



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 December 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:33 P.M., 11 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

■ Attorney General: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[124845\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what proportion of the vehicles used by her Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Michael Ellis:

The Department for Transport is responsible for all government vehicles managed by the Government Car Service.

The Attorney General's Office, Government Legal Department, Serious Fraud Office and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate have no other vehicles to report.

The Crown Prosecution Service currently lease 4 vehicles, none are currently electric vehicles.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Arcadia Group: Newport West

Ruth Jones:

[\[124864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the effect of the collapse of the Arcadia Group on employees of that company in Newport West constituency.

Paul Scully:

We understand this will be deeply worrying news for Arcadia's employees and their families in the Newport West constituency, and the Government stands ready to support them. BEIS officials met with their counterparts from the Welsh Government on 4th December when the situation at Arcadia was discussed. I want to pay particular tribute to the hard-working staff across the country who have kept these well recognised brands going in difficult times for so long.

Whilst no redundancies were announced as a result of the appointment of administrators and stores will continue to trade, we stand ready to support anyone affected by redundancies. If people need financial support quickly, they may be able to claim Universal Credit, New Style Jobseeker's Allowance or New Style Employment and Support Allowance. We are also doubling the number of frontline Work Coaches across our network of jobcentres to ensure people have access to bespoke support and have launched the £2bn Kickstart scheme to create opportunities for young people.

■ China General Nuclear Power Corporation

Daisy Cooper: [\[124314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the role of the China General Nuclear Power Group in Britain's nuclear power plants on UK security.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

All investment involving critical infrastructure is subject to thorough scrutiny and needs to satisfy our robust legal, regulatory, and national security requirements.

The Government conducted a comprehensive review of the Hinkley Point C project in 2016. The conclusions of the review were set out in a statement made by the then Secretary of State on 15th September 2016, [Official Report, Column 1066](#). We regularly review our assessments to ensure that they remain accurate.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[124835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Amanda Solloway:

BEIS currently contracts with the Government Car Service, which is a division within the Department for Transport, for the provision of two cars.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-car-service>.

The vehicle fuel type can vary depending on which car has been allocated to cover on that day. Generally, the cars are electric or hybrid

■ Energy: Conservation

Alan Brown: [\[124256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee Twenty-First Report of Session 2017-19, Energy efficiency: building towards net zero (HC 1730), whether he has had discussions with stakeholders on classifying energy efficiency programmes as part of a National Infrastructure Priority.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The National Infrastructure Strategy set out the Government's energy efficiency infrastructure ambitions. The Government is committed to delivering our net zero target and will take further steps to decarbonise the UK economy. The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in the coming months, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from all homes and buildings and set buildings on track for net zero

Over £3 billion has already been announced as part of the Summer Economic Update to make homes and buildings greener and more energy efficient through the Green Homes Grant, Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund demonstrator. My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister recently set out his ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution. This includes investing an additional £1 billion to make our homes, schools and hospitals greener, warmer and more energy efficient, whilst creating 50,000 jobs by 2030, and setting out an ambition to install 600,000 heat pumps by 2028.

■ Fossil Fuels: UK Export Finance

Daisy Cooper:

[\[124872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 78468 on Mozambique: Liquefied Natural Gas, if he will publish the most recent conclusions relating to his Department from the Government's ongoing review of its support for the fossil fuel industry.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

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

■ Fuel Poverty

Jon Trickett:

[\[124121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward proposals to tackle fuel poverty.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Improving energy efficiency is the best long-term solution to tackle fuel poverty and at the Summer Economic Update we announced more than £2 billion of funding for upgrading the energy efficiency of homes. The Green Homes Grant is a £2 billion programme which will help improve the energy efficiency of homes in England. Low-income homeowners in receipt of certain benefits may be eligible for a grant covering up to 100% of the cost of installation. The 2020 Spending Review committed a further £320 million in funding for the Green Homes Grant for 2021-22 and £150 million to help some of the poorest homes become more energy efficient and cheaper to heat with low-carbon energy.

The Energy Company Obligation scheme requires energy companies to deliver energy efficiency and heating measures to low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households. The current scheme is worth £640m per year and ends in March 2022. The Prime Minister announced an extension to this scheme until 2026 in his Ten Point Plan. We also recently closed our consultation on the extension of the Warm Home Discount until March 2022. This will continue to provide a £140 energy bill

rebate to over 2 million low income and vulnerable households, and vital projects helping fuel poor households throughout the country through Industry Initiatives.

We are currently consulting on improving the standard of privately rented homes in England and Wales through a minimum energy efficiency performance standard of Band C, helping to tackle fuel poverty in that tenure.

An updated fuel poverty strategy for England will also be released in the coming months, outlining our commitments to delivering against our statutory target to ensure that as many fuel poor homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band C, by 2030.

■ **Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996**

Alan Brown:

[\[124255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to point two of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published on 18 November 2020, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on changes required to the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS have been in regular discussion with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), who are sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions and are responsible for the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations (GS(M)R) 1996.

The current Schedule 3 of GS(M)R 1996 is being updated to reflect the changing needs and sources of gas supply to the UK market as we decarbonise. This will help to ensure the UK secures gas supplies from domestic and imported sources, whilst making it easier to incorporate the blending of low carbon gases into the network.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[124812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to promote the take-up of the Green Homes Grant to improve the energy efficiency of tenants' homes with energy ratings above E.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme is open to applications from landlords to install energy efficiency and clean heat measures in their rented properties. To be eligible for the scheme, private rented properties in scope of the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating E or above, or hold a valid exemption. As of 07 December, 11.7% of all applications received for the Voucher scheme have been from landlords.

The £500 million Local Authority Delivery (LAD) element of the scheme will be delivered via Local Authorities and Local Energy Hubs, who have a comprehensive understanding of their local communities and as part of delivery of the scheme are

undertaking extensive property assessments and householder engagement work. Together, they will identify eligible low energy efficiency properties (rated EPC D or below) and low-income households including those living in the worst quality off-gas grid homes. Under LAD, Local Authorities may upgrade their own housing stock as landlords or leaseholders and that of Social Housing providers they are partnering with, and also fund improvements to privately owned rental properties.

Furthermore, the Department is currently consulting on raising the minimum energy efficiency standards for privately rented homes in England and Wales to EPC band C. The consultation can be accessed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and will remain open until 30 December 2020.

■ Industry: Carbon Emissions

Liam Byrne:

[\[124135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his timeframe is for concluding the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge (IDC) is expected to disperse funding to successful projects until March 2024. The most recent competition phase of the IDC, the Phase 2 Deployment Strand, closed in October 2020 with bids currently undergoing assessment. Successful projects are expected to start to receive funding from March 2021.

Liam Byrne:

[\[124136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the establishment of the Clean Growth Grand Challenge, what representations he has received from the Mayor of the West Midlands on establishing the West Midlands as the world's first net zero carbon industrial cluster.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Decarbonising industrial clusters represent an opportunity to drive clean growth while cutting emissions. Clusters are important providers of jobs and form a crucial part of implementing my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

Around half of industrial emissions are concentrated in six clusters across the UK. That is why we launched the Industrial Clusters Mission, through which we have engaged with several industrial clusters, including the Black Country Industrial Cluster in the West Midlands. The £170 million Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge will help industrial clusters to develop their decarbonisation plans and support the rollout out of new technologies.

■ Medicine: Charities**Marco Longhi:** [\[124323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government will take to support medical research charities who are experiencing a shortfall in income as a result of a fall in donations during the covid-19 outbreak.

Amanda Solloway:

I refer my hon Friend to the reply I gave to Question UIN [121276](#).

■ Nuclear Power: Finance**Alan Brown:** [\[124253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the £40m commitment to develop regulatory frameworks announced in his Department's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published November 2020, how much of the funding was (a) newly committed and (b) previously announced as part of the £172m nuclear sector deal.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The £40m funding announced in the Ten Point Plan to develop regulatory frameworks and the UK supply chain is a new commitment.

