19 this winter. More details on all of the business support measures and eligibility details are available on GOV.UK.

Government is continuing to work closely with the civil society sector to understand the ongoing impact of the crisis on small charities, and to consider what additional policy measures might be appropriate in the months ahead. This includes working with the Institute of Fundraising to publish guidance on how to fundraise safely as an important source of income for small charities. To support this work we have set up a cross government network to share intelligence on challenges facing critical organisations and sub-sectors.

■ Digital Technology**Chi Onwurah:**[\[126026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what metrics he uses to measure digital inclusion; and whether those metrics include targets.

Caroline Dinenage:

There are several sources that the government uses to measure digital inclusion. In August 2020 ONS published data stating that 96% of households in Great Britain had internet access, up from 93% in 2019 and from 57% in 2006. According to this dataset the number of adult non-users of the internet is now 2.7 million, down from 3.9 million in 2019. The 2019 Oxford Internet Survey also shows that internet use has stabilised at very close to 100 percent for almost everyone below the age of 50, and at over 90 percent for everyone with an income of at least £20,000 per year. The Lloyd's 2020 Consumer Digital Index tells us that 78% (an estimated 42.5 million) of the population have Essential Digital Skills for life.

We do not have targets for digital inclusion.

■ Football: Coronavirus**Kate Hollern:**[\[910135\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the effect of tier 3 covid-19 restrictions on Championship football.

Nigel Huddleston:

As well as the Government's unprecedented financial support for business, which many football clubs have accessed, we ensured that elite sport could continue throughout the November national restrictions, and in every covid tier going forward. Spectators at elite sport are also now permitted in Tiers 1 and 2 - a crucial step for sport's recovery.

I welcomed the deal agreed between the Premier League and EFL to provide up to £250m of support to EFL clubs, including the Championship - to ensure that no EFL club goes under due to the pandemic.

■ Internet: Safety**Alex Davies-Jones:**[\[124908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on online harms.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is firmly committed to making the UK the safest place to be online, and DCMS and the Home Office are working at pace to introduce this legislation. We will publish a Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year. This will include more detailed proposals on online harms regulation and will be released alongside interim voluntary codes on tackling online terrorist and child sexual exploitation and abuse content and activity. The Full Government Response will be followed by legislation, which will be ready next year.

■ Local Broadcasting: Radio**Karen Bradley:**[\[123591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to support community radio stations during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We have worked with Ofcom to release emergency funding, through the Community Radio Fund, to help community radio stations continue to provide programming and outreach projects for the communities they serve. A total of 112 awards have been made by Ofcom across two rounds.

We are continuing to liaise with stakeholders across the industry regarding ways in which the Government can support the ongoing sustainability of the community radio sector through Covid-19 and beyond.

■ Mass Media: Coronavirus

Steve McCabe:

[\[124657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to provide financial support to (a) smaller and (b) independent media organisations during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Small and independent media organisations provide a vital service - supplying information about local public affairs, holding decision-makers to account, and helping to ensure the healthy plurality of our media.

It has been a priority for the government to support such organisations during this crisis, including local newspapers and commercial and community radio. In terms of financial support, the government brought forward the zero-rating of VAT on e-newspapers to May 2020 and we have also brokered significant support from the transmission operator, Arqiva, for small local commercial radio stations. We have also made available a small grant scheme for commercial stations that do not use Arqiva's networks. In addition to these financial support measures, some media organisations have benefitted from government advertising campaigns, which is designed to deliver important messages to UK citizens on coronavirus. Over 100 independent newspaper titles are included in the partnership, and the majority of expenditure, 60%, is allocated to regional, local and BAME titles. Government messaging has also been delivered through a targeted partnership with small commercial and community radio stations serving BAME communities.

In addition, small and independent media organisations may have been able to receive support from wider government measures, such as the job-retention scheme which the Government has extended until the end of March 2021.

We continue to work closely with stakeholders from across the media landscape regarding the ways in which the Government can support them through the current crisis and beyond.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[126111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect on (a) industry, (b) jobs and (c) the economy in the event that stage 5 re-opening is not reached for live music performances by April 2021.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government recognises the importance of the live music sector to the UK economy and that it has been significantly affected by the impacts of Covid-19. No assessment is currently available regarding the potential effects of stage 5 reopening taking place after April 2021.

From 2 December, in Tier 1 and 2 areas, socially distanced indoor audiences are permitted provided capacity in a venue is maintained at maximum 50% capacity or 1000 people, whichever is lower. Outdoor events can take place in line with Covid secure guidance with a capacity limit of the lower of 50% or 4000 in Tier 1 and 50% or 2000 in Tier 2.

DCMS has established a Venues Steering Group and a sector-led sub-group on Outdoor Events and Festivals looking at how music venues and festivals can reopen with fuller audiences, in line with stage 5 of the Performing Arts roadmap.

The Government has always been clear that moving forward with the performing arts roadmap is dependent on the prevalence of COVID-19, and that the measures that are in place are to ensure the safety of the public.

We are committed to continue working with the live music sector to understand the challenges they face and to work towards reopening events with fuller audiences.

■ Performing Arts: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum:

[\[124884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential economic effect of the English covid-19 tiers system on the performing arts sector.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government fully recognises the disruptive impact that Coronavirus and restrictions has on the performing arts sector and how devastating it will be where events are cancelled.

That is why we have already extended the Job Retention Scheme until March, alongside the unprecedented £1.57bn Culture Recovery package which has already benefited thousands of organisations and the individuals supported by them.

The Government continues to work with the performing arts sector to assess the impact of the tiers and to develop proposals for how venues can open for fuller audiences when it is safe to do so.

■ Youth Investment Fund

Cat Smith:

[\[910137\]](#)

When he plans to allocate the £500 million Youth Investment Fund.

Matt Warman:

The £500 million Youth Investment Fund remains a manifesto commitment for transformative levelling up across the country over the course of the parliament.

£30 million of the fund was committed at the Spending Review as capital investment in youth services for 2021-22, which is on top of the £750 million charity funding package. This will provide an investment in new and refurbished spaces for young people, so they can access positive activities and support from youth workers.

Further details of the timetable for allocation will be announced in due course, following a review of youth funding.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Day Care

Stephen Morgan:

[\[124301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to provide economic support in response to the covid-19 outbreak to childcare settings (a) nationally, (b) in Hampshire and (c) Portsmouth South constituency.

Vicky Ford:

The government recognises the importance of supporting the early years sector financially during the COVID-19 outbreak. This is why we are continuing to fund local authorities for the autumn term 2020 at the same level as before the COVID-19 outbreak, giving all nurseries and childminders another term of secure income, regardless of how many children are attending childcare settings.

Additionally, the government has provided a package of support for individuals and businesses across all local authorities which providers of childcare can benefit from. This includes business rates relief and grants, and the extended Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. As private nurseries typically rely on private income for a significant proportion of their income, unlike most state-funded schools, they are able to access support to furlough their staff via the extended Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme (CJRS). The CJRS will remain open until March 2021.

Early years settings will continue to benefit from a planned £3.6 billion funding in the 2020/21 financial year to create free early education and childcare places. On 25 November 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced a further £44 million investment for the 2021/22 financial year, allowing local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers. This is inclusive of the Hampshire local authority and the Portsmouth South constituency. Further information on how this will be distributed will be made available as soon as possible.

We continue to work with the early years sector to understand how they can be best supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available for those returning to work now, and for all families who need it in the longer term. Local authorities are best placed to monitor and manage their local childcare market and have responsibility for ensuring sufficient childcare places.

■ Children: Protection

Jon Trickett:

[\[124129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many child protection referrals were made to Children's Services in each month of 2020.

Vicky Ford:

The monthly figures on the number of child protection referrals that were made to children's social care services in England, up to March 2020, are published in the 'Characteristics of children in need' statistical release: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need>.

The Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey collects fortnightly data from local authorities in England on the number of referrals made to children's social care services. The data for the full month is not collected.

The attached tables show the number of referrals to children's social care services, where the data is available for 2020.

Attachments:

1. 124129_table [124129_table_child_protection_referrals_2020.pdf]

■ Classroom Assistants: Pay**Lilian Greenwood:****[126005]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Answer of 7 September 2017 to Question 8320, on classroom assistants: average earnings, if he will provide the same salary data for (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Nick Gibb:

The attached table shows the average salary for all full-time general teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants and all teaching assistants in local authority maintained schools, academy schools and free schools in England, as at November each year.

Attachments:

1. 126005_table [126005_table_showing_average_salaries_for_teaching_assistants.xls]

■ Extended Services: Closures**Andrew Gwynne:****[125962]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of closures in the wraparound care sector due to financial unviability on the (a) learning and (b) development of children.

Vicky Ford:

The department does not hold a central register of all wraparound provision or routinely collect data on closures of providers. The department does not, therefore, have a recent assessment of the effect of closures on the learning and development of children.

However, we recognise that before and after-school provision plays an important role in providing enriching activities for children and promoting their wellbeing, as well as being an important source of additional childcare for working parents and carers. That is why we have sought exemptions for this sector in The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 to ensure that

wraparound childcare is able to remain open at all tiers, and that parents can continue to access this provision for their children as normal. We have published further updated guidance for providers who run before and after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings for children on the protective measures that should be in place to ensure they are operating as safely as possible. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

We have also been encouraging schools to resume their breakfast and after-school club provision, where possible, since the start of the autumn term. As part of our guidance to schools on full opening, we have provided them with guidance to support them in reopening this valuable provision. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#wraparound-provision-and-extra-curricular-activity>.

In addition, our REACT teams, comprising education and social care staff from both the Department for Education and Ofsted, are working closely with local authorities and will act as a valuable source of intelligence on the sufficiency of wraparound childcare places in local areas. We have also been in close communication with several wraparound providers since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak and we will continue this communication over the coming months.

■ Foster Care

Martyn Day:

[\[124261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the remit of the proposed review of foster care legislation to include foster carer's employment status.

Vicky Ford:

'Foster Care in England', the 2017 independent review of foster care, was clear that the current legislative framework is fit for purpose:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foster-care-in-england>. The reviewers did not recommend a change to the current employment status of foster carers. Their assessment was consistent with that of the Education Select Committee in determining that whilst there could be improvement in the respect and value shown to foster carers, in recognition of the invaluable role they play in Children's Social Care and the lives of some of our most vulnerable children, this would not necessarily be achieved by becoming employees of fostering agencies:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/340/340.pdf>. As a result, we have no immediate intention to revise the foster care legislation to that effect.

In our response, 'Foster Better Outcomes' (2018), we committed to considering where changes could be made to the statutory guidance to strengthen and clarify issues around support for foster carers and to assess whether the National Minimum Standards for Foster Care should be replaced by Quality Standards:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-better-outcomes>. We are committed to undertaking this work and will engage fully with the sector when we do so.

■ Free School Meals

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[126070]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to provide (a) financial and (b) teaching support for schools whose staff have to deliver free school meals to individual students' families; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of reintroducing the free school meals voucher scheme.

Vicky Ford:

Now that schools and their kitchens are open, the provision of healthy, nutritious meal options for all children who are in school has resumed. Meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils, and pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria.

Schools should work with their existing suppliers to support eligible pupils who need to be at home due to self-isolation through the provision of food parcels. The guidance advises schools on what to do, and provides information on best practice. This includes details on what makes a good food parcel, as well as recommendations for weekly deliveries, rather than daily ones, to reduce time pressures. Further information on this guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>.

Building on the significant support given to the most vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has also announced a new £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, which will be run by local authorities in England. Funding has already been distributed and will be ring-fenced, with at least 80% earmarked to assist with food and utility bills. This will cover the period up to the end of March 2021.

■ Free School Meals: Dudley North

Marco Longhi:

[124325]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Free School Meal vouchers have been issued to parents in Dudley North constituency during the covid-19 outbreak; and how many of those vouchers have been redeemed.

Vicky Ford:

Our supplier Edenred reported that over £380 million worth of voucher codes had been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and families through the scheme, as of 19 August 2020. This funding was in addition to existing free school meal budgets.

The number and proportion of students who qualify for free school meals is published in the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' publication and its underlying data files. The 2019 publication is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>. We do not collect data at constituency level.

■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[124693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference the National Audit Office report, Investigation into free school meal voucher scheme, published 2 December, if he will utilise the provision in Edenred's contract to deliver the free school meal voucher scheme to access the information about (a) Edenred's income and (b) cost relating to the Scheme.

Vicky Ford:

The department made an award of a contract to Edenred pursuant to Regulation 32(2)(c) Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to provide extremely urgent deliverables as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The contract was let as a direct award using the terms of an existing Crown Commercial Service framework.

The department are using the open book arrangement in this contract to request information from Edenred about costs relating to the scheme. The department does not comment on the commercial arrangements of third parties but can confirm that we only paid for the face value of goods delivered, which in this case is vouchers.

■ Languages: Pre-school Education

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[124743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the development of language skills in early education.

Vicky Ford:

Since 2018, we have committed more than £60 million to programmes to improve early language and literacy. Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are spending up to £9 million of the National Tutoring Programme fund during the 2020/21 academic year on the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), a robustly evidenced programme proven to improve oral language skills.

The recent Spending Review has confirmed that the department will fund further expansion of an evidence-based reception year early language programme (such as NELI) during the 2021/22 academic year.

Furthermore, over 3,000 early adopter schools are implementing the reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) from September 2020, ahead of statutory roll out in September 2021. One of the main aims of the revised framework is to improve early years outcomes for all children, particularly disadvantaged children in the critical areas that build the foundation for later success, such as language development.

As part of the reforms, we have revised the educational programmes to strengthen teaching practice in communication and language, providing a deeper focus on building vocabulary to address the word gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Further information on the early adopter EYFS framework can be accessed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896810/EYFS_Early_Adopter_Framework.pdf.

■ Music: Education

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[126110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the new National Plan for Music Education.

Nick Gibb:

To gather views on how the National Plan for Music Education could be refreshed and strengthened, the Department launched a Call for Evidence on 9 February 2020, which then closed on 13 March 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, analysis of the Call for Evidence and the refresh of the National Plan is currently on hold. The results of the Call for Evidence, the Department's response to it, and the refreshed Plan will be published in due course.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [\[124266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer to Question 118555 on 25 November 2020 on Pre-school Education: Government Assistance, what estimate his Department has made of the average hourly rate paid to early years providers by local authorities; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Spending Review 2020 on that average hourly rate from April 2021.

Vicky Ford:

At the Spending Review 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £44 million investment for the 2021-22 financial year, to enable local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2020-documents>.

Further details and information on how this will be distributed will be made available as soon as possible.

Local authorities are responsible for setting the funding rates for their childcare providers. Local authorities normally submit this information to the department through the Section 251 financial return. These returns are published. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Section 251 budget return for the 2020-21 financial year was cancelled. Therefore, we do not have the data for this year.

The most recent Section 251 data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planned-la-and-school-expenditure-2019-to-2020-financial-year>.

■ Pre-school Education: Staff

Tulip Siddiq: **[126086]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2020 to Question 123657, how his Department calculated the financial effect of the minimum wage rise announced in the Spending Review 2020 on early years providers.

Vicky Ford:

I refer the hon. Member for Hampstead and Kilburn to the answer I gave on 7 December 2020 to Question [123656](#).

■ Pupils: Sanitary Protection

Tulip Siddiq: **[124813]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to (a) publicise the Period Products Scheme and (b) increase school participation in that scheme.

Vicky Ford:

On 20 January 2020, the Department for Education launched a new scheme which makes free period products available for state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England.

This scheme is in place to ensure that no learner misses out on education due to their period. Schools and colleges should have period products available should learners need them. Schools may choose to order period products through this scheme or through an alternative route.

Our supplier phs Group reported in August that almost 40% of eligible organisations have placed orders for period products through this scheme, and we are continuing to monitor orders closely. The scheme remained in operation during partial school and college closures, and these organisations are still able to order a range of period products and distribute them to learners.

We continue to work with our delivery partner phs Group to encourage engagement with the scheme. We intend to publish positive stories from organisations that have benefitted from the scheme in order to promote it further.

■ Reading: Teaching Methods

Theresa Villiers: **[125959]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will cancel phonics tests in 2021 in England in response to the pressures resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Getting the fundamentals right at an early age is vital for success at secondary school and in later life. It is important, therefore, to gauge standards at an early but appropriate age, identify those pupils who need extra help, and then ensure they receive it. Once pupils can decode, using consistent synthetic phonics, they are able to focus on their wider reading skills and develop a love of reading.

The phonics screening check is considered essential to support the Department's wider aim to help address any lost time in education during the COVID-19 outbreak. It is a short, light-touch assessment, to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an expected standard. The aim is simply to identify the pupil's decoding ability, so that those who need help can be identified and supported by the school.

The Department is enabling a more flexible approach in schools in 2021, accommodating those absent on the scheduled date for the phonics screening check by extending the existing timetable variation window by a further week, until 25 June 2021.

■ Social Mobility: Coronavirus**Stephen Morgan:**[\[124302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Sutton Trust's report, Covid-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #4: Early Years; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

Levelling up outcomes for disadvantaged children is a priority for the government, and the Sutton Trust report rightly highlights that the early years of a child's education are crucial.

That is why the government has prioritised getting children back into nurseries as quickly as possible, where they can be fully supported during this crucial period for their development. Since 1 June 2020, early years settings have been able to welcome back children of all ages.

We are continuing to provide extra security to nurseries and childminders that are open. We will do this by paying local authorities for the autumn term for childcare places at the level we would have funded before the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of how many children are attending.

Children in reception year, who may have missed time in formal early education settings at the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, will benefit from the government's £650 million catch up premium for schools, to ensure they have the support they need to make up for lost teaching time. Additionally, up to £9 million of the National Tutoring Programme fund will go towards improving the language skills of reception age children who need it most. We are working with the Education Endowment Foundation to make training and resources for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention available at no cost to schools that would particularly benefit.

■ Students: Coronavirus**Stephen Morgan:****[124296]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to stagger the return of university students to campuses following the Christmas period in order to limit exposure to covid-19.

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 in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

The government is committed to prioritising education and want to enable all students who have travelled home for the winter break to return to their universities and resume blended learning. On 2 December, we published guidance on students returning to HE for the spring term in 2021, which sets out our plans for staggering the return of students over a 5-week period:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

Practical and placement students should return first, in line with their planned start dates, from 4 January to week commencing 18 January 2021. Students on all remaining courses should be offered online learning from the beginning of term so they can continue their studies at home, and should be asked to return to their university over a 2-week period from 25 January.

Stephen Morgan:**[124297]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support university students through covid-19 quarantine periods on their return to campuses following the Christmas holidays.

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 in this unprecedented situation, whilst mitigating the impact on education.

On 2 December, we published guidance on students returning to HE for the spring term in 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/students-returning-to-higher-education-from-spring-term>.

HE providers are autonomous institutions, independent from government, and have a responsibility to students when delivering services, including the provision of pastoral support, and taking steps to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of students. It is vitally important that this support is in place, particularly for self-isolating students.

I have previously written to Vice Chancellors, asking them to ensure that self-isolating students have a range of choices available for access to food and other essential supplies. This includes providing food to those that need it and facilitating deliveries that will not require students to leave the accommodation where they are self-isolating. We expect this support to continue in the spring term.

Many HE providers have already bolstered their existing mental health services and adapted delivery mechanisms, including reaching out to students who may be more vulnerable. Staff at universities and colleges have responded quickly to the need to transform mental health and wellbeing services, showing resourcefulness, and there are many examples of good practice.

To support with this important work, we have worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that HE providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for the academic year 2020-21 starting from August, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support. We have also confirmed that Student Space, which bridges any gaps in mental health support for students arising from this unprecedented situation, has been extended to cover the 2020-21 academic year. The Student Space website is available here: <https://studentspace.org.uk/>.

Furthermore, we will be making available up to £20 million on a one-off basis to support those that need it most, particularly disadvantaged students. Further detail will be set out in due course.

Wes Streeting:

[126077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's announcement of 3 December 2020, what the terms of reference are for the expert group set up to look at differential learning and monitor the variation in the impact of the pandemic on students across the country.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises the challenges faced by schools, teachers and students, and knows that disruption has been felt differently across the country as well as between schools and colleges in the same area and between students within individual institutions.

In addition to a package of measures announced to ensure that exams are delivered fairly next summer, the Department confirmed the launch of an expert group to consider the differential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on students and to recommend mitigations for these impacts. We are working to finalise the terms of reference and membership of the group and additional details will be provided shortly: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-support-the-summer-2021-exams>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Cats: Tagging****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[126140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of microchips in cats (a) failed, (b) migrated and (c) resulted in an adverse reaction in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

It is a requirement of the Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 to report adverse reactions to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). Adverse reactions include microchip migration and any negative health reaction the veterinarian considers to be adverse. Although there is currently no legal obligation to report adverse reactions following microchipping of cats, the VMD encourages the reporting of these events. The Government will be issuing a public consultation on compulsory cat microchipping shortly.

According to the Pet Food Manufacturers Association's (PFMA) Pet Population report, and the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals' (PDSA) Animal Wellbeing report, there are currently between 7.5 and 10.9 million cats owned as pets in the UK. The PDSA Animal Wellbeing report indicates that of those, it is thought that approximately 74% are microchipped. In 2019, voluntary adverse reaction data shows that 136 cats were recorded as having an adverse reaction. Of that figure, (a) 112 had failed, (b) 14 had migrated and (c) 10 had reacted.

■ Pest Control: Animal Welfare**Theresa Villiers:**[\[125958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of restricting the use of glue traps as a means of pest control to improve animal welfare.

Rebecca Pow:

We are aware of the concerns around the use of glue traps and are engaging with key stakeholders about the issue.

This Government remains committed to high standards of animal welfare. We are in the process of developing a range of important animal welfare and animal-related measures to strengthen our position as a world leader in this field. This includes delivering our manifesto commitments to introduce new laws on animal sentience, to ban live exports, restrict the imports of trophies from endangered species and ban keeping primates as pets.

■ Pet Travel Scheme: Cats**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[126137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to strengthen welfare requirements for cats entering the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme following the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

This Government is committed to high standards of animal welfare. We are working to deliver a number of manifesto commitments that will strengthen our position as a world leader in this field at the end of the Transition Period.

The end of the Transition Period will present new opportunities for managing our own Pet Travel rules and welfare arrangements. We want to ensure that there are robust controls on disease and animal welfare whilst allowing pet owners to continue to be able to travel to and from the EU with the minimum of disruption.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[126138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he is taking steps to ensure that cats entering the UK will be treated for ticks and tapeworm as a requirement of any Pet Travel Scheme following the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has no immediate plans to amend the tick or tapeworm controls for cats entering the UK. However, the end of the transition period will open up new opportunities for managing our own Pet Travel rules. We remain aware of the concerns around ticks, tick-borne disease and tapeworm. Our future policy will be guided by risk assessments and we have commissioned assessments to understand the risks posed by tapeworms, as well as ticks and tick-borne disease. Defra also continues to monitor the disease situation around ticks through the Tick Surveillance Scheme.

Tick surveillance has shown that tick distribution and abundance is changing throughout the UK for many reasons, including habitat and climate change. Small numbers of localised infestations with non-native tick species have been reported in recent years. For these reasons, Defra strongly encourages pet owners to treat their pets to safeguard their animals against ticks and tick transmitted diseases when travelling abroad. Further advice can be obtained from their local vet, and via the Public Health England leaflet available on GOV.UK.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[126139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many cats entered the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme in 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

In 2019 31,890 cats entered the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme.

The data regarding the Pet Travel Scheme covers pets entering Great Britain and is based on information provided by checkers employed by approved carriers of pet animals.

The information that we have provided is a true reflection of the information that we have access to. We can't guarantee the accuracy of this data, as we can only rely on the information that has been provided by a third party.

■ **Pets: Animal Welfare**

Andrew Gwynne:

[125961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of financial support available for the companion animal welfare sector in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

The welfare of companion animals remains a priority for Defra throughout the coronavirus pandemic. My department continues to work closely with the companion animal welfare sector to understand the concerns of the sector and address how organisations that work with companion animals have been affected by Covid-19.

The Government has announced various measures to help businesses and charities cope in these strained times whilst remaining completely focussed on managing and eradicating the virus. Organisations can apply for the full range of COVID-19 support measures that the government has made available:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support.

There has been a change to the eligibility criteria for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). The CBILS requirement for a small to medium-size enterprise to generate more than 50% of its income from trading has been removed for registered charities.

The Charity Commission has also issued comprehensive guidance on running a charity during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Details can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector. This includes advice for Trustees on managing financial difficulties with respect to use of reserves, restricted funds and provisions to help businesses continue operating and avoid insolvency during this period of economic uncertainty.

In addition to this, we have worked closely with the sector through the Canine and Feline Sector Group and National Equine Welfare Council to agree and update guidance to animal rescue and rehoming organisations, and other animal charities and businesses. This has enabled them to undertake core operations as far as possible, whilst maintaining compliance with the social distancing rules and need for hygiene precautions to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Defra remains committed to continued engagement with the sector to understand the longer-term impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, monitor the animal welfare implications of this and offer appropriate advice.

■ Sheep Worrying: Prosecutions**Tim Loughton:**[\[125932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many prosecutions there have been of dog owners for sheep worrying in each of the last five years.

Victoria Prentis:

My Department takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising both the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications.

According to the National Sheep Association's annual survey 94.85% of respondents had experienced sheep worrying by dogs on their farm, and SheepWatch UK estimate that 15,000 sheep are killed each year in dog worrying incidents.

Data on prosecutions relating to the offence of livestock worrying (which includes sheep worrying) are consolidated in the Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly (England and Wales) under the broader category 'other offences related to dogs'. We do not hold separate data on this.

■ Veterinary Services: Coronavirus**Conor McGinn:**[\[126069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on access to veterinary services.

Victoria Prentis:

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has published surveys about the impact of the restrictions. These show there was an initial impact on veterinary practices. They have, however, since been able to adapt and are now able to work nearer to full capacity. Changes include the introduction of procedures to protect the safety of staff and customers.

■ Waste Management: Business**Dawn Butler:**[\[125955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to encourage businesses to (a) improve the recyclability of their products including plastic aluminium laminates and (b) reduce waste sent to landfill.

Rebecca Pow:

In our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy we committed to review and consult on measures such as extended producer responsibility and standards for a number of products, starting with packaging.

In 2019 we consulted on proposals to reform the UK's current packaging producer responsibility system. Government's aim through this reform is to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging and increase the amount of

packaging that is recycled. Measures being considered to drive increased recycling through the reformed system include requiring producers to fund the full net costs of managing packaging once it becomes waste, setting higher recycling targets on producers and basing producer 'disposal' cost fees on the design and recyclability of packaging, making hard to recycle packaging more expensive to use.

We are taking new powers in the Environment Bill to enable us to introduce extended producer responsibility, as well as taking powers in the Bill on resource efficiency to enable government to set minimum standards for products, and to introduce requirements for improved labelling and consumer information focused on, for example, recyclability and recycled content.

We are also taking new powers in the Environment Bill to require waste collectors in England to collect a number of recyclable waste streams from households and businesses. We plan to undertake second consultations on extended producer responsibility for packaging and on consistency in recycling in 2021. Plastic aluminium laminated packaging will be in scope of each. Through achieving outcomes including improving resource efficiency and incentivising the recycling of packaging waste these proposals will contribute to reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

In addition, in October 2020 we introduced a statutory permit condition for landfill and incineration permit holders stating they must not accept waste paper, metal, plastic or glass that has been separately collected for the purpose of preparing for re-use or recycling, unless the waste results from the treatment of that material and landfill/incineration delivers the best environmental outcome, in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

■ Wines: Imports

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[126058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2020 to Question 109198, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals for the requisite (a) easements and (b) exemptions for wine imports; what quantities of imports those provisions are planned to apply to; and what the Government's timeframe is for bringing forward those proposals.

Victoria Prentis:

The legislation which postpones, to 1st July 2021, the introduction of wine certification for imports of EU wine to Great Britain, is being laid on 29th December 2020 and will come into effect at the end of the transition period. This is in addition to the previously legislated for easement allowing imports of wine to Great Britain from non-EU countries to continue using the EU VI-1 form.

A number of exemptions to these certification requirements were included in the legislation setting out the certification requirements, adopted under the EU Withdrawal Act. These exemptions included wine shipments that do not exceed one

hundred litres, small shipments of wine sent from one private individual to another and wine imported for trade fairs.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Andrea Leadsom: [\[910037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the death of Harry Dunn.

Nigel Adams:

Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have repeatedly raised this case with the US Administration and the UK will continue to press the US to ensure justice is done on behalf of Harry's family. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary are in regular contact on this issue.

■ Bahrain: Durham Constabulary

Layla Moran: [\[125301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether Durham Constabulary has received Government funding to implement training in Bahrain since that constabulary was founded.

James Cleverly:

Durham Constabulary has not received Government funding to implement training in Bahrain.

Layla Moran: [\[125302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the statement by Durham Constabulary on 11 July 2018, which Ministers approved the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment.

James Cleverly:

The Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment was approved by the then Minister for Security at the Home Office.

Layla Moran: [\[125303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the statement by Durham Constabulary on 11 July 2018, how much funding his Department has allocated to the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance training.

James Cleverly:

The published Overseas Security and Justice Assistance Human Rights Guidance is the practical tool that officials, and Ministers where appropriate, use to make decisions in order to ensure that our security and justice work meets our human rights obligations and values.

Layla Moran:

[\[125304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the statement by Durham Constabulary on 11 July 2018, whether the agreement his Department has with Durham Constabulary has changed since that statement.

James Cleverly:

Durham Constabulary does not have an agreement with FCDO to implement training in Bahrain.

■ **British Nationals Abroad: Repatriation**

Lisa Nandy:

[\[126020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK citizens stranded abroad as a result of the covid-19 pandemic have been returned to the UK on charter flights arranged by the Governments of other countries.

Nigel Adams:

As the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (FCDO) set out in its response to the Foreign Affairs Committee's Third Report (<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmfaaff/859/85902.htm>), we collaborated with other countries to ensure the return of more than 4,000 British travellers on their charter flights, and supported more than 8,000 of their nationals in return.