■ Nuclear Reactors: Finance**Alan Brown:** [\[124252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the £170m Advanced Nuclear Modular Reactors announced in his Department's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published November 2020, how much of the funding was previously announced.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister has announced a broad set of policy measures to drive the UK to net zero, including a **new £1bn net zero innovation portfolio** from 2021 to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and business models in power, buildings and industry.

The Ten Point Plan includes £170m funding commitment for R&D for Advanced Modular Reactors under the £385m Advanced Nuclear Fund. Up to £30m of existing contracts and commitments from the nuclear sector deal for the nuclear innovation programme will continue to be funded through the Advanced Nuclear Fund.

■ Physiotherapy: Coronavirus**Rosie Duffield:** [\[124286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to provide support to help private practitioner physiotherapists rebuild their businesses in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government introduced an unprecedented and comprehensive package of business support measures to help as many individuals and businesses as possible during this difficult period. This support package included measures such as the small business grants, the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the deferral of VAT and income tax payments, and more. These measures were designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

The Government has set out a plan for recovery that focusses on backing business, improving skills, and creating jobs. Further measures were also announced by the Chancellor that build on the significant support already available as well as set out how current support will evolve and adapt. This includes the extension of the CJRS until the end of March 2021, the increase of the third Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant from 55% to 80% of trading profits, the extension of the coronavirus loan guarantee schemes until 31 January 2021, and the introduction of Pay As You Grow measures, meaning businesses now have the option to repay their Bounce Back Loans over a period of up to ten years.

Businesses who also deferred VAT due from 20 March to 30 June 2020 will now have the option to pay in smaller instalments up to the end of March 2022, interest free. Businesses will need to opt-in to the scheme, and for those who do, this means that their VAT liabilities due between 20 March and 30 June 2020 do not need to be paid in full until the end of March 2022.

Additionally, the Government has worked closely with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive to develop our workplace guidance. Close-contact service providers can check what they need to do to keep people safe and to make their business COVID-secure on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>.

Businesses, including private practitioner physiotherapists, are also able to access tailored advice through our Freephone Business Support Helpline, online via the Business Support website or through their local Growth Hubs in England.

■ Post Office: Annual Reports**Marion Fellows:****[124777]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when Post Office Ltd will publish its annual report and accounts.

Paul Scully:

Under the Companies Act, firms have 9 months after the relevant financial year ends to file its accounts, meaning the end of December 2020 for Post Office Limited. Companies House has provided an optional three-month extension of this deadline due to Covid-19. In recent years Post Office Limited has laid its report and accounts before Parliament between September and December.

■ Supermarkets: Coronavirus

Darren Henry:

[\[124327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the extent to which supermarkets have been covid-secure during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government welcomes the tremendous efforts and expense supermarkets have made making their businesses COVID-Secure. We have worked closely with retailers to develop comprehensive guidance to assist them in the safe operation of their business.

The best available Public Health England and NHS Track and Trace data shows there is at present no evidence of significant increased risk of virus transmission in retail premises.

■ Universities: Research

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[124745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to encourage the commercialisation of university research in the UK.

Amanda Solloway:

University-business collaboration and the effective commercialisation of university research is critical to achieving the Government's ambition to spend 2.4% of GDP on R&D by 2027. The Government has introduced a range of incentives and investments to support universities, charities and businesses to work together, such as:

- The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund funds collaborative research with business;
- £900m UK Research Partnership Investment Fund has generated over £2bn in private co-investment to create research centres and facilities in universities across the UK in collaboration with business and charities;
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP), which help businesses to innovate and grow by linking them with an academic or research organisation and a graduate;
- Mechanisms to broker new connections, include Konfer (an online platform to connect universities and businesses) and the Knowledge Transfer Networks (bringing together businesses, academics, government agencies and research organisations); and
- Stimulating access to finance through Innovate UK and the British Business Bank.

As well as supporting universities in England through:

- Higher Education Innovation Funding has increased to £250m p.a. by 2020 - underpinning universities' capacity to work with business and others;

- The £100m Connecting Capability Fund is helping universities to collaborate and pool Intellectual Property and resource so it is easier for investors and business to access; and
- The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), which benchmarks university performance in working with business and research commercialisation - encouraging universities to increase external engagement with business.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum:

[\[124894\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of domestic abuse.

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 PQ124894 [PQ124894.pdf]

■ Domestic Abuse: Poplar and Limehouse

Apsana Begum:

[\[124897\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the level of domestic abuse and violence in Poplar and Limehouse constituency.

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 PQ124897 [PQ124897.pdf]

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Telecommunications

Chi Onwurah:

[\[124752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how he plans to allocate the £250 million of diversification strategy funding.

Matt Warman:

The Government recognises that there is a need to work at pace to make early progress on 5G market diversification. As a first step towards delivering its long-term

vision, the Government has committed an initial investment of up to £250 million, to kick off work to deliver its key priorities. Implementation of the strategy will be led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Some of these priorities include: the establishment of a world-class National Telecoms Lab; investing in a R&D ecosystem; and seeking to lead a global coalition of like-minded partners to mount a coordinated international approach to diversification.

The Government's work in this area is informed by the Telecoms Diversification Taskforce, chaired by Lord Livingston and composed of independent experts from industry and academia. The Taskforce is advising my department on the design of targeted measures to deliver the Government's long-term vision for the market.

EDUCATION

■ Assessments: Coronavirus

Marco Longhi:

[\[124321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of cancelling examinations for (a) Key Stage 4 and (b) Key Stage 5 students in 2021 in response to the loss of in-person teaching time as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is clear that exams will take place in summer 2021. Exams are the fairest form of assessment.

GCSEs are an important assessment of attainment at a crucial stage of a pupil's progression at age 16, in England 71% of young people change institution. A levels open the door to the next stages of higher and vocational education at age 18. There is broad consensus backing the decision to hold exams because they are a critical part of the education system, giving students the foundations that they need to move on to the next stage of their life.

The Department recognises that there could be challenges for pupils being assessed in summer 2021, and we are preparing for all eventualities. The Department has announced a wide range of contingency measures, including an additional contingency paper for most subjects. We also recognise that pupils taking exams this year have faced disruption, and that is why grades in 2021 will be more generous, in line with outcomes from 2020. There will also be adaptations to exams, such as giving students advance notice of topic areas and exam support materials to ensure fairness at this exceptional time.

The Department will continue to work with Ofqual, exam boards, and representatives of the sector to ensure exams can take place successfully in the summer.

■ Children: Disadvantaged

Robert Halfon: [\[124721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department took to estimate private device ownership to inform its allocation of devices to support disadvantaged children in the 2020-21 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has based allocations on estimates of children in years 3 to 11 without a device. The Department used data on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, which was effectively equivalent to the estimate of children without private devices, and external estimates of the number of devices that schools already own.

Schools, local authorities and academy trusts can request additional devices if their allocation from the Department does not meet their needs. These requests can be submitted to covid.technology@education.gov.uk.

■ Children: Social Services

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[125246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the planned timescale is for Care Review, announced in December 2019.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[125247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria is being applied to the selection of a chair for the Care Review, announced in December 2019.

Vicky Ford:

The review of children's social care will be broad and bold and take a fundamental look across children's social care, with the aim of better supporting, protecting and improving the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people. The urgent local and national response to COVID-19 has delayed launching the review, but we are making preparations to launch as soon as possible and will set out further details at that point.

■ Class Sizes

Colleen Fletcher: [\[124765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the average class size in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in (i) Coventry North East Constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England.

Nick Gibb:

Average class size statistics are contained in the National Statistics release 'Schools pupils and their characteristics' and available at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

In the 'Download associated files' section, the file 'Class sizes – state-funded primary and secondary schools' has this information at national, regional and local authority level. The file 'school level underlying data – class sizes' has school level information that can be filtered at parliamentary constituency level. The release also has a function to create bespoke tables. For convenience, this link provides a table for Coventry, the West Midlands and England: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/3576031b-f586-4e21-8f12-f4650fe80205>.

■ Department for Education: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[124839\]](#)

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

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not operate any fleet vehicles for official use. All Ministers have access to the Government Car Service provided by the Department for Transport.

■ Foster Care: Care Leavers

Tulip Siddiq: [\[124267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funding his Department has allocated to local authorities for the delivery of the Staying Put programme in financial year 2021-22.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[124268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to set minimum allowances for Staying Put carers supporting young people aged from (a) 18 to (b) 20.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[124269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to update its guidance entitled Staying put: arrangements for care leavers aged 18 years and above, published on 22 May 2013.

Vicky Ford:

Since its introduction in 2014, the department has provided over £140 million to local authorities to support local implementation of Staying Put, including £33 million in 2020/21 (an increase of £9 million (40%) from 2019/20). This has helped thousands of young people to remain with their former foster carers for longer and make a more gradual transition to independence. Funding for Staying Put for the financial year 2021/22 will be confirmed once the department's internal Spending Review discussions have concluded.

The latest data – for year ending March 2019 - show that 55% of eligible 18 year olds chose to Stay Put; and 31% of 19 year olds and 21% of 20 year olds were also still living with their former foster carers. Care leavers who Stay Put are twice as likely to

go to university and half as likely to be not in education, employment or training compared to all care leavers.

The government does not believe that introducing a national minimum allowance for Staying Put carers is the right way forward. Unlike children in foster care, young people in Staying Put arrangements are adults, and may be in work, or claiming benefits (including housing benefit). These sources of income can be used to contribute to the cost of providing the Staying Put arrangement, in a similar way that young people who are still living at home with their parents may contribute to the costs of running the household. We therefore believe the level of financial support that Staying Put carers receive should be agreed on a case by case basis.

The department is aware of the need to update the Staying Put guidance that was published in 2013 and will endeavour to prioritise this work as soon as possible.

■ Pupils: Attendance

Jon Trickett: [\[124128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils classed as vulnerable were attending school as at 1 December 2020.

Jon Trickett: [\[124130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils classed as SEND were attending school as at 1 December 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not collect attendance information for all pupil characteristics, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We do collect attendance data for vulnerable children with an education health and care plan (EHCP) and/or social worker on a daily basis. This data is published at a national level as part of the official statistics series. The publication can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>. Data covering the period including 1 December will be published on 8 December.

We estimate that on 26 November 78% of all pupils with an EHCP on roll in all state funded schools were in attendance, and 78% of all pupils with a social worker on roll in all state funded schools were in attendance.

Justin Madders: [\[124772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to Answer of 21 October to Question 104751 on the regional breakdown for pupils in attendance on 15 October in responding schools, if he will provide updated data for an equivalent day in November on school attendance by local authority.

Nick Gibb:

The Department collects data on both the open status of schools and the number of schools that have indicated they have sent pupils home due to COVID-19 containment on a daily basis. This data is published from this collection at a national

level as part of the official statistics series. The publication can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Data is published from 9 September 2020, but prior to 12 October 2020, information on pupils isolating was not collected. The Department intends to publish regional and local authority level data on 15 December 2020. This data will be included as part of the publication 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (Covid 19) outbreak'. The frequency of the publication 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (Covid 19) outbreak' will be reviewed in the new year.

The Department is constantly reviewing the content of its publications. Announcements about future content will be made through the official statistics release page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>.

■ Remote Education

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[124674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Vice-Chancellor of the Open University on virtual teaching in schools in England.

Nick Gibb:

Department for Education Ministers and officials have had meetings with a wide variety of organisations and individuals in the past year, including the Open University, to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on education. We welcome the Open University's positive contribution to these discussions. For many years, UK higher education (HE) providers have delivered education online successfully and effectively, with the Open University a leading proponent of this.

We recognise that, for some pupils and students, remote education will be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum this year, alongside on-site teaching. Schools have been working extremely hard to develop remote education contingency plans and put these into practice.

To help schools meet the expectations for remote education set out in the schools guidance for full opening, the Government has invested in a remote education support package. This includes helping schools to access technology that supports remote education, as well as peer-to-peer training and guidance on how to use technology effectively. It also includes practical tools, a good practice guide and school-led webinars to support effective delivery of the curriculum, as well as information on issues such as safeguarding and statutory duties and expectations. The support package can be accessed through our Get Help with Remote Education page at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>.

Details of Ministerial and Permanent Secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-2020>.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rosie Cooper:

[124703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the risk to clinically extremely vulnerable parents of sending their children to school.

Nick Gibb:

Updated guidance on protecting clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, developed by the Department of Health and Social Care, was published on 26 November 2020. The advice outlined within this guidance states that children and young people whose parents or carers are clinically extremely vulnerable should still attend education and childcare. This remains the default position for all areas irrespective of local restriction tiers. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>.

Education and childcare is vital to the wellbeing of children and young people. Time out of nursery, school and college is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development.

Schools, nurseries and colleges have implemented a range of protective measures recommended by the Public Health England-endorsed guidance published by the Department for Education which, when followed, creates an inherently safer environment for pupils, staff and families. The guidance can be found here:

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

If parents or carers are anxious about their child attending education, we recommend that they discuss this with their school leaders to understand their concerns and provide reassurance regarding the protective measures that have been put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission at school, nursery or college.

Clive Lewis:

[124796]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much additional funding has been allocated to schools in (a) Norfolk and (b) Norwich South constituency for health and safety adaptations during the covid-19 outbreak.

Clive Lewis:

[124797]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much additional funding has been allocated to schools in (a) Norfolk and (b) Norwich South constituency for the provision of personal protective equipment to keyworkers in schools.

Nick Gibb:

Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in the 2020-21 financial year, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to the 2019-20 financial year. This increase in funding will help schools with costs

associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. As stated in our guidance, schools should use their existing resources when making arrangements for the autumn term. This guidance can be accessed here:

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

This year, Norfolk is receiving an extra £25 million for schools, an increase of 3.8% per pupil. This takes total funding for the 2020-21 financial year in the local authority to over £507 million. Norwich South is receiving an extra £1.5 million for schools this year, an increase of 3.0% per pupil. This takes total funding for the 2020-21 financial year in the constituency to over £55 million.

Keeping schools, nurseries and colleges open is a national priority. The Department has announced a new COVID-19 workforce fund for schools and colleges to help them to remain open. It will fund the cost of teacher absences over a certain threshold for those schools and colleges facing high staff absences and significant financial pressures. Guidance on the claims process will be published shortly.

On Friday 4 December the Department updated the guidance for exceptional costs associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. These instructions are to help schools claim exceptional costs that were not claimed for during the first window, which closed on 21 July 2020. Guidance on exceptional costs is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/claiming-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19/exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19--2>.

Over 9 million items of personal protective equipment have been delivered to schools, colleges and universities as part of 50,000 one-off deliveries distributed by the Department of Health and Social Care to build resilience across the education sector to respond to any suspected cases of COVID-19 on-site. This was a one-off delivery with no cost to schools.

■ Schools: Political Impartiality

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[124744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to (a) monitor and (b) enforce schools' compliance with the requirements on political impartiality in the provisions of the Education Act 1996.

Nick Gibb:

The law is clear that schools must remain politically impartial. School leaders and staff have a responsibility to ensure that they act appropriately, particularly in the political views they express. When political issues are discussed, schools must offer pupils a balanced presentation of opposing views and should not present materials in a politically biased or one-sided way.

As Ministers have made clear, political impartiality in our education system is an incredibly important principle to uphold. The Government is committed to ensuring children and young people receive a balanced education. The Department is

committed to enforcing this and it, and Ofsted, will not hesitate to act where necessary to help schools meet their legal duties.

■ Video Games: T-levels

Alex Sobel:

[\[124858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to develop a T-Level for the Video Games Industry.