■ **Diplomatic Service: British Nationals Abroad**

Lisa Nandy:

[\[126017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to paragraph 30 of the Third Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Flying Home: The FCO's consular response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HC 643, what plans he has to establish a logging system to record the location and contact details of UK citizens abroad.

Nigel Adams:

As the FCDO set out in the response to the Third Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC), asking British nationals to log their location and contact details in advance of a crisis is ineffective. We agree with the FAC that British nationals may be more willing to share information proactively during times of crisis, when there is a service which HMG is offering, or might offer in future. The FCDO has therefore further developed the "express an interest in a flight" service on GOV.UK which we used in April and collected 14,000 registrations across 20 countries. It allows FCDO to create a form for British nationals to register relevant details and inform FCDO they need to travel home urgently. If needed, the form can now be published within three hours and can be configured for individual countries.

■ Diplomatic Service: Complaints**Lisa Nandy:** [\[126021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many complaints from the public his Department has received on consular support provided during the covid-19 pandemic.

Nigel Adams:

During the period March to November 2020, we received 144 complaints under our public complaints procedure regarding consular support provided, 92 of which were related to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the same period, we provided consular assistance in 22,924 cases and received 1,735 compliments.

■ Diplomatic Service: Telephones**Lisa Nandy:** [\[126018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Third Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Flying Home: The FCO's consular response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HC 643, what steps he has taken to ensure that answerphone messages of UK embassies abroad can be controlled centrally in times of crisis.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO has increased its capability to make emergency changes to telephone auto-attendants at UK missions abroad by training staff abroad to change the auto-attendant messages for their own mission in real time. By mid-December our Global Consular Contact Centres, which are open 24 hours, 365 days a year, will also have the capability to update auto-attendant messages remotely.

As a contingency the FCDO has also put in place revised commercial procedures with our telephony provider which enables the auto-attendant messages at all Posts overseas to be changed remotely by the provider within 5 days of a request. Under the previous arrangement it could take several weeks for updates to be made.

■ Durham Constabulary: Training**Layla Moran:** [\[125305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether Durham Constabulary has received Government funding to implement training abroad since that constabulary was founded.

James Cleverly:

Durham Constabulary has not received Government funding to implement training abroad.

■ Egypt: Detainees

Theresa Villiers:

[\[125957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Egyptian counterpart on the arrest of Karim Ennarah, Abdel Razek and Mohammed Basheer from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the release of Gasser Abdel Razek, Karim Ennarah and Mohamed Basheer. The UK was clear from the outset that we had serious concerns about their arrest and detention, concerns shared by likeminded international partners. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November, the first Foreign Minister to do so. We continue to take a close interest in this case. We continue to have regular discussions with the Government of Egypt on human rights issues, raising concerns where we have them.

■ Egypt: Human Rights

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[126165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK-Egypt Association Agreement announced on 5 December 2020, what steps he plans to take to work with Egypt on human rights.

James Cleverly:

Egypt remains a human rights priority country for the UK. It is no secret the UK wants to see more political progress and better protection of human rights in Egypt. This includes implementation of the rights guaranteed by Egypt's constitution. These rights and freedoms are essential for Egypt's long-term stability. We regularly raise our human rights concerns with the Egyptian authorities, both privately and in forums such as the UN Human Rights Council. A recent example was the Foreign Secretary's call with his Egyptian counterpart on 19 November.

■ International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

Mhairi Black:

[\[125258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his policy is on Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure people in developing countries have access to clean water.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has signed and ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which includes Article 11(1) on the right to a standard of living. The UK recognises that Article 11 implies rights to water and sanitation. The UK has gone further to work with other countries on water and sanitation related human rights. At the 2020 session of the UN Human Rights Council, held from 14 September to 7 October, the UK joined with other UN Member countries in adopting the latest

resolution on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation. This resolution was successfully adopted.

The FCDO is taking steps to ensure that people in developing countries have access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Since 2015, UK Aid funded programmes have reached over 60 million people with access to clean water or sanitation, and we continue to work in this area, not least in the context of the COVID-19 response and recovery.

■ Nagorno Karabakh: Political Prisoners

Bob Blackman:

[\[124726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to call for the release of Amin Musayev, Bayram Karimov and other political prisoners following the ceasefire between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Wendy Morton:

I spoke to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister on 13 November and the Armenian Foreign Minister on 30 November where I highlighted the importance of return of prisoners of war and reinforced support for the International Committee of the Red Cross as the primary mediator through which prisoner exchanges should take place. We continue to monitor the situation carefully.

■ Niger: Armed Forces

Chi Onwurah:

[\[126032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Government of Niger on reports that Niger's army has been responsible for the disappearance and execution of civilians.

James Duddridge:

The UK is committed to protecting human rights across the world, including in Niger and the rest of the Sahel. As one of the largest humanitarian donors in the Sahel and with our new deployment to the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali, we are prioritising the protection of civilians in this most fragile of regions.

We are deeply concerned about the discovery of mass graves in the Tillaberi region of Niger in September. The country's National Human Rights Commission has now published its report on the mass graves publicly. Last month I raised the issue with Niger's Minister for Foreign Affairs, calling on the Government to ensure the military court proceedings conclude and that the perpetrators are brought to justice. The UK will continue to call for the Government of Niger to take action on this issue.

■ Palestinians: Refugees

Afzal Khan:

[\[126127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on Palestinian refugees of the Government's decision to reduce Official Development Assistance.

James Cleverly:

FCDO is currently running a prioritisation exercise across all its programmes, to ensure that every pound we spend goes as far as possible and makes a world-leading difference. We are in the process of assessing the impact of this decision on the UK's aid expenditure.

The UK is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides protection and core services to Palestinian refugees across the region. We have consistently been a top donor to UNRWA, providing £51 million in 2020. In his statement to the House of Commons on 26 November, the Foreign Secretary stated that alleviating humanitarian crises will be a focus area for ODA.

■ Repatriation

Lisa Nandy:

[\[126019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish the (a) membership and (b) remit of his Department's Repatriation Taskforce.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Repatriation Taskforce was set up in June 2020 following the Government's initial repatriation response to build a strong and well-tested capability to move people in an emergency under a range of potential future scenarios. It is based in the FCDO's Consular Directorate and constitutes officials from the Consular Directorate working closely with experts from across Government, including the Department for Transport, Civil Aviation Authority, UK Border Force, the Ministry of Defence, the Department for Health and Social Care, and Public Health England, as well as liaising with the travel industry where appropriate.

The Taskforce monitors the global situation to assess where future repatriation need might arise, maintains operational readiness to ensure that the FCDO can respond quickly and flexibly if needed, mitigates risks - including by working with airlines and other stakeholders to support the restart of commercial flights in certain countries - and has strengthened the FCDO's long-term capability by refining how it would run future charter operations. This work will transition to our Crisis Management Department at the end of December.

■ Somaliland: Diplomatic Relations

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[124691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to develop and strengthen diplomatic relations with Somaliland.

James Duddridge:

The UK enjoys a warm and historic relationship with Somaliland and is the only Western donor with a permanent presence in Hargeisa. The UK does not recognise Somaliland as an independent state, but UK officials engage with the local authorities on an ongoing basis on a broad range of issues. The UK is committed to pursuing prosperity and security for people across East Africa; in Somaliland, we offer support in areas such as economic infrastructure, inclusive politics, humanitarian response, security and justice.

On my recent visit to Mogadishu, I underlined our hope that people in Somaliland should benefit from the World Bank support that is now available thanks to progress under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries debt relief process. I also encouraged President Farmajo to continue the dialogue and confidence building initiative begun in Djibouti earlier this year.

■ Sri Lanka: Cremation

Afzal Khan:

[\[126126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect on (a) Sri Lankan Muslims and (b) other faith communities of the Sri Lankan Government's decision to make cremation mandatory for covid-19 victims.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is concerned about the Government of Sri Lanka's decision to mandate cremations for all those affected by Covid-19, and recognises the particular impact this is having on Sri Lankan Muslims and other faith communities. The Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has raised concerns about this directly with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner. The UK's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka has also raised concerns about mandatory cremations with the Sri Lankan Government, most recently in November.

The UK has shared guidance with the Government of Sri Lanka on how burials can continue to operate in a safe format, within the WHO guidelines, to ensure all religious groups can practise their rites. We will continue to engage with the Government of Sri Lanka on this important issue.

■ Western Sahara: Human Rights

Alex Sobel: [\[126120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding he has provided to Saharawi human rights defenders in Western Sahara.

Alex Sobel: [\[126122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance the Government has provided to Western Saharan refugees in Algeria.

James Cleverly:

Support for human rights and human rights defenders is a priority around the world. The UK has provided support to displaced people in camps in the Tindouf region of Algeria via contributions to the EU's ECHO humanitarian fund, which provided €9 million in humanitarian funding in 2020. Our core contributions to the UN also help to support UN bodies in Tindouf.

Alex Sobel: [\[126121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the statement by Amnesty on 30 November 2020 in relation to human rights violations in Western Sahara; and what steps he is taking to ensure human rights are protected in that territory.

James Cleverly:

We take note of the statement by Amnesty International on 30 November 2020. We continue to stress the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, and to encourage the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, bearing in mind their relevant obligations under international law.

■ Western Sahara: Politics and Government

Alan Brown: [\[125267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to exclude Western Sahara from international treaties with Morocco.

James Cleverly:

The UK-Morocco Association Agreement, once in force, will apply in the same way as the EU-Morocco Association Agreement. It treats products originating in Western Sahara in the same way as the EU-Morocco Association Agreement, in line with the European Court of Justice's ruling on that issue and the subsequent amendment of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement. The UK is clear that the application of parts of the UK-Morocco Association Agreement to certain products originating in Western Sahara is without prejudice to our position on the status of Western Sahara, which we regard as undetermined.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Rehabilitation****Dan Jarvis:****[126040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to (a) increase the number of places and (b) reduce the waiting time for NHS funded drug and alcohol rehabilitation services.

Jo Churchill:

Local authorities are responsible for assessing local needs and commissioning drug and alcohol prevention, treatment and harm reduction services to meet these needs. Local authority spending through the public health grant will be maintained in the next financial year, meaning local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential frontline health services and this includes drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services. The Government will set out further significant action that it is taking to improve the population's health in the coming months.

National statistics on adult alcohol and drug treatment between April 2019 and March 2020 were published on 26 November 2020 and show that of the people starting treatment, 98% did so within three weeks of referral to treatment. These statistics are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/substance-misuse-treatment-for-adults-statistics-2019-to-2020/adult-substance-misuse-treatment-statistics-2019-to-2020-report>

The Second Phase of Dame Carol Black's independent review on drugs focuses on prevention, treatment services and recovery. The recommendations will be made available to ministers in due course and will feed into wider government work to tackle the serious harms caused by substance misuse, including through increasing access to services.

■ Breast Cancer: Health Services**Caroline Lucas:****[117222]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2020 to Question 102752 on Breast Cancer: Health Services, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of secondary breast cancer patients covered by the existing audit of breast cancer in older women.

Jo Churchill:

No estimate has been made.

■ Breast Cancer: Screening

Mike Kane:

[\[118532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to provide funding to breast centres to help (a) deliver improved timely care and (b) meet service demands due to breast imaging workforce shortages.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 25 November 2020]: Full details on funding allocations towards National Health Service workforce budgets in 2021-22 will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

The NHS is supporting breast screening services to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and to improve uptake so that cancers can be identified and treated earlier. Breast services are expected to benefit from the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to roll out Rapid Diagnostic Centres and the announcement in the Spending Review 2020 speech that ageing diagnostic machines will be replaced. Local health systems have been allocated additional funds to help manage the costs of COVID-19.

■ Care Homes

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[109367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide additional support to care homes to ensure that they are well prepared and supported in the event that they are required to accept discharged hospital patients during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: Building on the commitments of the Adult Social Care Winter Plan, we are working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the NHS to ensure everyone discharged from hospital to a care home has an up-to-date COVID-19 test result and anyone testing positive is discharged to a designated setting that meets a set of agreed standards to provide safe care for COVID-19 positive residents.

No care home provider will be required to admit a new or returning resident if they do not feel they can provide the appropriate care or isolation. The individual's local authority should secure alternative appropriate accommodation and care for the required isolation period if needed.

■ Cervical Cancer

Sarah Champion:

[\[119248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will take steps to support the World Health Organisation's strategy to eliminate cervical cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom supports the World Health Organization's global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer and continues to work towards increasing uptake rates for human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations. For instance, in response to a recommendation made by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the HPV vaccine programme was expanded in September 2019 from girls to also include boys of 12 to 13 years old. The vaccine protects men from HPV-related diseases, including certain cancers and also helps to reduce the overall number of HPV-associated cancers in women, such as cervical cancer. The National Health Service also runs a national cervical screening programme in England to assist in the early detection, diagnosis and treatment of cervical disease. In December 2019, HPV became the primary test for in this programme to effectively let women know their risk of developing cervical cancer.

■ Coronavirus: Drugs**Emily Thornberry:**[\[125218\]](#)

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 (f) levomepromazine and (g) paracetamol have been built up in the COVID-19 supportive medicines stockpile since the contracts to build up that stockpile were awarded.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 December 2020]: The Government holds stockpiles of medicines to cope with a range of scenarios, and robust contingency planning continues to ensure that the country is prepared for peaks of COVID-19 infections. The COVID-19 supportive medicines stockpile is a new stockpile and we are currently in the process of awarding contracts and taking and arranging for the delivery of supplies of medicines and therefore volumes have not been shared.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[91135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of covid-19 tests at drive through centres are (a) self administered and (b) swab-administered by a member of staff.

Helen Whately:

Of the 79 drive-through centres, or regional test sites, currently in operation, the information requested is as follows:

- Assisted – two;
- Self-administered – 19; and
- Hybrid – 58.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[91136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of tests from drive through centres are (a) self-administered and (b) administered by a member of staff.

Helen Whately:

Of the 79 drive-through centres, or regional test sites, currently in operation, the information requested is as follows:

- Assisted – two;
- Self-administered – 19; and
- Hybrid – 58.

■ Dental Services

Derek Twigg: [\[116395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 November 2020 to Question 99527, what information his Department holds on the number of dental appointments that have been cancelled since 1 April 2020 by (a) region and (b) local authority area.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 November 2020]: The Department does not hold data on the number of cancelled dental appointments.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[96904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients have accessed a dental hub in each month since March 2020.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not currently available. Data is collected on the number of courses of treatment delivered and unique patients seen but this information is not routinely collected by individual practice or urgent dental care centre.

All high street practices should now be open and delivering face to face care as needed. In addition, over 600 Urgent Dental Care centres (UDCs) remain open to ensure that any patient having difficulty in accessing urgent care through a high street practice can be treated.

■ Dentistry: Hampshire

Stephen Morgan: [\[124298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to support the (a) recruitment and (b) retention of dentists (i) nationally, (ii) in Hampshire and (iii) in Portsmouth South constituency; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The latest headcount data published by NHS Digital show that the total number of dentists actively delivering National Health Service services increased by 1,885 (8%) from 22,799 to 24,684 during the period 2010/11 to 2019/20.

NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England (HEE) have initiatives in place to tackle recruitment and retention issues of dentists across England. As part of this work, HEE is reviewing the opportunities for flexible dental training pathways that can better serve patients as well as improving retention nationally in the long-term.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for commissioning primary care dentistry to meet local need and are aware of geographic shortfalls that may lead to limited service provision, including in Portsmouth South. NHS England's Interim NHS People Plan commits to addressing shortages within the dental workforce. Action to deliver this will be set out in due course.

■ Earwax: Medical Treatments**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[117197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is taking to help ensure that the NHS tariff price for ear wax removal is affordable.

Edward Argar:

The national tariff is a set of prices and rules used by providers of National Health Service care and commissioners to deliver the most efficient, cost effective care to patients. To ensure tariffs are affordable, all NHS England and NHS Improvement prices are reviewed by stakeholders and clinicians to ensure that they are correct and relative to one another and that they reflect the differential amount of resource needed for different treatments or procedures. Their prices are set in reference to data sent from NHS trusts and then adjusted for efficiency and inflationary factors, and to fit within the envelope of funding available to nationally priced activity.

■ Food: Advertising**Bob Blackman:**[\[125228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of attaching sunset clauses to each proposal contained in the consultation for an online advertising ban for foods high in fat, salt or sugar.

Jo Churchill:

We carefully consider all views on our measures to reduce obesity and will continue to do so. This includes responses to the consultation on proposals to ban online adverts for foods high in fat, salt and sugar including suggestions to include time limits on specific policy proposals.

Bob Blackman: [\[125229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the proposed online advertising ban on foods high in fat, salt or sugar on the financial position of (a) small and (b) large businesses.

Bob Blackman: [\[125230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the proposed online advertising ban on foods high in fat, salt or sugar on the financial position of small business that rely on online advertising and social media engagement to generate business.

Bob Blackman: [\[125231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential economic effect on small and large businesses of the different proposals in the consultation on restricting the online advertising of foods high in fat, salt or sugar.

Bob Blackman: [\[125232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the economic effect on small businesses that rely on online advertising and social media engagement of the different proposals in the consultation on restricting the online advertising of foods high in fat, salt or sugar.

Jo Churchill:

We published an evidence note alongside the consultation on the proposal to introduce a total restriction of online advertising for products high in fat, salt and sugar. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/total-restriction-of-online-advertising-for-products-high-in-fat-sugar-and-salt-hfss/evidence-note>

This builds on the impact assessment that accompanied the 2019 consultation on further advertising restrictions on TV and online. This is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786554/advertising-consultation-impact-assessment.pdf

In the consultation we have asked a question on the impact of the proposals on small businesses and are engaging with industry to understand these in more detail to factor in the final policy decision. We will outline the detailed costs and benefits of the final policy in the response to the consultation early next year.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[125947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made international comparisons to provide the evidence base for each proposal set out in the consultation for an online advertising ban of foods high in fat, salt or sugar.

Jo Churchill:

We carefully consider all views on our measures to reduce obesity and will continue to do so. This includes responses to the consultation on proposals to ban online adverts for foods high in fat, salt and sugar including suggested comparisons with international examples.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[125948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether plans to introduce (a) advertising restrictions on foods high in fat, salt or sugar and (b) promotional restrictions on foods high in fat, salt or sugar will act as a barrier to new businesses entering the market.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[125950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the online advertising ban for foods high in fat, salt or sugar on new businesses entering the market.

Craig Whittaker: [\[126198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of proposed (a) advertising and (b) promotional restrictions on foods high in fat, salt or sugar on (i) international businesses entering the UK market and (ii) inward investment.

Jo Churchill:

'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives', published in July, sets out our intention to restrict the advertising and promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS).

An impact assessment was published alongside the 2019 consultation on further advertising restrictions on TV and online. This is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786554/advertising-consultation-impact-assessment.pdf

We published an evidence note alongside the consultation on the proposal to introduce a total restriction of online advertising for HFSS products. This builds on the impact assessment that accompanied the 2019 consultation. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/total-restriction-of-online-advertising-for-products-high-in-fat-sugar-and-salt-hfss/evidence-note>

A full public consultation and impact assessment has been carried out for the proposal to restrict the promotion of HFSS foods in stores. The Government's response to the consultation and the impact assessment will be published shortly.

■ Health Professions: Mental Health and Occupational Health

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[121168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department regularly (a) monitors and (b) measures levels and trends in (i) mental health and (b) occupational health and safety among NHS health workers.

Helen Whately:

Trends in mental health and occupational health and safety of National Health Service workers are shared through self-reported data in the annual NHS staff survey. The survey includes questions on health and wellbeing and safety culture.

More information on the survey is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1056/Home/NHS-Staff-Survey-2020/>

■ Health Services: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney: [\[122834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to provide support for people who are suffering potentially life-changing health conditions as a result of a lack of access to screening and routine appointments at the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 December 2020]: The National Health Service will continue to deliver non-COVID-19 services as far as possible, making full use of available capacity both in the NHS and in contracted independent hospitals. Hospitals are carrying out more than a million routine appointments and operations per week, with around three times the levels of elective patients admitted to hospital than in April. All screening programmes are operational and sending invitations for appointments, with priority given to those at highest risk. The backlog of people waiting for an appointment due to the disruption to screening services caused by the first wave of COVID-19 is steadily reducing.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Tulip Siddiq: [\[118553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an estimate of the cost of increasing the value of Healthy Start vouchers in line with inflation each year since 2009.

Edward Argar:

The increase in the value of the Healthy Start voucher from £3.10 to £4.25 in England is estimated to cost an extra £25.8 million in 2021/22. This cost estimate is based on current uptake of Healthy Start and may change, as Healthy Start is a demand-led scheme.

This will provide additional support to pregnant women and families on lower incomes to make healthy food choices.

■ **Hearing Impairment: Protective Clothing**

Ian Mearns:

[\[125991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to (a) provide transparent face coverings to front line service workers and (b) encourage workers required to wear a face covering, to wear something transparent, to help people who are deaf or rely on lip reading to communicate.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is guided by the scientific evidence emerging in this area. Separately, clear face masks are being piloted in some health and social care settings and the lessons will be taken on board for future policy.

If workers are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate, they have a reasonable excuse to not wear a face covering. Employers must undertake risk assessments to ensure their business addresses the risks of COVID-19, using Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy guidance to inform decisions and control measures including social distancing rules and screens, which is available on GOV.UK.

■ **Hospices: Coronavirus**

Alex Sobel:

[\[119368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to introduce regular asymptomatic testing for covid-19 for hospice staff.

Helen Whately:

Hospices across the country have played a vital role in the COVID-19 response, helping to provide more capacity for the National Health Service and continuing to provide care to those who need it. Regular asymptomatic testing on a weekly basis for clinical hospice staff was introduced from 4 December. Hospices are now able to order polymerase chain reaction tests through our online portal and we would encourage all hospices to do so. This is in addition to the existing testing available to all symptomatic health and care staff as a priority, including hospice staff.

■ **Hospital Beds**

Chris Grayling:

[\[125214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 December 2020 to Question 110065 on Hospital Beds; whether information in the Covid-19 Situation Operational Dashboards beds analysis contains data on bed occupancy; and in what form his Department holds data about bed occupancy in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 9 December 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement publish key data on bed occupancy, including daily and weekly COVID-19 admissions and bed occupancy.

Quarterly bed numbers and occupancy, including general and acute beds is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/>

Data collection on critical care bed numbers has been suspended during the response to COVID-19.

Weekly critical care bed availability and occupancy for winter 2020/21 is available at the following link:

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

Daily and weekly COVID-19 admissions and bed occupancy is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-hospital-activity/>

■ Hospitals: Birmingham**Matt Western:****[104155]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost was of the construction of the Nightingale Hospital Birmingham; how many patients it has admitted; and what plans he has for its use in the weeks ahead.

Edward Argar:

Information on the costs of the Nightingale hospital in Birmingham are not available because they are commercially confidential.

As at 8 December 2020, no patients have been admitted to the hospital because the additional capacity has not yet been required. However, the hospital remains on stand-by ready to play whatever role is needed in the months to come. Local clinical leaders are working to determine how this is done whilst considering the needs of all patients requiring National Health Service care.

■ Hospitals: Disease Control**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[124672]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that doors in hospitals can be opened without contact.

Mr Barry Sheerman:**[124673]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that taps in hospitals can be used without contact.

Edward Argar:

In England, the design and construction of all healthcare building projects in National Health Service organisations require input and approval from Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) teams, this includes taps and doors.

Guidance provided to the NHS on the infection control in building design is the Health Building Note 00-09: 'Infection control in the built environment'. This includes the consideration of hands-free operation of utilities including taps and other facilities including automatic doors and proximity sensors. The guidance states the importance of consulting the IPC team throughout a building or renovation project with their advice and recommendations being considered and documented.

Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination**Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[120073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to commit to achieving 90 per cent HPV vaccination coverage by 2030 as set out in the World Health Organisation's Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 30 November 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working closely with Public Health England and the Department to drive improvements in immunisation uptake and coverage in all routine childhood immunisations. The Department intends to publish a vaccination strategy in the near future to maintain and develop the United Kingdom's immunisation programme.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination is routinely administered in schools, with a target of 90% coverage for 13 to 14 year old females. Where full HPV coverage has not been attained in schools, HPV vaccination can be administered in general practice up to the age of 25 to support high levels of population coverage. A review of vaccination and immunisations in 2019 has led to reformed general practice contractual arrangements to support the delivery of vaccination activity to increase coverage. In addition, all practices are required to have a named vaccination lead, to support maximisation of uptake.

Influenza: South Northamptonshire**Andrea Leadsom:**[\[122685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason GP practices in the South Northamptonshire constituency were not given notice of the roll out of flu vaccinations for the 50-64 year old age group; and whether he has made an assessment of the effect on GP switchboards' service of the volume of patient calls as a result of that matter.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 December 2020]: The Annual Flu Letter Update published on 5 August outlined the Government's intention to extend the national flu programme to the 50-64 year old cohort with a proposed start date of November/December,

following the prioritisation of at risk groups. General practitioners (GPs) were provided guidance on ordering extra supplies of vaccine from the central stock in October, which has since been updated with information on the 50-64 year old cohort.

The announcement on 20 November to begin the free vaccination of those aged 50-64 years old from 1 December was also included in the Primary Care Bulletin. It has allowed GPs and pharmacies the necessary time to order vaccines from the central stock procured by the Department and organise appointments.

■ Medical Treatments

Adam Afriyie: [\[124152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the response of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to advice in HM Treasury Green Book, updated in 2018 in setting the discount rate it uses for costs and health effects taking into account that NICE has stated that any proposals for change should be subject to formal consultation.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 December 2020]: We have made no such assessment. The discount rates applied by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in its health technology assessments are specified in its methods guides. NICE is an independent body and is therefore responsible for its own methods and processes. NICE is currently carrying out a public consultation on the case for change to its methods, which is open until 18 December 2020.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[122638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 21 July 2020, on care home restrictions, ref 53161.

Edward Argar:

We are working rapidly to provide all hon. Members and external correspondents with accurate answers to their correspondence, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Rosie Cooper: [\[124696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 7 October 2020 on covid-19 testing for care workers, reference ZA53914.

Edward Argar:

We are working rapidly to provide all Members and external correspondents with accurate answers to their correspondence, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

■ **NHS 111: Coronavirus****Kate Osamor:**[\[102134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 96968, if he will place in the Library a copy of the internal online tool for guidance used by covid-19 call handlers.

Edward Argar:

The online tool used for COVID-19 guidance is publicly available at the following link:

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

NHS Digital continues to update this online tool in response to new scientific information, Government guidance and public health strategies. The changes made over time are available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/nhs-111-online-coronavirus-services>

■ **Nurses: Breast Cancer****Rosie Cooper:**[\[125966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of (a) primary and (b) secondary breast cancer patients with access to a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Jo Churchill:

Data on the proportion of primary and secondary breast cancer patients who have accessed a clinical nurse specialist is not available in the format requested.

■ **Public Health: Finance****Tim Loughton:**[\[125933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the maintenance of the public health grant in the Spending Review 2020, whether that maintenance is valued in (a) real or (b) cash terms.

Jo Churchill:

Local authority public health grant allocations for 2021-22 will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

Margaret Greenwood:[\[126061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 2 December 2020, Official report, column 330, that the Government is increasing the

public health grant in 2021, what the magnitude of the increase to the 2021-22 public health grant will represent in relation to the 2020-21 funding of £3.3 billion.

Jo Churchill:

Local authority spending through the public health grant will be maintained, meaning local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential frontline health services. Local authority public health grant allocations for 2021-22 will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

■ **Rare Diseases: Diagnosis**

Bob Blackman:

[\[124729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce diagnosis times for people living with rare diseases; and whether the Rare Disease Framework will include targets on earlier diagnosis.

Jo Churchill:

The Government recognises the importance of all patients being able to obtain a quick and accurate diagnosis. We plan to publish a new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework by the end of 2020 which identifies improving diagnostic times as a key priority. Measurable targets where possible are not included in the UK Rare Diseases Framework but will be included in the subsequent nation specific action plans.

Advances in genomics and the commitment to incorporate whole genome sequencing into routine healthcare by the NHS Genomic Medicine Service are helping early detection of rare diseases. The recently published Genome UK Strategy outlines the Government's vision to help people live longer, healthier lives using new genomic technologies to diagnose and treat rare diseases.

■ **Rare Diseases: Mental Health Services**

Bob Blackman:

[\[124727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Rare Disease Framework will include measures to help people with rare diseases to access psychological support.

Jo Churchill:

The Government plans to publish a new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework by the end of 2020. One of the underpinning strategic themes will be to ensure that the needs of rare disease patients are recognised in wider health and care services including mental health support. The appropriate steps to take to address these themes will be addressed in the nation specific action plans that will follow on from the Framework publication.

■ Surgery

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[124710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the £1 billion to tackle the elective surgery backlog announced in the Spending Review 2020, how that funding will be allocated.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[124711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the £1 billion announced in the Spending Review 2020 for tackling the elective surgery backlog, when that funding will be made available to NHS organisations; and whether that funding will be released (i) as a single block or (ii) via several smaller amounts at different times.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[124712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to use criteria relating to (a) clinical area, (b) geographical region, (c) population size or (d) other metrics to determine the allocation of the £1bn for tackling the elective surgery backlog.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[124713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether decisions on the allocation of the £1bn for tackling the elective surgery backlog will be made (a) centrally by Government Ministers, (b) by Executives at NHS England, (c) healthcare commissioners at local Clinical Commissioning Groups or (d) healthcare managers and practitioners at individual NHS providers.

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[124714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the £1bn for tackling the elective surgery backlog will be allocated (a) via block contracts or (b) through the NHS National Tariff payment system.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: We are working up detailed plans for making best use of the £1 billion funding to tackle the elective backlog and would expect to communicate the implications for National Health Service providers through NHS operational planning guidance in the usual way.

■ Varicose Veins: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon: [\[121253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when plans he has to make the cyanoacrylate glue treatment for varicose veins available on the NHS.

Edward Argar:

Clinical commissioning groups are responsible for commissioning the treatment of varicose veins.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has developed guidelines on varicose vein treatment generally and on the use of cyanoacrylate glue specifically. Within this framework they are supportive of the use of cyanoacrylate glue occlusion. Organisations commissioning and delivering services are expected to take the recommendations contained within NICE clinical guidelines into account when planning and delivering services.