Gillian Keegan:

The T Level in Digital Production and Development, which launched this September, covers a broad range of content based on the employer-led for software development technician standard. This T Level will support progression to entry-level job opportunities in this area, including Junior Games Developer roles, whilst other T Levels in Digital and in Creative and Design will develop skills that are directly relevant to the video games industry.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Luke Pollard:

[\[124863\]](#)

What recent assessment the Government has made of the preparedness of (a) manufacturers and (b) importers for UK REACH requirements to complete Downstream User Import Notifications by October 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

The Downstream User Import Notification (DUIN) provision is intended to ensure continuity of supply chains and provide time for businesses to comply with their new obligations as an importer under UK REACH. The measure will apply only to existing GB downstream users or distributors under EU REACH who were, at any time in the two-year period before 1 January 2021, already a downstream user or distributor under EU REACH established in GB in relation to a substance (and who did not have an EU REACH registration).

We are also ensuring continuity through the transitional provisions enabling GB based manufacturers to carry over their existing EU held registrations 'Grandfathered' into UK REACH. This will give them automatic access to the GB market. Businesses benefitting from this will have 120 days from 1 January 2021 to provide some basic information about the registered chemical.

In September, we announced an extension to the deadline for the submission of DUINs from 180 to 300 days from 1 January 2021. As a result, GB downstream users will have the opportunity to assess how existing EU REACH registrants, that have been Grandfathered into the UK REACH system, have met the 120-day deadline and use it to inform their own process. This decision was taken following engagement

with stakeholders to identify practical ideas on how we could help the industry make the transition from EU REACH to UK REACH.

We have published detailed guidance for chemical businesses so they know what actions they need to take. We have also been carrying out an extensive programme of business readiness activity, exploiting all of our networks across Government, trade associations and business representative organisations, to engage the hardest to reach areas of the sector on their new obligations and the steps they need to take to prepare. This includes direct correspondence sent to over 80,000 stakeholders within the chemicals industry and Defra policy officials speaking at over 450 stakeholder events over the last 18 months.

■ **Drugs: Litter**

Daisy Cooper:

[124311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of pollution from littering of (a) nitrous oxide cannisters, (b) plastic balloons and (c) other paraphernalia from the use of that gas for recreational purposes.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has made no specific assessment of the prevalence of pollution from littering of nitrous oxide cannisters, plastics balloons, or other paraphernalia from the use of nitrous oxide gas for recreational purposes.

Keep Britain Tidy has, however, recently undertaken a national survey, on behalf of Defra, to understand litter composition across the UK. Nitrous oxide cannisters did not feature in its findings, and balloon-related litter was only found in very small quantities. The report did not distinguish between balloon-related litter as a result of the use of nitrous oxide gas for recreational purposes and other uses for balloons. The report is available at:

www.keepbritaintidy.org/sites/default/files/resources/20200330%20KBT%20Litter%20Composition%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf

It is an offence to drop litter of any kind, and councils have legal powers to take enforcement action against offenders. Anyone caught littering may be prosecuted in a magistrates' court, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500 on conviction. Instead of prosecuting, councils may decide to issue a fixed penalty (on-the-spot fine) of between £65 and £150.

The Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced powers, such as Public Space Protection Orders, which the police and local councils can use to prevent people from taking intoxicating substances, including psychoactive substances such as nitrous oxide, in specified areas.

■ Incinerators: Air Pollution

Jane Hunt:

[\[124345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to reduce levels of PM_{2.5} pollution (a) in total and (b) emitted from (i) existing and (ii) future incinerators.

Rebecca Pow:

Our Clean Air Strategy, published in 2019, set out the comprehensive action required across all parts of Government and society to reduce our emissions of five key pollutants, including particulates, to meet legally binding targets for 2020 and 2030.

We are taking action now to deliver these commitments. For example, we recently passed legislation to phase out the sale of house coal and small volumes of wet wood for domestic burning across England – measures focused on tackling a key source of PM_{2.5}.

Our landmark Environment Bill delivers key parts of the Strategy. It introduces a duty to set a legally binding target for fine particulate matter, in addition to a further long-term air quality target. In August, Government published a policy paper on environmental targets which outlined our objectives for air quality targets – to reduce the annual mean level of PM_{2.5} in ambient air and reduce population exposure to PM_{2.5} in the long-term.

Emissions from incinerators in England are regulated by the Environment Agency under environmental permits. Permits contain limits for total particulate matter (TPM) which includes particulates of all sizes, including PM_{2.5}. All incinerator permits issued since 3 December 2019 have contained a lower daily average TPM limit of 5 mg/Nm³ (compared with permits issued before then for which the limit was 10 mg/Nm³). Permits for incinerators issued before 3 December 2019 will be changed to require compliance with the lower 5 mg/Nm³ limit by 3 December 2023. Operators must continuously monitor their TPM emissions and the Environment Agency carries out regular inspections and audits to ensure that plants are complying with their permits.

■ Microplastics: Seas and Oceans

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[124675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to prevent microplastics from tyre degradation from flowing into rivers and seas.

Rebecca Pow:

A Defra-funded study concluded that particles released from vehicle tyres during use could be a significant and previously unrecorded source of microplastics in the marine environment. This research advanced understanding of ways in which microplastics enter the marine environment and highlighted the complex problem of microplastic pollution to the marine environment from various sources and pathways.

The Department for Transport is currently commissioning research to better understand tyre and brake wear emissions from road vehicles. It is anticipated that the knowledge developed in this project will lay the foundation for improved ways to assess and control these emissions.

■ **Portsmouth Port: Recruitment**

Stephen Morgan: [\[124295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on recruiting staff to support the processing of livestock at the port of Portsmouth following the end of the transition period.

Stephen Morgan: [\[126967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Government support to recruit veterinary staff to process livestock (a) nationally and (b) at the Portsmouth International Port for after the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

Exports of livestock to the EU will require an Export Health Certificate (EHC), certified by a suitably qualified Official Veterinarian (OV), following the end of the transition period. Checks on EHCs will take place at the Border Control Post (BCP) of arrival in the EU, as opposed to the port of departure in Great Britain (GB). Generally, livestock animals already require a form of veterinary certification to move between GB and the EU. The training required for vets to certify ungulate exports has been made available free of charge by the Government and we expect sufficient resource will be available as a result. There are currently approximately 700 OVs authorised to certify ungulate exports across GB.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) already carry out controls on live animal imports. From 1 January they will continue to carry these out at destination, meaning that there will be no controls on imported live animals at ports, including Portsmouth. The APHA will ensure that the necessary live animal inspection resources are in place in time for July 2021, when all live animals imports will need to enter GB via an established point of entry with an appropriate Border Control Post (BCP).

■ **Roads: Air Pollution**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[124677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the effect on air quality of (a) road surface wear and (b) road dust resuspension.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is supporting work on how air quality is affected by road surface wear and road dust resuspension by gathering evidence needed and feeding in views to inform effective policies. In July 2018 we published a call for evidence^[1] to improve our

understanding of the extent and impact of emissions from brake, tyre and road wear and potential ways to address them, to inform future policy development on air quality. This evidence also informed a review led by the Air Quality Expert Group which was published in July 2019[2].

The Department for Transport will shortly commence a research project to understand better the measurement techniques, materials properties and control parameters of non-exhaust emissions from road vehicles. The knowledge developed in this project will inform what policy and legislation may be required to control and reduce these emissions. We will also continue our work with international partners to develop procedures to test and evaluate emissions from tyre and brake wear, with the potential to produce future regulatory standards.

[1] www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-brake-tyre-and-road-surface-wear-call-for-evidence/outcome/brake-tyre-and-road-surface-wear-call-for-evidence-summary-of-responses

[2] uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1907101151_20190709_Non_Exhaust_Emissions_typeset_Final.pdf

■ Tyres: Air Pollution

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[124676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of tyre degradation on air pollution.

Rebecca Pow:

At Defra's request, the Air Quality Expert Group produced a report considering the whole range of non-exhaust emissions resulting from road vehicles, i.e. tyre degradation, road surface wear and brake wear.

https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1907101151_20190709_Non_Exhaust_Emissions_typeset_Final.pdf

Particulate emissions from non-exhaust emissions are estimated to make up 7.4% of total UK emissions of fine particulates (PM_{2.5}) according to the 2016 National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory and tyre wear comprises approximately 2.5% of this.