HOME OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Stephen Doughty:

[\[910122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with social media and streaming platforms on the availability of violent gang and drug-related content to under 18s.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to delivering on the people's priorities by tackling violent crime. We are clear that internet companies must go further and faster to tackle illegal content online. It is already an offence to incite, assist or encourage violence online.

We are proactively working with law enforcement agencies and meeting with social media companies to address a full range of online harms (including serious violence, gang and drug content online), as part of our wider aims set out in the Online Harms White Paper. The full Government response to the Online Harms White Paper will be published shortly. This will set out our plans for a new legislative framework that will drive robust action to tackle the spread of illegal content online and to keep children safe.

The Government has invested significantly to tackle serious violence and county lines: £119million in 2020-21, including £20 million to tackle county lines drug dealing and £1.5million to fund the Social Media Hub, delivered by the Metropolitan Police Service. The Hub includes a dedicated team of police officers and staff to take action against harmful online material, focusing on investigative, disruption and enforcement work against online gang activity, as well as making referrals to social media companies so illegal and harmful content can be taken down.

■ A14: Speed Limits

Tom Hunt:

[\[123708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many fines for exceeding the speed limit have been issued between Junction 55 and Junction 57 of the A14 trunk road for each year from (a) 2010 to (b) 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued for speed limit offences. These data can be found in the 'Police Powers and Procedures, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales>

Detailed information on the location where the offence took place is not collected or held by the Home Office.

■ Asylum: Interviews

John Spellar: [\[126778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are waiting to be interviewed.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not publish information on how many asylum seekers are waiting to be interviewed as this does not form part of routinely published data.

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

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

■ Biometric Residence Permits

Patrick Grady: [\[125259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 01 December 2020 to Question 120888 on Biometric Residence Permits, how many paid appointments were offered from April to June 2020.

Patrick Grady: [\[125260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2020 to Question 120888 on Biometric Residence Permits, how the target of 56 per cent of appointments being offered for free was decided.

Patrick Grady: [\[125261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2020 to Question 120888 on Biometric Residence Permits, for what reason free appointments were not offered during June 2020 when the service restarted.

Patrick Grady: [\[125262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2020 to Question 120888 on Biometric Residence Permits, when she plans to

publish Sopra Steria Ltd's performance against KPI3 for the period from July 2020 onwards.

Kevin Foster:

The target of appointments being offered for free was decided as part of a contract change - a joint agreement with Sopra Steria Ltd on a metric that measured the number of free appointments in the system which augments the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) regime in place.

This metric is designed to ensure more than half of all appointments at core sites (Cardiff, Croydon, Belfast, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester) will be free to the customer. Details on the relevant performance indicators to measure appointment availability has been published and can be found in Schedule 7 of the UKVI Front End Services contract available here:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/ec5031ea-021e-471a-86cf-af540e8d8efa>

The performance of Sopra Steria Ltd on KPI 3 for the period of Quarter 2 (July – September 2020) is due to be published by the Cabinet Office as part of wider Government transparency in early 2021:

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

Following the suspension of UKVCAS due to COVID-19 lockdown measures, SSL began a phased reopening of the service in England on 1 June 2020 and from 22 June 2020 a phased reopening of sites in devolved administrations (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) where local conditions allowed. Both free and chargeable appointments were provided from these dates to customers. Customers who had appointments scheduled as of 27th March 2020 (when the service was suspended) were invited first to book and attend a UKVCAS appointment. As a result of customers having an appointment profile at the point of service suspension, customers' existing appointment profiles (free or chargeable) at the time of service suspension were honoured across all UKVCAS sites.

Appointment systems returned to pre-COVID-19 profiles at the point of booking for customers on 22 June 2020. Customers who submitted their online application to UKVI in June were invited to book a UKVCAS appointment from 21 July.

As set out in the answer to a previous question, UKVCAS service was suspended in April and May 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdown measures. In June 2020 the total number of appointments fulfilled across UKVCAS sites was 23,985 and of these 7,270 were paid for appointments.

■ **Deportation: Jamaica**

Claire Hanna:

[122923]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) cancel the deportation flight to Jamaica scheduled for 2 December 2020 to ensure that people on

board are protected from the risk of contracting covid-19 and (b) allow no further deportation flights until the Windrush Lessons Learned Review has been fully implemented.

Chris Philp:

No. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have continued to return and deport foreign offenders and other immigration offenders where flight routes have been available to us, both on scheduled flights and via the use of over thirty charter flights to countries including Albania, France, Germany, Ghana, Lithuania, Nigeria, Poland and Spain.

This flight has nothing to do with the Windrush Review or the wrongs that the Windrush Generation faced. Seeking to deport foreign murderers, rapists and other criminals (whether to Jamaica or elsewhere) is the only responsible course of action and this, and subsequent flights will not be suspended.

■ **Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[124809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to provide additional support to victims of domestic abuse.

Victoria Atkins:

Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime that this Government will not tolerate. People should not be living in fear in the place where they should feel safest – their home. That is why this Government has a wide-ranging and ambitious programme of work to tackle this crime.

Our landmark Domestic Abuse Bill will further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice. It will also strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies, and raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families

This year alongside the Domestic Abuse Bill we are providing £35 million to combat domestic abuse. This includes £3 million to support children affected by domestic abuse and £15 million for the development and pilot of integrated domestic abuse courts and perpetrator programmes.

Throughout the period of national measures introduced to slow the spread of COVID-19, we have taken strong steps to support victims and will continue to do so as we enter the tiered system.

These steps include £76 million of funding to support charities providing services to the vulnerable through the COVID-19 pandemic, including survivors of domestic abuse.

As well as funding specialist services, specific advice has been published on gov.uk for domestic abuse victims during COVID-19 directing them to a range of specialist organisations. The information also makes clear that stay at home orders do not apply where any victim needs to leave home to seek help if they are in danger of

domestic abuse. Additionally, In April, we launched a domestic abuse campaign, #YouAreNotAlone, to raise general awareness of domestic abuse during COVID-19 and signpost the support and advice available.

We are continuing to work closely with domestic abuse organisations, to assess ongoing trends and needs.

■ Immigrants: Sleeping Rough

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[125980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people who will be affected by the new Immigration Rules which make rough sleeping grounds for refusing or cancelling a person's permission to be in the UK.

Chris Philp:

The new Immigration Rules which make provision for the refusal or cancellation of permission to stay in the UK on the basis of rough sleeping will be used sparingly, and as a last resort where a person repeatedly engages in anti-social behaviour and refuses offers of support.

If we cancel a person's permission to stay in the UK, we will ask them to leave voluntarily with government support. Only if they refuse would we consider an enforced removal.

David Simmonds:

[\[126189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 November 2020 to Question 92027 on Immigration Rules: Sleeping Rough, when the Government plans to publish the guidance on the Immigration Rule changes published on 22 October 2020 which make rough sleeping grounds for refusing or cancelling a person's permission to be in the UK.

Chris Philp:

Guidance on the operation of the new rough sleeping rule is currently being finalised and will be made available on GOV.UK as soon as possible. Until then, we will not refuse or cancel a person's permission to stay in the UK on grounds of rough sleeping.

■ Immigration: Income

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[124344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the evidential basis for her Department's claim that the minimum income requirement encourages integration.

Chris Philp:

The purpose of the minimum income requirement, implemented in July 2012 along with other reforms of the family Immigration Rules, is to ensure family migrants are supported at a reasonable level so they do not become a burden on the taxpayer.

The Government is committed to promoting social cohesion, good relations and a sense of belonging for all members of society. The ability to participate in activities and organisations outside the home plays a part in this. The minimum income requirement is not the only factor that promotes the ability to participate but the level at which it is set can mean that one particular barrier is reduced.

The Supreme Court has endorsed our approach in setting an income requirement for family migration which prevents burdens on the taxpayer and promotes integration into our communities. In particular that it strikes a balance between the interests of those wishing to sponsor a partner from overseas and the community in general.

■ Internet: Safety

Fiona Bruce:

[\[123565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of level of risk of online harms for children including (a) child sexual abuse and (b) exposure to inappropriate sexual content on social media during the covid-19 pandemic.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government recognises that the measures required to tackle COVID-19 mean it is likely that more people are spending more time online, including children and vulnerable users.

The Internet Watch Foundation reported an increase of almost 50% in indecent images of children online over an eleven-week period during lockdown and that there were 8.8 million attempts by UK internet users to access child sexual abuse imagery during a one-month period during lockdown.

We have worked with technology companies, civil society and academia on online harms and amplifying messages to ensure online child users are protected. We have also worked across government and agencies to ensure that teachers and parents and carers have access to the support they need to help keep children safe online. This includes the launch at the start of national lockdown in March, of the NCA-CEOP Education team's #OnlineSafetyAtHome campaign, to reach those most at risk, as a result of which ThinkuKnow resources aimed at parents, carers and children have now been downloaded over half a million times.

Protecting children is at the heart of our Online Harms agenda, and wider government priorities. We expect companies to use a proportionate range of tools, including age assurance and age verification technologies, to prevent children accessing age-inappropriate content and to protect them from other harms.

Our proposals as part of the Online Harms framework sets out our plans to introduce world-leading legislation to tackle harmful content online and make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. This legislation will include a legal duty of care on online platforms, backed up by an independent regulator to hold them to account. This will make companies more responsible for their user's safety online, especially children.

■ Paul Cleeland**Damian Collins:**[\[125990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will allow the hon. Member for Folkestone and Hythe's constituent, Mr Paul Cleeland, to have access to her Department's files that have been placed with the Criminal Cases Review Commission relating to his conviction for the murder of Terry Clarke in 1972.

Kit Malthouse:

As stated in the answer provided to PQ 114151 on 18 November, a review of Home Office file holdings on this subject is ongoing. The Home Office will work with the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) to review any Home Office material the CCRC holds concerning Mr Cleeland.

■ Shukri Abdi**Apsana Begum:**[\[126154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of the actions of (a) the police, (b) other public bodies and (c) staff under her Department's remit in relation to the death of 12-year-old Shukri Abdi.

Kit Malthouse:

Shukri Abdi's death was a tragedy and our thoughts remain with her family and friends. An investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct into the actions of Greater Manchester Police found insufficient evidence to suggest that the force did not conduct a thorough investigation into Shukri's death and was satisfied that it was carried out in line with national and local policies and procedures. The coroner in the inquest into Shukri's death concluded that it was an accidental death. Consequently, there are no plans for an assessment of the type suggested by the Hon. Member.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Staff**Alex Cunningham:**[\[126025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the amount of additional office accommodation in square metres that will be required to provide a covid-19 secure workplace for UK Visas and Immigration staff to enable them to address the backlog of immigration documents.

Kevin Foster:

It is unclear which application route the Hon. Member is referring to.

If in relation to the issuing of Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), the Home Office works closely with the DVLA, which produces BRPs, and TNT/Fedex, which delivers them, to ensure service level agreements are met and performance is improved, through improved reconciliation reporting and clearer escalation processes.

More generally, we publish information on the proportion of applications processed within service standard, where a service standard applies, at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration/about-our-services> and have worked carefully, and at pace to use available resource to best effect to maintain service standards against the backdrop of the pandemic.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Stuart C McDonald: [\[126060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish a breakdown of how the £28.1 million committed to France as part of the bilateral agreement of 28 November 2020 to tackle migrant activity in the Channel will be spent; and to which French police forces funding will allocated.

Chris Philp:

We remain committed to tackling illegal migration with France and this is a joint effort. The funding recently agreed for £28.1m supports a range of activity including continued deployment of French reservists from the Gendarmerie and Police Nationale, technical equipment to improve detections of crossings; suitable alternative accommodation for migrants away from the immediate port and beach areas; and border security infrastructure and capabilities at priority ports in France. We are not intending to publish detailed information on the package agreed with the French Government, as it relates to sensitive operational activity.

■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review

Stephen Timms: [\[117165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 106891 on Windrush Lessons Learned Review, what plans she has to update Parliament after receiving the regular progress reports on the review and evaluation of the compliant environment.

Priti Patel:

The review and evaluation of the compliant environment will look at all the measures individually and then cumulatively, building on existing work.

There are six primary streams to the compliant environment – some of which only apply to England and Wales – which will be covered in our response to this recommendation. These are:

- Work – to prevent those who are ineligible from working;
- Housing – to prevent those without lawful status from accessing the private rental sector.
- Public Funds – to prevent those who are ineligible from accessing mainstream support and benefits;
- Health – to charge upfront for non-urgent health care and recover costs for emergency treatment where payment upfront was not possible;

- Financial Services – to prevent people deemed as disqualified due to lack of lawful status from accessing current accounts;
- Driving – to prevent those without lawful status from holding licences while in the UK.

Wendy Williams will return in September 2021 to review our progress. In line with the wording of recommendation 7, we will publish the outcomes of the review in a timely way. This may include updates to Parliament.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Air Traffic Control: Permitted Development Rights

Daniel Zeichner:

[124206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many airport radar towers have been built using permitted development rights.

Christopher Pincher:

We do not hold information on the use of permitted development rights by airport operators.

■ Building Safety Fund: Birmingham

Preet Kaur Gill:

[R] [126098]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many registrants with the Building Safety Fund in Birmingham have been informed of whether they are invited to submit a full detailed application to the fund.

Christopher Pincher:

My Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building Safety Fund and published registration statistics on 30 September, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics>.

■ First Time Buyers: Government Assistance

Rosie Cooper:

[124701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what Government support is available to help first-time buyers obtain a deposit for a home.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to supporting first time buyers onto the housing ladder and recognises the challenges faced by prospective homeowners to secure a sufficient deposit. Many creditworthy homebuyers can afford regular repayments but not high deposits.

Help to Buy: Equity Loan helps address this by allowing people to buy with deposits as low as 5 per cent. The Government provides a loan of up to 20 per cent of the

property's value (40 per cent in London) which grants the purchaser to access to lower cost 75 per cent LTV mortgages. Furthermore, there are no interest fee payments for first 5 years, easing financial pressures in the early years of home ownership. Under the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme, the homeowner owns 100 per cent of the property, and the Government has an equity share of up to 20 per cent (40 per cent in London) of the home.

Since the launch of the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme (1 April 2013 to 30 June 2020), over 278,000 properties have been bought with an equity loan of which 228,896 (82 per cent) were bought by first time buyers. Whilst the current Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme is closing on 31 March 2021 it will be replaced from 1 April 2021 by a new Help to Buy scheme specifically targeted at first time buyers, with regional property caps (based on average first time prices) that will run for two years until March 2023.

In addition to the Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme, the Government helps first time buyers to save. First time buyers who opened a Help to Buy: ISA before 30 November 2019 can save through the scheme and will be eligible for a Government bonus of up to £3000. The bonus size is calculated as 25 per cent of the balance in the buyer's Help to Buy: ISA (capped at £3000). The bonus is calculated and paid when the home is purchased. Since the scheme launched in 2015, 336,884 property completions have been supported through the scheme.

Moreover, in April 2017 the Government introduced the Lifetime ISA, which is a long-term savings product intended to support younger people saving for their first home, or for later life. Adults aged 18 to 39 can open a Lifetime ISA, and can save up to £4,000 into their account each year until their 50th birthday, receiving a 25 per cent Government bonus on those savings.