Regarding emission reduction from tyre wear, tyre design and formulation is an important option for reducing emissions and we will continue to work with international partners seeking to develop new international regulations for particulate emissions from tyres and brakes through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, as well as with other international initiatives.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ British Council: Pay****John McDonnell:**[\[124102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase the remuneration of British Council employees; when a pay award will be made; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

This has been a uniquely challenging time for the British Council and its finances, and HMG have worked hard to provide additional financial support in a time of strain on public finances. The FCDO has provided an additional £26 million Grant in Aid in 2019-20 and a £60 million loan in June 2020, with further financial support to be provided in the New Year.

■ China: Forced Labour**Chris Evans:**[\[126010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of whether personal protective equipment has been imported in to the UK which is the result of forced labour in the Xinjiang province of China.

Nigel Adams:

The Government takes all allegations of modern slavery and forced labour extremely seriously. We expect suppliers to follow the highest legal and ethical standards and to carry out proper due diligence for all government contracts. We continue to urge all businesses involved in investing in Xinjiang, or with parts of their supply chains in Xinjiang, to conduct appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support, or risk being seen to support, any human rights violations or abuses.

■ Early Rain Covenant Church**Ruth Jones:**[\[124866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of reports of harassment of members of Early Rain Church in China during the pandemic; and whether he has made representations to his Chinese counterpart about the alleged harassment.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of credible reports of the closure or demolition of unregistered churches in some areas of China, including the Early Rain Covenant Church and the arrest and detention of its Pastor Wang Yi.

In January 2020 Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, raised concerns about his sentence to 9 years in prison after a

secret trial. We regularly raise our concerns about restrictions on freedom of religion and belief with the Chinese authorities.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Recruitment**

John McDonnell: [\[124101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what equalities impact assessment he has made of his Department's policy to reserve certain job roles for British nationals.

Nigel Adams:

A full equalities impact assessment (EIA) was conducted to fully understand the potential impacts on protected characteristics.

John McDonnell: [\[124105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he made of the potential merits of a hybrid approach in terms of nationality and reserved posts for his Department, as is operational at the Home Office.

Nigel Adams:

The most appropriate approach is the chosen one: reserving new recruitment into the FCDO to UK Nationals, while allowing flexibility for existing valued staff, who are non-UK nationals, to continue their careers within the FCDO. Many factors, including nationality, were considered in drawing up this approach.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff**

John McDonnell: [\[124103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Overseas Development Aid budget to 0.5% of GDP on the number staff required in his Department.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO is a new organisation which undertakes a diverse range of responsibilities. That remains the case despite the temporary ODA reduction and there will be no compulsory redundancies. We have begun the process of integrating the development and diplomatic functions of the FCDO and determining the mix of skills which will best meet its needs. We expect that process to deliver a more effective organisation better able to meet the UK's international ambitions. We maintain our status as one of the leading countries in the world in terms of our ODA spend and remain firmly committed to helping the world's poorest people.

John McDonnell: [\[124104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in the Overseas Development Assistance budget on (a) career progression and (b) potential redundancies of staff employed by his Department.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO is a new organisation which undertakes a diverse range of responsibilities. That remains the case despite the temporary ODA reduction and there will be no compulsory redundancies. We have begun the process of integrating the development and diplomatic functions of the FCDO and determining the mix of skills which will best meet its needs. We expect that process to deliver a more effective organisation which will meet the reasonable career aspirations of its staff.

■ **India: Air Pollution****Jim Shannon:**[\[124188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Indian Government on tackling air pollution in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The Minister of State for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has led UK discussions on air pollution with Indian interlocutors. In November, he virtually participated in the 'Clean Air Street Project' launch in Bengaluru supported by the Newton Fund, led by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and delivered by Catapult Network and Indian partners. He also noted the importance of UK-India collaboration in building climate resilient cities when speaking at the Bengaluru Tech Summit and, in separate discussions, shared UK experiences of London's Ultra Low Emissions Zones (ULEZ) with the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE■ **Blood: Donors****Colleen Fletcher:**[\[104113\]](#)

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

Helen Whately:

Demand for blood decreased by around one third at the outset of the coronavirus pandemic but has returned to normal levels. NHS Blood and Transplant's blood collection levels have been impacted by the requirement to make the blood sessions COVID-19 secure and shortfalls in staffing levels in some areas. NHS Blood and Transplant has increased its capacity for blood collection by recruiting more staff and opening new temporary blood collection centres.

The situation is monitored daily and NHS Blood and Transplant has continued to fulfil hospitals' orders.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Derek Twigg:

[\[124685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 1 December 2020, Official Report column 262, in which (a) clinical commissioning group and (b) local authority areas he has managed to keep cancer services going at over 100% of their normal last year.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement collect and publish official cancer waiting times data by clinical commissioning group but not at local authority level.

The attached table shows activity compared to last year, September 2019 compared to September 2020 for general practitioner referrals to first appointment to see a cancer specialist and the 31-day decision to first treatment for cancer standard, by clinical commissioning group.

The Government has been clear from the start of the pandemic that cancer treatment and care must continue.

Attachments:

1. Waiting Times [PQ124685 data redraft.xlsx]

■ Children: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[120834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will publish further guidance for joint-custody parents in the event that their child or children need to self-isolate due to a suspected or confirmed case of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

If a child has been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, their parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring they do so. Where possible, the parents or guardians should arrange for a child to remain at the same address during their period of self-isolation. There are a limited number of circumstances where an individual may leave self-isolation, including where there is a need to fulfil a legal obligation or it becomes impracticable to remain at the original address provided for self-isolation. These circumstances may apply where there are legal arrangements governing the time a child spends with each parent. We do not offer advice on specific circumstances as each scenario is different for every family.

■ Coronavirus: Battersea

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[93675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when adequate covid-19 testing capacity will be available to allow Battersea residents with covid-19 symptoms to get tested within a reasonable distance of their home.

Helen Whately:

The nearest testing sites for Battersea residents are at Grosvenor Hall, Vincent Street, Westminster and Wheatsheaf Community Hall, Wheatsheaf Lane in Lambeth. Between 12 November and 18 November, the median distance to a testing site was 2.5 miles, nationally.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Julian Sturdy:**[\[116466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date his Department will be making assessments of what covid-19 local alert level tier each local authority will revert to from 2 December 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

On 26 November, the Government announced the alert level tier for each area which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions>

Ian Mearns:[\[121833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the methodology that was used to determine which tier of covid-19 restrictions apply to each region of England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 2 December 2020]:

Decisions on tiers are made by Ministers based on public health recommendations informed by the case detection rate in all age groups and in particular, among those over 60 years olds; how quickly case rates are rising or falling; positivity in the general population; pressure on the National Health Service; and local context and exceptional circumstances such as a local but contained outbreaks.

As decisions are informed by a range of factors, it is possible for variation between individual factors when comparing areas.

Emma Hardy:[\[121902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department uses to determine which areas are under tier 3 covid-19 restrictions.

Emma Hardy:[\[121903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish the scientific evidence used to determine which areas are under tier 3 covid-19 restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Decisions on tiers are made by Ministers based on public health recommendations informed by the case detection rate in all age groups and in particular, among those over 60 years old; how quickly case rates are rising or falling; positivity in the general

population; pressure on the National Health Service; and local context and exceptional circumstances such as a local but contained outbreaks.

As decisions are informed by a range of factors, it is possible for variation between individual factors when comparing areas.

■ **Coronavirus: Females**

Charlotte Nichols: [\[124333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research his Department is undertaking on the longer-term health impacts of covid-19 for women.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation, have launched a £20 million joint research call to fund ambitious and comprehensive research to understand and address the longer term physical and mental health effects of COVID-19 in individuals who contracted the virus but were not hospitalised. The aim is to support two or three large consortia and a number of extensions to existing studies. These studies will be robust and of sufficient scale with the potential to include analysis of factors such as gender.

There are also several other large Departmental and NIHR-supported surveillance studies which are looking to understand the importance of factors such as age and potentially gender in determining COVID-19 disease severity, for example Virus Watch and the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children.