■ Housing: Construction

Dr Liam Fox:

[\[124648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take through the Planning White Paper to (a) restrict land banking and (b) prevent developers from procuring more land until sites on which they already have planning permission have been built out.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is clear that where planning permission is granted for new development, developers must deliver those new permissions as quickly as possible. Our *Planning for the Future* White Paper has put forward proposals to support build out through planning, including revising national policy to encourage masterplans and design codes for substantial development sites to see a variety of development types by different builders come forward at once. We will be exploring further options to support faster build out as part of the wider package of reforms and look forward to reviewing the consultation responses in full.

■ Local Growth Deals

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [[126039](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how the £387 million extension to the Local Growth Fund for 2021-22 announced in the Budget on 11 March 2020 will be allocated.

Luke Hall:

The £387 million extension to the Local Growth Fund included £137 million for Department for Transport for retained transport schemes.

The remaining £250 million was allocated to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support local economic recovery efforts as part of the Getting Building Fund (GBF) programme which was announced on 4 August. The Government has agreed “shovel ready” projects with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mayoral Combined Authorities to be delivered over the next 15 months.

To help local areas prepare over 2021-22 for the introduction of the UKSPF, the Government will also provide £220 million additional funding to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. This funding will be delivered UK-wide and further details will be published in the New Year.

■ Parish Councils: Coronavirus

Tom Tugendhat:

[[124235](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what specific financial support is available to help Town and Parish Councils with (a) lost income and (b) greater costs during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

The way in which Parish and Town councils have responded to the challenges of the pandemic is testament to the unique position they occupy within our local government family.

Whilst the Government does not have the necessary powers to pay Parish and Town councils directly, we are encouraging their principal authorities to discuss the funding support they can provide from within the support we have provided them, which is over £7.2 billion.

Therefore, Parish and Town councils should liaise with the relevant principal authorities on how this money is allocated in their area.

■ Planning Permission: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[[126095](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will grant an extension for unimplemented planning permissions that lapse after 31 December 2020 and before 31 May 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

To ensure that unimplemented planning permissions and listed building consents do not lapse unnecessarily due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has brought forward measures through the Business and Planning Act 2020 to extend planning permissions in England which have lapsed or are at an increased risk of lapsing during this period. Planning permissions that have lapsed or are due to lapse between 23 March and 31 December 2020 will receive an extension to 1 May 2021

The legislation allows for certain dates to be extended by regulations, including the dates for eligible permissions and the extension period. The use of this power is being kept under review.

■ **Shukri Abdi****Apsana Begum:**[\[126155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will undertake an investigation into the actions of the public bodies under his Department's remit in relation to the death of Shukri Abdi.

Kelly Tolhurst:

I am not aware of any actions taken by public bodies under the remit of my Department which would warrant an investigation in relation to the tragic death Shukri Abdi.

A list of departments, agencies and public bodies, including those which MHCLG is responsible for, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>.

JUSTICE■ **Public Sector: Misconduct****Dame Margaret Hodge:**[\[125935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department plans to undertake to implement the Law Commission's recommendations on reforming the misconduct in public office offence.

Alex Chalk:

It is vital that those who hold public office are held to the highest standards and if they abuse these positions it should be clear what punishments they could face. We welcome the Law Commission's report into Misconduct in Public Office and will respond in due course.

Public Service: Misconduct**Dan Garden:**[\[126115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Law Commission's recommendations of 4 December 2020 to replace the misconduct in public office offence with two statutory offences (a) an offence of corruption in public office and (b) an offence of breach of duty in public office.

Alex Chalk:

It is vital that those who hold public office are held to the highest standards and if they abuse these positions it should be clear what punishments they could face. We welcome the Law Commission's report into Misconduct in Public Office and will respond in due course.

Young Offenders: Self-harm**Peter Kyle:**[\[126079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has produced a forecast of the number of children who are considered potentially likely to self-harm in youth custodial settings over the Christmas 2020 period.

Lucy Frazer:

Forecasting potential levels of self-harm is challenging, however, the rates of self-harm across the Youth Custody Service estate are reviewed regularly. We are very aware of the difficulties many children in custody will have experienced as a result of Covid-19 and the need to follow physical distancing, and that feelings of uncertainty may be heightened over Christmas. We will be working hard to support children in custody at this time, especially for those children who are at a greater risk of self-harm. As a result of the pandemic, 'SECURE STAIRS' - the Framework for Integrated Care jointly led by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHS E&I) and the YCS - has enhanced its approach to meet the needs of both children and staff focusing on the importance of connectivity, whilst adhering to physical distancing principles.

We have also been progressing work with a focus to some of the most vulnerable and challenging young people in custody through the Critical Case Pathway (CCP), which is jointly led by the YCS's Directorate lead Psychologist and NHS E&I Quality Lead. The CCP is a multi-disciplinary pathway which aims to provide oversight, assurance and support to professionals working with the most exceptionally complex young people in the youth custody estate, and take action as necessary to ensure effective assessment, planning and co-ordination of services to ensure that every effort is made to meet the needs of this group of children.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) visited Cookham Wood, Parc and Wetherby Young Offender Institutions on 21 April, and to Feltham and Werrington on 7 July to undertake monitoring visits, with reports subsequently published on the HMIP website. HMIP noted that self-harm had reduced since the start of the pandemic at four of the five sites (and was stable at the fifth); however, we continue to monitor

rates of self-harm very closely, whilst also looking to enhance regime opportunities, in a manner which is safe for children and staff.

■ Youth Custody: Expenditure

Peter Kyle:

[126080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much his Department has spent on the youth custodial estate (a) in total and (b) on consultants or third party contractors in each of the last five years.

Lucy Frazer:

The information requested for 2015/16 and 2016/17 is available at the following links:

2015/16: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539930/Youth_Justice_Board_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2015_to_2016.pdf

2016/17: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630201/YJB_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2016-17_Web.pdf

Information for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 is provided in the table below and is a subset of data published as part of the annual HMPPS Annual Report and Accounts publication. The budget for the youth estate moved from the Youth Justice Board to the Youth Custody Service in the middle of the 2017/18 financial year. The contracted-out figure is included in the total spend across the youth custodial estate.

RESOURCE DEL 2017/18	FULL YEAR OUTTURN (£M)	FULL YEAR BUDGET (£M)
Total	£103	£108
Contracted Out	£52	£52
Resource DEL 2018/19	Full Year Outturn (£m)	Full Year Budget (£m)
Total	£146	£147
Contracted	£76	£77
Resource DEL 2019/20	Full Year Outturn (£m)	Full Year Budget (£m)
Total	£172	£176
Contracted	£77	£79

LEADER OF THE HOUSE**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions****Kate Osamor:**[\[124265\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the delay in answering Questions (a) 102132 to 102136 tabled on 9 October 2020 and (b) 105481 to 105489 tabled on 19 October 2020.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

I have regular discussions with members of the Cabinet and have reminded all departments of the importance of full and timely responses to Parliamentary questions. I have raised the hon. member's specific questions with the Department for Health and Social Care and have been assured answers will be provided as soon as possible.

The Department of Health and Social Care responded to an urgent question on Thursday 19 November 2020 in relation to its performance in answering written questions from right hon. and hon. Members.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Health Education: Northern Ireland****Karin Smyth:**[\[123630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will hold discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on the potential merits of including (a) endometriosis and (b) menstrual wellbeing in the health and wellbeing school curriculum in Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

I thank the Honourable Lady for her question on these important issues.

Endometriosis affects 10% of women from puberty to menopause - over 1.5m in the UK - and we recognise the importance of the provision of education and information on these matters.

I am in regular contact with ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive on a range of important topics, including healthcare. As you will be aware, the Rebuilding Health & Social Care Strategic Framework was published by Minister Swann on 9 June.

However, education and the content of the school curriculum, including on health and wellbeing, in Northern Ireland are devolved matters for the Education Minister to carefully consider.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Electric Vehicles**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[124848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Northern Ireland Office has one vehicle, which is not electric.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Members: Correspondence****Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[126043\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to respond to the letter of 21 October 2020 from the Inequalities in Health Alliance on the need for a cross-Government strategy to reduce health inequalities as part of the Government's covid-19 recovery plans.

Boris Johnson:

My Office has no record of receiving this letter. I have asked my Office to contact the organisation to see if they can re-send the correspondence.

TRANSPORT**■ A14: Accidents****Tom Hunt:** [\[123709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many accidents have occurred between Junction 55 and Junction 57 of the A14 trunk road which have resulted in its closure in each year from (a) 2010 to (b) 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

The attached table contains the number of traffic collisions reported by Highways England from 2015 for the A14 between junctions 55 and 57, which resulted in a lane closure being implemented: Date from previous years is not readily available.

Attachments:

1. Table - No of accidents and road closures [Table - No of accidents and road closures.docx]

■ Bicycles: Pedestrian Areas**Mark Pritchard:** [\[125222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will consult (a) Uber and (b) other electric bicycle operators on the effect on visually impaired people of indiscriminate parking of bicycles on pavements.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Local authorities already have powers to deal with hire bicycles if they are causing an obstruction or nuisance on pavements or elsewhere, and are also able to introduce local byelaws as appropriate. The Department continues to monitor the impacts of bike hire schemes through regular engagement with stakeholders including organisations representing disabled people, local authorities and the scheme operators.

Mark Pritchard:[\[125223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Royal National Institute of Blind People and (b) other sight loss charities on the risks of bicycles being parked on pavements.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Local authorities already have powers to deal with bicycles if they are causing an obstruction on pavements or elsewhere, and are also able to introduce local byelaws as appropriate to deal with this. The Department continues to engage on this and other issues with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), which provides expert independent advice on the transport needs of disabled people.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus**Alexander Stafford:**[\[125319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support the coach industry in areas with tier 3 covid-19 restrictions.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has announced several measures available to UK businesses, including the coach sector, to support them through this challenging time, and launched a 'support finder' tool to help businesses quickly and easily determine what financial support is available to them during the coronavirus pandemic.

From 2 December councils in England in Tier 2 and Tier 3 will receive funding to provide grants to closed businesses and to be able to run local discretionary grant schemes to provide support to affected businesses. These allocations will be published shortly and are in addition to the £2.3 billion already provided to local councils since the start of the pandemic. The Local Authority administers the scheme and determines on a case-by-case basis where to allocate this funding.

Alexander Stafford:[\[125321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with local authorities on providing the coach industry the same financial support as taxi companies.

Rachel Maclean:

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

In addition to the financial support measures available to all UK businesses, including the coach industry, Local Authorities have discretion to provide further support to businesses in their area on the basis of local need. Some areas have provided targeted support to the coach and taxi sectors.

From 2 December councils in England in Tier 2 and Tier 3 will receive funding to provide grants to closed businesses and to be able to run local discretionary grant schemes to provide support to affected businesses. These allocations will be published shortly and are in addition to the £2.3 billion already provided to local councils since the start of the pandemic. The Local Authority administers the scheme and determines on a case-by-case basis where to allocate this funding.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[126159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been provided to local government for cycling and walking schemes, by scheme (a) in total and (b) by (i) combined authority, (ii) county, district or unitary authority and (iii) parish council, in each of the last three years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department published a detailed funding summary report alongside the CWIS statutory report to Parliament in February 2020. Around £2.4 billion of funding has been provided to support active travel schemes since 2016/17. The majority of funding has gone to combined and local authorities for cycling and walking schemes. The Department does not provide active travel funding direct to parish councils.

The report provided to Parliament is available online here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936926/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-report-to-parliament-document.pdf

■ **Level Crossings: Safety**

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[125930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential safety benefits of requiring yellow box junctions at the intersection of road and rail at small level crossings; and if he will make it his policy to require those yellow boxes to be installed by highway authorities.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail, in its role as the national railway infrastructure manager, is responsible for ensuring the safe operation of public level crossings on the rail network in Great Britain and for assessing what safety measures are suitable at each crossing. It undertakes this in consultation with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), as the safety regulator, and with local highway authorities. There are no plans to require local highways authorities to install yellow box junctions at level crossings.

■ Portsmouth International Port

Stephen Morgan: [\[124293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to avoid severe congestion at the port of Portsmouth in the event that the UK and EU do not reach an agreement on their future trading relations at the end of the transition period.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport officials have been working closely with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure that the LRF has the necessary traffic analysis and £2.5m resource funding to mitigate against potential congestion at the port of Portsmouth at the end of the transition period.

Stephen Morgan: [\[124294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to avoid severe disruption at the port of Portsmouth following the end of the transition period.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport officials have been working closely with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure that the LRF has the necessary traffic analysis and £2.5m resource funding to mitigate against potential congestion at the port of Portsmouth at the end of the transition period.

■ Railways: Coronavirus

Jim McMahon: [\[126093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his announcement of 3 December 2020 of a Christmas travel plan, how many train operating companies are suspending their peak travel times on 23 and 24 of December 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

A number of train companies are planning to relax peak travel restrictions over the Christmas period, including Avanti West Coast, London North Eastern Railway, Cross-country and East Midlands Railways, while others are planning to lift restrictions on some services or on particular days such as Christmas Eve.

■ Sainsbury's: Motor Vehicles

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[124678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Sainsbury's on improving the sustainability of their vehicle fleet.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[124679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Tesco Plc on improving the sustainability of their vehicle fleet.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[124680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Asda on improving the sustainability of their vehicle fleet.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[124681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Waitrose and Partners on improving the sustainability of their vehicle fleet.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[124682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Mark and Spencer on improving the sustainability of their vehicle fleet.

Rachel Maclean:

Ministers and officials have periodic meetings with fleet operators about a range of issues. The Government recognises the scope for fleets to be at the vanguard of the transition to zero emission driving, including the recently announced 2030 phase out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans and the phasing out of the sale of new diesel heavy goods vehicles, which we will be consulting on. We will continue to work with fleet operators towards this.

The Government's £20m Low Emission Freight Trials funded a series of R&D projects aimed at encouraging the widespread introduction of low and zero emission vehicles to UK fleets. Retailers including Sainsbury's, ASDA, Tesco and John Lewis were all part of this programme to cut emissions and improve air quality by focusing on emissions-busting technologies for trucks and vans.

The Government has to date already committed £1.5 billion to support the early market for greener cars and vans through various grant funding schemes which fleet operators are able to take advantage of. The Government has announced phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, and, from 2035, all new cars and vans must be zero emissions at the tailpipe. To facilitate this we have pledged a further £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles

■ Taxis: Coronavirus

Lilian Greenwood: [\[126003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on support for (a) taxi drivers and (b) private hire companies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government recognises the difficulties those working in the taxi and private hire vehicle sector face during the pandemic. The Department has maintained close contact with representatives from the taxi and private hire vehicle trade throughout the pandemic, including those representing local authorities responsible for the licensing of the taxi and private hire vehicle sector. Local authorities are best placed

to understand local demand and driver need and we are aware that some local authorities are supporting the sector.

From 2 December councils in England in Tier 2 and Tier 3 will receive funding to provide grants to closed businesses (Local Restriction Support Grants) and to be able to run local discretionary grant schemes to provide support to affected businesses. These allocations will be published shortly and are in addition to the £2.3bn already provided to local councils since the start of the pandemic. The Local Authority administers the scheme and determines on a case-by-case basis where to allocate this funding.