■ **Coronavirus: Food**

Caroline Lucas: [\[123560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued on how many scotch eggs constitute a substantial meal under proposed Tier 2 covid-19 restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 December 2020]: Comprehensive guidance on the new tiering system is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The concept of a substantial meal is long established in law, for example in the Licensing Act 200, and in the practice of the hospitality industry, and is readily familiar to those who operate and regulate licensed premises.

■ **Coronavirus: Gyms**

Rebecca Long Bailey: [\[122737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the (a) viability and (b) safety of gym classes being permitted to take place in tier 3 areas of covid-19 restrictions.

Alberto Costa:

[122773]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the present capacity limits in place for weddings in Tiers 1 and 2 of the proposed local lockdown restrictions; and whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of increasing these capacity limits in line with relaxed restrictions in areas located in Tiers 1 and 2.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government are committed to publishing data that has informed its decision making, including the tier allocations. The Department publishes a weekly watchlist giving epidemiological COVID-19 data for each lower-tier local authority in England. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-cases-by-local-authority-epidemiological-data>

Detailed data on hospital activity can be found at the following link:

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

The public dashboard on the progress of the virus across a range of metrics is updated daily at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk>

The Contain framework sets out how national and local partners work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks, this includes the allocation of areas to the appropriate tier, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>

Epidemiological data and projection models on local restriction tiers, including commentary on individual tier allocation decisions is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938964/Coronavirus_England_briefing_26_November.pdf

This provides further information and context beyond the headline metrics as to why areas are in particular tiers currently.

■ **Coronavirus: Holiday Accommodation**

Barbara Keeley:

[124709]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 Schedule 3, Part 2(12)(5), whether there are restrictions on who can stay in (a) hotels and (b) other overnight accommodation in tier 3 areas during the Christmas period.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: Between 23 and 27 December, people may travel between tiers and other nations of the United Kingdom, if necessary to meet with other households in their Christmas 'bubble' or return home. Once at their destination, they should follow the rules in that tier.

Individuals can stay in a hotel during the Christmas period, including accommodation in tier 3 areas, or with other members of your household. People can only meet their Christmas bubble in a hotel if it is the primary residence of one of the members of their bubble. This is also the case for other types of non-private residence, for example an educational establishment or bed and breakfast. Those in a Christmas bubble must not mix in any shared facilities or spaces, like a restaurant. However, households or bubbles can stay in private rented accommodation.

■ Coronavirus: Hospitality Industry**John Spellar:****[108205]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) advice and (b) evidence informed his decision to propose a 10 pm curfew on hospitality venues.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies highlighted that alcohol consumption may increase risk of non-compliance with social distancing and that gatherings in hospitality are higher risk of transmission. This was highlighted also in Public Health England's Weekly Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report which stated 13% of positive COVID-19 cases reported eating out in the time before symptom onset, when there is a high risk of transmission. The report is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923668/Weekly_COVID19_Surveillance_Report_week_40.pdf

■ Coronavirus: Ice Skating**Lilian Greenwood:****[123574]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what scientific evidence informed his decision not to allow ice rinks to reopen under tier three local covid alert level restrictions.

Lilian Greenwood:**[123575]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what scientific evidence informed his decision not to allow bowling alleys to reopen under tier three local covid alert level restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 December 2020]: The Government is committed to publishing data that has informed its decision making, including the tier allocations. The

Department publishes a weekly watchlist giving epidemiological COVID-19 data for each lower-tier local authority in England. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-cases-by-local-authority-epidemiological-data>

Detailed data on hospital activity is available at the following link:

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>

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This provides further information and context beyond the headline metrics as to why areas are in particular tiers currently.

■ **Coronavirus: Laboratories**

Ian Murray:

[92754]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff are employed at the Lighthouse Laboratories facility in Glasgow; and how many have been employed at the facility in each month since it opened.

Helen Whately:

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

■ **Coronavirus: Nutrition**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[122747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what clinical guidelines his Department has developed on assessing and managing the nutritional needs of patients with covid-19 (a) in hospital and (b) on discharge into the community.

Jo Churchill:

Nutrition assessment tools like the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool are used in hospitals and in the community to assess a person's individual needs and can be used to develop a care plan.

There are no specific nutritional assessment or nutritional management tools for patients with COVID-19 either in hospital or in the community.

■ Coronavirus: Oldham**Jim McMahon:**[\[102139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of the local covid-19 lockdown restrictions imposed on Oldham in August 2020 relating to (a) meeting outdoors, (b) funeral mourner attendance and (c) public transport use.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 16 October 2020]: In August, aggregated mobility information from multiple data sources suggested that time spent in household settings, be that outdoors or at family events, fell somewhat after the ban on household mixing. Time spent at transit stations also fell markedly across Greater Manchester following the August measures. The number of household contacts in contact tracing data fell following local interventions in Oldham and following the national rule of six. COVID-19 infections subsequently fell in Oldham.

The Government continues to assess the transmission of COVID-19 and the impact of local interventions on its trajectory. At the start of November, 'R' was above one everywhere and the virus was more widespread in the North West. Further action was required to address the rise in cases. The national restrictions took effect on 5 November in response to the continued threat of the epidemic in its second wave. These ended on 2 December. The tiers of interventions will be strengthened in comparison to the previous tiers to prevent a return to growing infections.

■ Coronavirus: Public Houses and Clubs**Chris Grayling:**[\[122592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will allow pubs and clubs to waive the covid-19 substantial meal rule if a customer can provide medical evidence of an eating disorder.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The concept of a substantial meal is long established in law, for example in the Licensing Act 2003, and in the practice of the hospitality industry and is readily familiar to those who operate and regulate licensed premises. There is no obligation on licensees or their staff to regulate the possible clinical aspects of their customers' choice of meal.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[121882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what wellbeing and mental health support he is making available to vulnerable people shielding during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Every Mind Matters site is available to everyone with advice and practical steps that people can take to support their wellbeing and manage their mental health during this pandemic. Anyone concerned about their mental health should speak to their general practitioner or existing care team or can access further advice via NHS.UK. Online self-referral options are commonly available for some services including children and young people's mental health services, and [psychological therapies services](#) for adults with common mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

All mental health providers, including providers of psychological therapies, have been issued with guidance to encourage them to deliver care remotely so that vulnerable groups can receive care safely and 24 hours a day, seven days a week urgent mental health helplines have been established in all parts of England to provide support and advice to people experiencing a mental health crisis.

On 23 November 2020, we published our Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Plan for COVID-19, which set out the support available for individuals in the context of a second wave and the winter months, including for vulnerable people. It sets out the steps we have taken to strengthen the support available for people who are struggling, our commitments to ensure services are there to support those who need it and the provision in place to keep frontline workers well.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Stella Creasy:

[\[103496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) covid-19 test QR codes have been scanned at covid-19 test centres and (b) test results have been issued per day since August 1 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 October 2020]: We do not publish data in the format requested.

Jim McMahon:

[\[122830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many completed covid-19 tests have gone missing (a) nationally and (b) by local authority.

Helen Whately:

We do not publish data in the format requested.

Hilary Benn:

[\[124134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Government guidance that states, Anyone who has previously received a positive test result for covid-19 should only be re-tested within a 90-day period if they develop any new symptoms of covid-19, whether a person who has tested positive for covid-19 and has completed 14 days of isolation is required to isolate again if a subsequent test within 90 days is positive but the person is displaying no symptoms.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 December 2020]: A person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and has completed 14 days of isolation is required to isolate again if a subsequent test within 90 days is positive but the person is displaying no symptoms.

Anyone who has previously received a positive test result for COVID-19 should only be re-tested within a 90-day period if they develop any new symptoms of COVID-19. This is because it is possible for tests to detect residual virus for some time after COVID-19 infection.

■ **Coronavirus: Travel Restrictions**

Stephen Flynn:

[\[110905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on public health of the UK implementing travel restrictions similar to those implemented by New Zealand during the covid-19 pandemic.

Stephen Flynn:

[\[110906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he last discussed with Cabinet colleagues the potential merits of the UK implementing covid-19 travel restrictions similar to those implemented by New Zealand.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government's travel corridor policy remains a critical part of the COVID-19 response as it reduces the risk of importing infections from abroad, while at the same time permitting inbound travel from certain destinations without the need for travellers to self-isolate where the risk of importing COVID-19 is deemed sufficiently low. Travel corridors are informed by risk assessments provided by the Joint Biosecurity Centre, working closely with Public Health England.

■ **Coronavirus: Wakefield**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[102200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of covid-19 test results in Wakefield have been confirmed within (a) 24 hours and (b) 48 hours.

Helen Whately:

We do not publish data in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Yoga

Hilary Benn: [\[125946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk of transmission of covid-19 in yoga classes; and if he will make a statement.

Emma Hardy: [\[126114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether bingo clubs can reopen under tier 3 covid-19 restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Contain framework sets out how national and local partners work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks, this includes through allocation of areas to the appropriate tier, which available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>

We have also published supporting a document, to accompany the most recent regulations. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-health-economic-and-social-effects-of-covid-19-and-the-tiered-approach>

■ Coroners

Mr David Lammy: [\[122560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much NHS trusts have spent on legal representation, preparation and counsel for coroner's inquests in each year since 2013.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Information on the total spend by National Health Service trusts regarding coroner's inquests is not collated or held centrally. However, NHS Resolution, which handles clinical negligence claims for NHS bodies in England, has provided the following annual figures for inquest payments it has made on behalf of trusts as part of managing their clinical negligence claims.

INQUEST PAYMENTS

| Financial year | Total |
|----------------|------------|
| 2013/14 | £907,055 |
| 2014/15 | £138,879 |
| 2015/16 | £3,022,924 |
| 2016/17 | £1,340,977 |

INQUEST PAYMENTS

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 2017/18 | £1,684,258 |
| 2018/19 | £2,968,153 |
| 2019/20 | £2,223,580 |
| Grand Total | £12,285,826 |

Payments were made by NHS Resolution in accordance the rules of the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts to support trusts at inquests and for associated costs to investigate entitlement to compensation. NHS Resolution has no involvement in any arrangements that an individual trust might make outside of the scheme.

■ Dental Services: Isle of Wight**Bob Seely:**[\[107104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department (a) is taking and (b) plans to take to provide greater access to NHS dental care on the Isle of Wight.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 November 2020]: Dental practices were required to close for face to face care on 26 March 2020 due to COVID-19. Urgent care continued to be provided by practices, restricted to remote triage, advice, analgesia and antibiotics where appropriate. In April, urgent dental care (UDC) hubs were established in Cowes for patients who were at greater risk or shielding as well as Ryde for all other patients. In July a further UDC hub was established in Bembridge.

Since 8 June, practices have been able to see patients for face-to-face care. The pace of restoration of dental services is limited by public health measures on social distancing and the infection prevention control guidance. All National Health Service dental practices on the Isle of Wight are open and seeing patients who require urgent dental care which cannot be controlled by pain relief or assisted by antibiotics, those who were in a course of treatment that was not completed prior to the lockdown, and those who may be at greater risk of oral disease. Dental clinicians should identify and recall patients according to their clinical and professional judgement.

■ Dental Services: Mothers**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[122823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will extend the maternity exemption certificate for dental care to new mothers who declined to access dental care whilst pregnant during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 December 2020]: Pregnant women and new mothers who have given birth within the last 12 months are exempt from dental charges. There are no plans to extend maternity exemptions for dental treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Urgent dental treatment continued to be provided through the first national lockdown from over 600 urgent dental centres and urgent care is available now from all high street National Health Service dental practices. All NHS dental practices are required to comply with national infection, prevention and control guidance and personal protective equipment requirements to ensure the safe provision of care to patients.

Disability: Coronavirus**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[109553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has provided to local authorities on how to communicate different local lockdown rule changes in formats accessible for disabled people.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: We expect all local authorities to comply with the Accessible Information Standard. The Standard sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

The Government has provided information on tiers and the new local restrictions in an accessible format available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know-alternative-formats#history>

Genito-urinary Medicine and Gynaecology**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[122628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to consider the best interests of women when determining the future of Public Health England's reproductive and contraceptive care responsibilities.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[122629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness of sexual and reproductive healthcare commissioning responsibilities concurrently with the reorganisation of Public Health England.

Jo Churchill:

The Department are currently considering a range of options for where Public Health England's wider public health functions, including supporting the commissioning and delivery of sexual and reproductive health services, could sit in the future as part of

the reform to the public health system. We will be engaging in more detail on these issues and setting out next steps on the reform programme over the coming months.

■ Health: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[122604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 lockdown restrictions on (a) mental and (b) physical health.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

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

To further support people's mental health in the context of a second wave of COVID-19, and the winter months, we have brought forward our Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Plan for COVID-19 setting out the steps we have taken to strengthen the support available for people who are struggling, our commitments to ensure services are there to support those who need it and the provision in place to keep our frontline workers well.

On physical health, the Chief Medical Officer is clear that being physically active is important to long-term health and crucial for keeping people healthy during the ongoing pandemic. Evidence suggests that regular physical activity can promote good physical health and help manage stress and anxiety.

■ Heart Diseases: Health Services

Paul Bristow:

[R] [122911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on heart failure services in (a) the community and (b) primary care.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement promoted restoration of heart failure services as a priority as soon as the peak of the pandemic's first wave began to decline. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working with health professionals to support heart failure patients in the community through the roll-out of the NHS@Home self-management scheme.

NHS Long Term Plan work on improving heart failure services remains a priority for NHS England and NHS Improvement during the COVID-19 pandemic and NHS England and NHS Improvement's work includes improving the early diagnosis and management of patients with heart failure in primary care. General practice is open

and people should continue to access services by phone, online or in person. Practices have been encouraged to deliver as much routine and preventative work as can be provided safely, and supporting patients at higher risk with ongoing care needs.

Paul Bristow:

[R] [[122912](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the variation in the (a) availability and (b) quality of heart failure services (i) before and (ii) during the covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England published the NHS Long Term Plan, with heart failure a key priority. NHS Long Term Plan work on improving heart failure services, including reducing variation in the availability and quality of services as well as ensuring early and rapid access to heart failure diagnostic tests and treatment, remains a priority for NHS England and NHS Improvement during the pandemic.

As soon as the peak of the first wave of the pandemic began to decline, NHS England and NHS Improvement promoted restoration of services as a priority, including heart failure diagnostic and treatment services. The restoration of non-COVID-19 services is being prioritised at local level based on local demands. In October 2020 NHS England and NHS Improvement provided service protection plans to regional teams to ensure that critical services, such as cardiac surgery for patients with severe valvular disease, are maintained as far as possible during the second wave of COVID-19.

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Chris Grayling:

[[122586](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people currently being treated in hospital with covid-19 were infected after admission to hospital.

Chris Grayling:

[[122587](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people classified as covid-19 hospital admissions (a) had a positive test within 28 days of admission and (b) were tested positive after admission.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 3 December 2020]: Given the incubation period of the virus and local differences in application of testing protocols, it is not possible to definitively determine the number of people who contracted the virus while in hospital in England to date.

The published data shows that between 1 August and 3 November there were 33,719 estimated new hospital cases where the patient was admitted for the first time with COVID-19 or diagnosed in hospital. Of these 28,408 patients were admitted for the first time with COVID-19 or were diagnosed in hospital where the test was within seven days of admission and therefore hospital association is unlikely.

■ Mental Health Services

Jamie Stone:

[\[122844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to affordable (a) meditation, (b) mindfulness classes, (c) yoga, (d) pilates and (e) hitt workouts to improve people's mental health.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government is absolutely committed to supporting everyone's mental health and wellbeing throughout the winter period and beyond, and to ensuring that the right support is in place. The National Health Service has launched a major campaign as part of its 'Help Us Help You' campaign to encourage people who may be struggling with common mental health illnesses to come forward for help.