TREASURY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[126119\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to give businesses that borrowed under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme the option to repay their loan over a period of up to 10 years under the Pay as you Grow scheme.

John Glen:

The Government has introduced the 'Pay as you Grow' options to give businesses more time and flexibility to repay their loan on the terms that best suit them. This includes the ability to extend the term of the loan from 6 to 10 years (reducing average monthly payments by almost half), as well as the option to temporarily switch to interest-only payments or to take a full repayment holiday for 6 months.

These are standardised options which can be offered by lenders to all businesses. The options can be requested by borrowers ahead of their first repayment or later in the life of the loan. This will enable businesses to repay the loan on the terms which work best for their individual circumstances.

■ Bowling: Coronavirus

Chris Green:

[\[124214\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial support required by bowling centres due to covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors like the leisure and entertainment industry.

That is why the Government has put in place an economic package of support which will provide businesses and individuals with certainty over the Winter months, even as measures to prevent further spread of the virus change. This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and government-backed loan schemes. The Treasury has further provided funding to local authorities, to support both open and

closed businesses through the Local Restrictions Support Grants and the Additional Restrictions Grant.

During this difficult time the Treasury is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, government departments like the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and industry groups such as the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions, in order to understand the long-term effects of Covid-19 across all key areas of the economy.

We will continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review as we respond to this pandemic.

■ Duty Free Allowances

Henry Smith: [\[124718\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment has he made of the merits of introducing a new airside tax-free shopping regime for international visitors at the end of the Brexit transition period.

Henry Smith: [\[124719\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessments his Department has made of the potential merits of providing alternative airside tax-free shopping regimes for international visitors at the end of the transition period.

Kemi Badenoch:

Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers). The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

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

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

The detailed rationale for these changes are included in the written ministerial statement and summary of responses to the recent consultation:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-11/hcws448> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-duty-free-and-tax-free-goods-carried-by-passengers>. A technical note has also been issued to stakeholders to expand on this document and to respond to issues raised by stakeholders.

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

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

On 25 November the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out their assessment of the fiscal impact of the withdrawal of the tax-free airside sales. The OBR estimate that the withdrawal will raise approximately £170 million per year for the Exchequer, after behavioural responses are taken into account and passenger numbers recover from the impacts of Covid-19.

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

■ Hospitality Industry and Tourism: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[124154]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of the second lockdown and tier restrictions on suppliers to pubs, restaurants and other hospitality and tourism businesses; how many pubs he estimates will be protected against closure by the one-off coronavirus emergency payment of £1,000 in December; and whether he will make it his policy to bring support for hospitality and tourism businesses and business-to-business companies in line with what the sector has identified as needed across each of the three tiers.

Kemi Badenoch:

On the 30 November, the Government published '[Analysis of the health, economic and social effects of COVID-19 and the approach to tiering](#)'. As stated in this analysis, it is not possible to forecast the precise economic impact of a specific change to a specific restriction with confidence, however it is clear that restrictions to contain COVID-19 have had major impacts on the economy and public finances.

The Government understands that this is a very challenging time for the UK's hospitality sector and recognises that the pub sector in particular has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The Government continues to collect evidence on the impact of the pandemic on the sector and on the economy as whole

and is working with businesses and trade groups to inform our efforts to support these businesses.

The Government has announced an additional £1,000 Christmas grant for 'wet-led pubs' in tiers 2 and 3 who will miss out on business during the busy Christmas period. Wet-led pubs in tiers 2 and 3 will be subject to significant measures under the new regional tiered system and it is right for the government to increase its support.

The additional support comes on top of the £1.1 billion of Discretionary Grant funding for local authorities to target support to the businesses that are most important to their local economy. Businesses are also still able to access wider support, including:

- o The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended until the end of March;
- o Affordable, Government backed finance through loan schemes – extended until the end of January 2021 and 'Pay as You Grow' options for businesses which have taken out loans, to make repayments over the long-term;
- o A VAT deferral for up to 12 months;
- o A 12-month business rates holiday;
- o A moratorium on evictions to protect commercial tenants;
- o Targeted support through the temporarily reduced rate of VAT (5%)

■ Job Retention Bonus

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[126118\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to (a) publish and (b) introduce the retention incentive replacement for the Job Retention Bonus announced on 5 November 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Job Retention Bonus (JRB) will not be paid in February 2021 and the Government will redeploy a retention incentive at the appropriate time. The purpose of the JRB was to encourage employers to keep people in work until the end of January 2021. However, as the CJRS is being extended to the end of March 2021, the policy rationale of the JRB has fallen away.

■ Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Dan Jarvis:

[\[R\] \[126038\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what role mayoral combined authorities will have in the (a) bidding process, (b) allocation of funding, and (c) delivery of projects, for the (i) Levelling Up Fund and (ii) UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Kemi Badenoch:

All local areas will be eligible for funding from the Levelling Up Fund. This is about empowering local areas to identify and bring forward genuine local priorities. We will

provide further details on the bidding process and allocation of funding in a prospectus in the New Year.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will target places most in need and people who face labour market barriers. We will provide further details on the bidding process and allocation of funding in a UK-wide investment framework in the spring. To help local areas prepare over 21/22 for introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we are providing additional UK funding to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. We will provide detail on allocations for 21/22 in a prospectus in the New Year.

■ Local Restrictions Support Grant: Bus Services

Alexander Stafford:

[\[125320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure the coach industry can access the Local Restrictions Support Grant during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The various COVID-19 business grants have all been intended to support businesses facing high fixed property-related costs in some of the sectors hit hardest by the fall in consumer footfall caused by COVID-19, on the basis that businesses in this situation would find it particularly challenging to meet their high fixed property-related costs. This is why eligibility for both the original grant schemes and the new Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes is tied to the business rates system.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) provides businesses which are legally required to close with grants of up to £3,000 per month, depending on their rateable value. A coach company occupies a property which is legally required to close due to COVID-19 restrictions, it would be eligible for this scheme.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) (LRSG (Open)) provides local authorities in areas subject to restrictions on socialising, in particular a ban on indoor household mixing, with funding so that they can make grants to businesses in the accommodation, hospitality and leisure of up to £2,100 per month, depending on their rateable value. If a coach company in an area where indoor household mixing is banned occupies a property classified as an accommodation, hospitality or leisure property, it may also be eligible for this scheme, depending on Local Authority decisions on precise eligibility.

Coach companies could also be eligible for a grant from the Additional Restrictions Grant, through which all English local authorities have received additional funding for business support worth £20 per head of population, a total of £1.1 billion across England. It will be up to Local Authorities how to distribute this funding, but we encourage them to make grants to businesses which are seeing severe impacts on their business due to the national lockdown, but which aren't legally closed. We also encourage them to make grants to business outside the business rates system.

■ Pensions: Uprating**Mr Steve Baker:****[126013]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the outcome of the consultation on the Reform to Retail Prices Index (RPI), published on 25 November 2020. what steps the Government plans to take to (a) protect the lifetime value of people's defined benefit pension savings which are RPI-linked from 2030 and (b) maintain confidence in defined benefit pension schemes.

John Glen:

On 25 November, the Government and UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published their response to the consultation on the timing of reform to the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Owing to shortcomings in its calculation, UKSA intends to bring the methods and data sources of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) into RPI.

The Government and UKSA are mindful of the widespread use of RPI in the economy, and, as such, sought views in the consultation on the broader impacts of reform. The Government and UKSA received approximately 550 responses from members of defined benefit (DB) pension schemes whose benefits are linked to RPI.

It is apparent that some DB pension schemes members will be affected by UKSA's reform. The effect of reform on the members of such schemes will depend on whether their benefits are linked to RPI under the trust deed and rules of the scheme.

The announcement in the response by the Chancellor and UKSA Chair means that reform will not be implemented before 2030. The Government keeps the occupational pensions system under review and will continue to do so.

For further information please see the consultation response at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-the-reform-to-retail-prices-index-rpi-methodology>.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus**Jon Trickett:****[124125]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost to the public purse is of introducing one-off payments of £1,000 to all wet pubs that are unable to open due to covid-19 restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is providing additional funding to all local authorities in Tiers 2 and 3 to enable them to make one-off grants of £1,000 to all wet-led pubs in their areas. We will calculate the funding which local authorities receive for this scheme using a combination of Valuation Office Agency data and industry information. The cost to the public purse will be dependent on the take-up of the grants.

This additional support comes on top of existing support that is already available to wet-led pubs through the Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes under which these pubs will receive up to £3,000 per month for each month they are closed. 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.

Jon Trickett:

[\[124126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the sum of £1,000 was decided on as a measure of one-off financial support for wet pubs that are unable to open due to covid-19 restrictions.

Kemi Badenoch:

Given wet-led pubs in tiers 2 and 3 will be subject to significant measures under the new regional tiered system, and will miss out on business during the busy Christmas period, it is right for the Government to increase its support to these businesses.

The Government has announced an additional £1,000 Christmas grant for 'wet-led pubs' in tiers 2 and 3. The payment will be a one-off for December, and eligible wet-led pubs across these tiers are invited to apply through their local authority who will be responsible for distributing the grants.

This grant is just one part of the unprecedented package of support that is available for businesses. The Government has acted to deliver support to the hospitality sectors by extending the CJRS until March and provided cash grants of up to £3,000 per month to help businesses that are closed with their costs.

In addition, the Government has provided £1.1 billion of Discretionary Grant funding for local authorities to target support to the businesses that are most important to their local economy. Businesses are also still able to access wider support, including:

- o Affordable, Government backed finance through loan schemes – extended until the end of January 2021 and 'Pay as You Grow' options for businesses which have taken out loans, to make repayments over the long-term;
- o A VAT deferral for up to 12 months;
- o A 12-month business rates holiday;
- o A moratorium on evictions to protect commercial tenants;
- o Targeted support through the temporarily reduced rate of VAT (5%)

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.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[124299\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has undertaken an economic impact assessment of the effect of the most recent covid-19 restrictions on pubs that do not serve food; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

On the 30 November, the Government published '[Analysis of the health, economic and social effects of COVID-19 and the approach to tiering](#)'. As stated in this

analysis, it is not possible to forecast the precise economic impact of a specific change to a specific restriction with confidence, however it is clear that restrictions to contain COVID-19 have had major impacts on the economy and public finances.

The Government understands that this is a very challenging time for the UK's hospitality sector and recognises that the pub sector in particular has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The Government continues to collect evidence on the impact of the pandemic on the sector and on the economy as whole and is working with businesses and trade groups to inform our efforts to support these businesses.

■ Public Sector: Pay

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[126004\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his oral contribution of 25 November 2020, Official Report column 828, on public sector workers who earn below the median wage of £24,000 being guaranteed a pay rise of at least £250, whether that £250 award will be consolidated or non-consolidated.

Steve Barclay:

The recommended £250 pay award provided to public sector workers earning less than £24,000 on a full-time equivalent basis will be consolidated.

■ Self-employed: Coronavirus

Tracy Brabin:

[\[126094\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what date he last met with representatives from organisations representing PAYE freelancers who are ineligible for the (a) Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and (b) Coronavirus Job Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Treasury ministers and officials have had meetings with a variety of organisations 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. The Government has engaged widely, including with IPSE, the TUC and other organisations who represent the self-employed.

The Government's proactive approach to stakeholder engagement has been recognised by the Institute for Government, who 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 on GOV.UK.

The Treasury continues to speak to stakeholders, and has met with representatives including from the ExcludedUK campaign group, the Chair of the Gaps in Support APPG, Refused Furlough Support Group, Forgotten Ltd, Maternity Petition and Forgotten PAYE, alongside MPs.

■ Tax Avoidance: Oxford West and Abingdon

Layla Moran: [\[126116\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 4 December 2020 to Question 120993, how many people have been affected by the Loan Charge in Oxford West and Abingdon constituency.

Jesse Norman:

The Government estimates that about 50,000 individuals are affected by the 2019 Loan Charge. Information is not held at constituency, borough or regional level.

■ Treasury: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[124847\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Kemi Badenoch:

The vehicles used by ministers of HM Treasury are supplied under contract by the Government Car Service and this is therefore a matter for the Department of Transport.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Discrimination

Ben Bradley: [\[124305\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has to ensure the effectiveness of the Equalities Hub in tackling discrimination and disadvantage resulting from socio-economic circumstances or geography, which are not covered by the Equality Act 2010.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Equality Hub is at the heart of Government decision-making in the Cabinet Office, and brings together the Government Equalities Office, the Disability Unit and the Race Disparity Unit. It has a key role in driving Government priorities on equality and opportunity.

The Hub has a particular focus on improving the quality of evidence and data about disparities and the types of barriers different people face, ensuring that fairness is at

the heart of everything we do. Key to this is looking beyond a focus solely on the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, to ensure we understand how different issues interact, including in socio-economic and geographic inequality.

The Equality Hub will be key to driving progress on the Government's commitment to levelling up opportunity and ensuring fairness for all.

■ Equality Act 2010

Ben Bradley: [\[124306\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether her Department collects data on the effect of the Equality Act 2010 on heterosexual white males.

Kemi Badenoch:

Data is not collected routinely or centrally on the effect of the Equality Act 2010 on different groups. Individual public authorities are responsible for conducting Public Sector Equality Duty assessments of new measures and collecting and using data to ensure that the impact of policies on all groups, including men and heterosexual people, is adequately considered.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Housing Benefit

Liam Byrne: [\[124688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the value for money of the system for paying housing benefit to providers of exempt accommodation.

Will Quince:

No such assessment has been made.

We are working with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to improve value for money and quality in the supported housing sector through our joint oversight regime. An important step in this programme was the launch of Local Authority pilots in Birmingham and four other areas, to test innovative ways of ensuring good quality and value for money in supported housing, including exempt accommodation.

■ Parliament: National Workplace Day of Remembrance

Dan Jarvis: [\[126042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to mark National Workplace Day of Remembrance 2020 in Parliament.

Mims Davies:

Every year on 28 April the Health and Safety Executive joins with the Trade Union Congress and others to mark International Workers' Memorial Day. The event remembers all those who have lost their lives at work, or from work-related injury and

diseases. Workers Memorial Day is commemorated throughout the world and is officially recognised by the UK Government.

The Health and Safety Executive welcomes any initiatives that will raise awareness of this important topic and help to reduce work related ill health, injury and death in the workplace.

■ Pension Wise: Bury South

Christian Wakeford: [\[126186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people living in the Bury South constituency have had a Pension Wise guidance appointment by telephone or in person between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.

Christian Wakeford: [\[126187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people living in Greater Manchester have had a Pension Wise guidance appointment by telephone or in person between April 2019 and March 2020.

Christian Wakeford: [\[126188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people had a Pension Wise guidance appointment (a) by telephone and (b) in person between April 2019 and March 2020 in each region of the UK.

Guy Opperman:

The Money and Pensions Service publishes data on pension wise appointments across 2019-2020 here:

<https://moneyandpensionsservice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Pension-Wise-Service-Evaluation-report-2019-2020.pdf>

■ Pensions: Australia

Chris Elmore: [\[124819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government of Australia has made representations to the Government on negotiating a reciprocal social security agreement that includes the uprating of pensions.

Guy Opperman:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 3 December 2020, PQ UIN 121330.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-26/121330>

■ Pensions: Fraud

Neil Gray: [\[126051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she will take to protect consumers from proceeding with fraudulent online pension transfers.

Neil Gray:

[\[126052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what powers she will give to regulators and trustees to allow them to override the individual's statutory right to transfer their pension in the event of a suspected scam.

Guy Opperman:

Government is committed to safeguarding the savings of consumers based in the UK and people living overseas with UK based savings. Although the majority of transfers are to safe destinations there are still fraudsters who try to entice individuals to transfer to schemes for the purposes of relieving them of their pension savings.

To help protect people from pension scams, clause 125 in the Pensions Schemes Bill 2020 will allow government to introduce measures to limit the statutory right to transfer. The clause achieves many things and reference is made to all the parliamentary responses on this topic for the details. However, in summary:

1. it introduces in legislation provisions that require members to provide evidence of an employment link or, if transferring abroad, residency before a statutory transfer can take place; and
1. it will remove the right to transfer if certain circumstances (red flags) are identified by the trustee or scheme administrator. For other prescribed circumstances people will be required to confirm they have received information or taken guidance about the risk of scams before a transfer can proceed. We are and will continue to work with industry and regulators to identify these circumstances. This means that trustees will have the power to refuse a transfer if the red flags occur or an individual has not taken guidance. The regulator will oversee the operation of these new requirements.

Regulators and trustees also have a broader role to play in scam prevention. The Pension Regulator, Financial Conduct Authority, and Money Advice and Pension Service issued information on 7 April pointing to the actions members should seek to take to safeguard against becoming victims of scams. Additional guidance was issued to trustees, and providers from both The Financial Conduct Authority and the Pensions Regulator to support them to produce suitable communications during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Please see links below for more information about the joint statement from Regulators and the Money Advice Service, and help available, produced by the Pension Protection Fund and supported by government.

<https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/covid-19-savers-stay-calm-dont-rush-financial-decisions>

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/sites/default/files/file-2020-05/COVID-19-and-your-pension.pdf>

In addition, the Government, working with the regulators and the Money and Pension Service, has been communicating with pension savers to alert them to the risk of scams in the current climate. DWP continues to communicate regularly on social media about the warning signs of a scam.

We have adopted an approach that not only safeguards against pension scams but assists all pension savers seeking to access their pensions.

For all pension savers aged 50 and over, in the lead up to accessing their pension savings, our aim is to support them make informed choices about their retirement income. We are therefore committed to replicating measures introduced by the FCA for contract based schemes for occupational pension schemes and requiring trustees to provide information to pensions savers from the age of 50, in a simpler format, to encourage savers to think about their retirement savings, choices and raise awareness of Pension Wise.

We want to encourage savers to take appropriate guidance via Pension Wise when they apply to access savings. We want to present taking guidance or advice as a natural part of the journey when individuals access their pension savings. We are working with the FCA on rules that would require managers of private pension schemes to introduce parallel provisions.

The Government is committed to safeguarding consumer savings and continues to raise public awareness of scams through ongoing communications directly from DWP and with other organisations.

DWP continues to communicate regularly on social media to set out the warning signs of a scam and has made multiple posts referencing Pension Scams and #ScamSmart in total across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn in the period March to September 2020.

In addition, Pensions Dashboards will help more people actively manage their pension savings and plan for their retirement, and this will include making decisions about pension consolidation, particularly for deferred defined contribution pots. Initial dashboards will enable a user to find and view their pension savings in one place. Future functionality will be informed by user research and testing, and consumer protection will be a primary concern in this decision making.

■ **Universal Credit: Coronavirus**

Neil Gray:

[\[126050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the equality impact assessments conducted by or on behalf of her Department before the reimposition of universal credit conditionality and sanctioning in July 2020.

Mims Davies:

No – and there are no plans to publish the Equality Impact assessment as it is a return to existing legislation.

■ **Universal Credit: Fraud**

Stephen Timms:

[\[125936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her letter of 20 July 2020 to the Work and Pensions Committee, how many cases of universal credit

identity hijack her Department (a) has investigated since October 2018 and (b) is currently investigating.

Will Quince:

In terms of UC Advances cases where an individual's identity has been hijacked, we have investigated a significant number of potential or alleged UC Advances frauds and to date have found 36 cases where the person had been a genuine victim of hijacked id. Other cases are still in the process of being investigated. We cannot provide details of any potential identity frauds as the outcomes (of each case) cannot be pre-determined.

In addition, during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Cyber Resilience Centre within the Department for Work and Pensions thwarted attempts made to defraud the Government of an estimated £1.7bn through organised criminal attacks on the Universal Credit system.

The Department was able to intervene on around 133,000 linked fraudulent claims and prevent the vast majority from being paid. Some claims received an advance or progressed to payment, but were subsequently detected and payments stopped immediately, with less than £50 million paid out in total.

These claims used hijacked identities, but the identities were not stolen from the Department. Of the attempted fraudulent claims only a very small minority used the identities of existing benefit claimants. Where existing claims have been affected, the Department has reinstated the original claim.

All figures used in this response are correct as of 20 November 2020.

Stephen Timms:

[\[125937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the letter of 21 November 2020 from the Permanent Secretary to the Work and Pensions Committee, how many cases of universal credit identity hijack have been referred to the Stolen Identity Team since 24 June 2020.

Will Quince:

As at 8 December 2020, the total number of suspected cases of Universal Credit identity hijack referred to the Stolen Identity Team since 24 June 2020 was 5,894.

The vast majority of benefit expenditure is paid correctly, with front line staff working hard to prevent incorrect and fraudulent payments. We are constantly improving our processes and continue to use data to identify fraud and better target our investigations.

The Department continues to take fraud seriously, and will continue to challenge people who seek to abuse the system, employing the full range of penalties at its disposal.

■ Universal Credit: Learning Disability

Tom Tugendhat:

[\[124237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department provides to college staff on supporting universal credit applications for 18 to 25 year olds with learning difficulties.

Will Quince:

The Advice for decision makers guide (ADM) supports the decision making for various social security benefits, including Universal Credit (UC). This guide is published online, is freely available to the public and the specific guidance which would support a decision as to whether a person as described would have entitlement to UC is referred to below.

A condition of entitlement for UC is that the claimant must not be receiving education. This excludes most students, including those with learning difficulties. In chapter H6 of the ADM, paragraphs H6026 to H6028 set out the meaning of “receiving education” for the purposes of determining entitlement to UC. If a person is treated as receiving education they will not be entitled to UC unless they meet one of the exceptions which are listed at paragraph H6041.

Paragraphs H6026 to H6028 advise that a person is treated as receiving education if;

- they are a “Qualifying Young Person” (QYP), i.e. has reached age 16 but not the 1st September following their 19th birthday and are undertaking an average of over 12 hours per week approved non-advanced education at a school or college, or
- is in full-time advanced education (defined at paragraph H6031), or
- where not a QYP, is undertaking any other full-time course of study or training at an educational establishment for which a maintenance loan or grant is provided and that course is determined not to be compatible with any work related requirements imposed upon them. Conversely, if the course does not provide a maintenance loan or grant and is determined to be compatible a person’s work related requirements, the person is not treated as receiving education and satisfies this condition of entitlement to UC.

A student with learning difficulties will likely fall to be considered under the guidance set out at the last bullet point, unless they are of a QYP age. If the student is a QYP, they continue to be treated as receiving education and will only have entitlement to UC if they first meet one of the exceptions listed at paragraph H6041 and, if under age 18, one of the minimum age exceptions listed at chapter E of the ADM, paragraph E1024. A QYP remains to be supported by their parents, who receive benefits for them.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS**HOME OFFICE****■ Fire and Rescue Services: Pay****Mike Amesbury:**[\[105536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason fire fighters have been offered a pay award below that offered of teachers, doctors, dentists, police and prison officers.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 December 2020. The correct answer should have been:

James Brokenshire:

The pay awards announced on 21 July 2020 related to workforces covered by Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) which are: the armed forces, teachers, police officers, the National Crime Agency, prison officers, doctors, dentists, the Judiciary, senior civil servants and senior military personnel.

Pay awards for firefighters are agreed independently outside this process by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services which include representatives of employers, devolved administrations and trade unions. Central Government has no role to play in this process.

The pay awards announced on 21 July 2020 related to workforces covered by Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) which are: the armed forces, teachers, police officers, the National Crime Agency, prison officers, doctors, dentists, the Judiciary, senior civil servants and senior military personnel.

Pay awards for firefighters are agreed independently outside this process by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services which include representatives of employers, devolved administrations and trade unions.

■ Islam**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[101987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the growing (a) influence and (b) networks of Turkey's Justice and Development Party in (i) United Kingdom and (ii) the European Union on Islamist activity.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 December 2020. The correct answer should have been:

James Brokenshire:

We are aware that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Turkey has offices in the UK and certain EU member states. All foreign political parties with

representation in the UK must act in accordance with UK law in relation to their activities in the UK.

The Home Office has not undertaken an assessment of Turkey's Justice and Development Party's (AKP) influence on extremist Islamist activity.

We are aware that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Turkey has offices in the UK and certain EU member states. All foreign political parties with representation in the UK must act in accordance with UK law in relation to their activities in the UK.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Export Controls

Joanna Cherry:

[125256]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the longest number of days her Department has taken to make an export licence decision from the date of the initial request to the date of the first decision being communicated to the applicant in each quarter of (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 December 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer the Hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 8th December 2020 to Question (UIN: 124773).

HM Government publishes Official Statistics on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK, on a quarterly and annual basis. These reports contain detailed information including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

This information is available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data. The most recent publication was on 13th October 2020, covering the period 1st April – 30th June 2020.

Internal records held indicate, in each quarter between Q1 2018 and Q2 2020, the longest an application has taken to process a Standard Individual Export Licence (SIEL) by HM Government, is as follows:

PERIOD	LONGEST AN APPLICATION HAS TAKEN, IN WORKING DAYS
Q1 2018	901
Q2 2018	887
Q3 2018	1018
Q4 2018	424
Q1 2019	576
Q2 2019	730
Q3 2019	431
Q4 2019	573
Q1 2020	488
Q2 2020	549

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ **The European Union (Withdrawal) Act & Common Frameworks Report**

Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith):

[\[HCWS635\]](#)

I am today laying before Parliament a report, 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 June 2020 to 25 September 2020'. I am laying this report because it is a legal requirement under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 for quarterly reports to be made to Parliament on the progress of the work to develop common frameworks. The report is available on Gov.uk and details the progress made between the UK Government and devolved administrations regarding the development of common frameworks. This report details progress made during the ninth 3-month reporting period, and sets out that no 'freezing' regulations have been brought forward under section 12 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act. A copy of the 'The European Union (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks: 26 June 2020 to 25 September 2020 report has been placed in the library of both Houses. The publication of the report reflects the Government's continued commitment to transparency.

Attachments:

1. EU (Withdrawal) Act & Common Frameworks Report [(Unnumbered Act Paper) - EU (Withdrawal) Act and Common Frameworks.pdf]

HOME OFFICE

■ **College of Policing Annual Report and Accounts 2019 – 2020**

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse):

[\[HCWS637\]](#)

I am today publishing the 2019-20 annual report and accounts for the College of Policing Limited [HC 987]. This will be laid before the House and published on www.gov.uk. The report will also be available in the Vote Office.

■ **Offensive Weapons Act 2019 Surrender and Compensation Scheme**

The Minister of State for Crime and Policing (Kit Malthouse):

[\[HCWS636\]](#)

The Offensive Weapon Act 2019 Surrender and Compensation Scheme commences today. This is an important part of the Government's response to tackling serious violence and keeping dangerous weapons off our streets.

The scheme is being run in advance of the Government commencing the prohibitions relating to rapid firing rifles and certain knives and other offensive weapons provided for by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019.

The scheme allows for the surrender to the police of certain knives such as zombie knives and cyclone knives, other offensive weapons, rapid firing rifles and their ancillary

equipment and bump stocks. The arrangements apply in England and Wales and extend to Scotland and Northern Ireland with respect to firearms and ancillary equipment only. The lawful owners of these items will be able to claim financial compensation in most cases.

The scheme will run for 3 months between 10 December 2020 and 9 March 2021 inclusive.

I will place in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of the guidance to the public on the scheme, the claims form, a standard values list of compensation that will be paid for surrendered weapons and a list of designated police stations in every force where weapons can be surrendered. These documents are being made available to the public on gov.uk.

JUSTICE

■ Update to Government response to the Prison Service Pay Review Body recommendations 20/21

The Minister of State for Justice (Lucy Frazer):

[\[HCWS638\]](#)

I am today making a further and final announcement on the government's response to this year's recommendations from the Prison Service Pay Review Body.

The Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) reported to Government with its 2020-21 pay award recommendations earlier this summer, and on 21 July, the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice was pleased to announce the Government's acceptance of six out of the seven recommendations. This has already delivered an above inflation pay rise of at least 2.5% for all prison staff, with cumulative awards of up to 7.5% where progression pay is taken into account.

The PSPRB report also included a recommendation ("recommendation 3") to make a further overall increase of £3,000 for 'Band 3' prison staff on modernised terms and conditions, intended to have effect from September 2020. For staff at this grade, this would represent a rise of between 14 and 21%. This group represents around one third of the prison service workforce. This recommendation presents clear affordability challenges due to its exceptional cost and is also out of step with other public sector workforces. The Government therefore committed to considering the recommendation in more detail.

Since the initial announcement, the Ministry of Justice, together with HM Treasury, has considered further the exceptional costs associated with implementing this recommendation, the impact on the overall pay structure, and the changing labour market conditions due to the exceptional economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes in the labour market as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the unpredictable changing state of the economy means that the assumptions made by the PSPRB upon which they based their recommendations have now changed.

The Department has also considered if any associated workforce reforms could be delivered alongside the recommendation which would create efficiencies and savings,

and therefore deliver value for money by offsetting some of the cost of the recommendation. This was undertaken with a view to possible discussions with recognised trade unions, should an option for affordable delivery of the recommendation, which could offer value for money for taxpayers, be identified. The conclusion is that sufficient savings required to offer value for money could not be achieved, meaning the recommendation remains unaffordable.

It has therefore been decided not to accept "recommendation 3".

Nonetheless, this is the third year in a row that prison staff have benefitted from an award of at least 2% - which delivers an above inflation increase.

I would like to reiterate my thanks to the PSPRB for their independent expertise, insight and rigour through which they have developed this year's report. While the Government has not accepted the entirety of the PSPRB recommendations for 20/21, the Department remains committed to working with the review body and we will also continue to work closely with recognised trade unions.

The Chancellor has outlined that in the interest of fairness, pay rises in the public sector will be restrained and targeted for the coming year (2021/22), whilst also ensuring an uplift for lower earning staff who need it most. I will be shortly writing to the Chair of the PSPRB to seek their independent advice on the prison pay for 2021/22, in line with the Chancellor's statement.

I am also, above all, immensely grateful for the hardworking public servants who are critical to the delivery of safe and secure running of our prisons. While the wider circumstances are unpredictable, I remain committed to supporting staff in our prison service, who work hard to help those who are the most vulnerable in our society while keeping the public safe.