The NHS is also taking a holistic approach to supporting people's health and wellbeing by expanding its social prescribing services. Social prescribing enables general practitioners to refer people to link workers who can work with them to access community groups and agencies for practical, emotional and social support. For example, the recently announced ukactive scheme will make free gym and leisure sessions available to the public via social prescribing services. National rollout will start from 1 April 2021.

Jamie Stone:

[\[122846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to make specialised counselling and therapy services freely available on the NHS.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme provides specialist counselling and therapy services that are widely available for free from the National Health Service. We are committed to expanding access to IAPT services. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to ensuring that an additional 380,000 adults will be able to access IAPT services by 2023/24.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Elliot Colburn:

[\[123711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) the effectiveness of the tiers system in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and (b) the use of alternative therapeutic approaches for children who have experienced trauma.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

'Future in Mind', published by the Department and NHS England in 2015, recommended that children and young people's mental health services move away from the concept of tiers, in which the system is defined by the services that provide the care, towards models that are defined by how they address patients' needs.

NHS England has worked with Health Education England to deliver the children and young people's improving access to psychological therapies programme. It trains new

and existing staff working in children and young people's mental health services and includes evidence-based trauma informed practice.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has made recommendations on the psychological interventions for the prevention and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder in children and young people in its guideline.

■ **Mental Health Services: Publicity**

Jamie Stone:

[\[122845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to promote mental health services and counselling in increase the take-up of such services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We continue to expand access to talking and psychological therapies through the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme. IAPT services are promoted through Every Mind Matters, an online platform which contains resources to help people look after their wellbeing and mental health and local services can be located through NHS.UK. Data from 2019/20 shows that there were 1.69 million referrals to talking therapies in England and 1.17 million people started a course of treatment within this year. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to ensuring that a total of 1.9 million adults will be able to access IAPT services by 2023/24.

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

Tim Loughton:

[\[120765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to increase access to specialist children and young people's mental health provision, specifically for children in the first two years of life as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 30 November 2020]: Our ambition in the NHS Long Term Plan is to create a comprehensive offer for 0-25 year olds that reaches across mental health services for children, young people and adults.

Through the Plan we are increasing mental health funding by at least an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24. This will see an additional 345,000 children and young people, and 370,000 adults, accessing specialist mental health care if they need it.

In addition, the Rt hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom MP) is leading a new review, commissioned by the Prime Minister, into improving health outcomes of babies and young children. The review will consider the barriers that impact on early-years development, including social and emotional factors and early childhood experiences.

She is expected to submit her findings and policy recommendations from the first phase of the Review into Early Years Health in January 2021. This will contribute to the Government's vision for excellence in early-years health.

■ **Mental Health: Coronavirus**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[121881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect isolation has on the mental health of vulnerable people during periods of shielding.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government is aware of the challenges faced by clinically extremely vulnerable people. Throughout the pandemic, we have been clear on the need to balance the risks to this group with the benefits of gradually returning to normal life. Therefore, it was important to ensure that no-one was asked to shield unless absolutely necessary and shielding was paused at the earliest opportunity.

Updated guidance, issued on 2 December 2020, aims to strike a better balance between providing practical steps to help keep people safe while reducing some of the potentially harmful impacts on mental and social wellbeing that were associated with the previous shielding arrangements. It sets out the steps clinically extremely vulnerable people in each local tier can take to protect themselves and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

■ **NHS Test and Trace: Consultants**

Alyn Smith: [\[109653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the tendering process is for recruiting consultants to the NHS Test and Trace programme.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 4 November 2020]: Call off contracts from the Crown Commercial Framework which contain a preselected list of suppliers with standard terms and conditions have been used in the majority of awards.

■ **Postnatal Depression: Coronavirus**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[124815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on (a) post-natal depression and (b) support for people with post-natal depression.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: We recognise the impact of the pandemic and restrictions on people's mental wellbeing and are doing our utmost to ensure that

mental health services are there for everyone who needs them, including people with post-natal depression.

From April 2019, new and expectant mothers have been able to access specialist perinatal mental health community services in every part of the country. These services have continued to provide support during the pandemic with greater use of digital and remote technologies providing support and prioritising higher needs families.

From 1 April 2020 it has been a contractual requirement for general practitioners to offer a maternal postnatal consultation at six to eight weeks after birth which should focus on a review of the mother's physical and mental health and general wellbeing.

■ Prescriptions

Jim Shannon:

[\[123596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP practices have adopted electronic repeat dispensing; and what steps he is taking to increase uptake of electronic repeat dispensing.

Jo Churchill:

At the end of October 2020, 6,539 practices - almost every practice in England - have enabled the functionality to allow them to order prescriptions online.

In October 2019 regulation 60A (electronic repeat dispensing services) was introduced to the GP Contract. This requires a prescriber to issue an electronic repeatable prescription, where this is clinically appropriate for the patient and the patient has agreed to be issued with such a prescription.

■ Protective Clothing: Contracts

Gareth Thomas:

[\[123513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2020 to Question 109145, for the three hundred and seventy contracts that have been awarded by his Department for the supply of all types of personal protective equipment (PPE), what the location is of the each supplier by (a) nation and (b) region of the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Contract Award Notices are published for each contract which contain information on the name and address of the supplier.

This includes 27 United Kingdom-based manufacturers who were contracted to manufacture under the personal protective equipment 'Make' initiative for facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons, to build and maintain a domestic supply base for the future.

■ Protective Clothing: Procurement

Steve Reed:

[\[124760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to assist in procuring personal protective equipment for local authorities from 1 April 2021 when the current arrangement ends.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: In the recent Spending Review, it was announced that the Department would be provided with funding for 2021/2022 to cover ongoing COVID-19 related personal protective equipment (PPE) expenditure. We are currently analysing options for the future supply and distribution of PPE beyond March 2021.

We have seen a monumental change in the way that PPE has been secured and supplied across the country. We have learned a great deal from this experience and want to build on this to transition to a future model that is both resilient and proportionate.

■ Suicide: Older People

Scott Benton:

[\[123730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholder groups on trends in the level of suicide among elderly people.

Jo Churchill:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly engages with colleagues across Government on mental health and suicide prevention and meets regularly with suicide and self-harm prevention stakeholders, including meetings of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group.

■ Viral Diseases: Air Conditioning

Geraint Davies:

[\[114767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether air filters reduce the rate of transmission of viruses in indoor environments.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 November 2020]: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) considered the paper, 'Application of UV disinfection, visible light, local air filtration and fumigation technologies to microbial control' at meeting 37 on 19 May. Among the key findings of that paper are that the use of local air cleaning devices, including filter devices and ultraviolet C devices are unlikely to have significant benefit unless the airflow rate through the device is sufficient. The paper is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emg-role-of-ventilation-in-controlling-sars-cov-2-transmission-30-september-2020>

HOME OFFICE**■ Buildings: Fire Prevention**

Mr Jonathan Lord: [\[124742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress her Department has made on improving fire safety in buildings.

James Brokenshire:

The Government is making significant progress in improving fire safety. The Fire Safety Bill, which clarifies that external walls and flat entrance doors are within scope of the Fire Safety Order, has progressed through the majority of its stages in Parliament.

The Government has also published a fire safety consultation. We will soon publish a formal response and look to introduce Regulations as soon as practicable.

Alongside this the Government has progressed work on the Building Safety Bill, which recently completed its pre-legislative scrutiny. The Government will introduce this Bill before Parliament shortly.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Construction

Caroline Nokes: [\[124734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 3 December 2020 to Question 121241, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on adhering to Habitat Regulations and the need to implement nitrate mitigation measures when seeking permission for overnight accommodation in the Solent region.

Chris Philp:

The Home Secretary has regular meetings as part of the process of policy development and delivery. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings.

■ Windrush Generation: Compensation

Bambos Charalambous: [\[126099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many successful Windrush Compensation claims have been (a) paid and (b) completed.

Priti Patel:

Information on the Windrush Compensation Scheme claims that have been paid is available to view on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-november-2020>

Information on the number of Windrush Compensation Scheme claims that have been completed is not available in the public domain.

■ Windrush Generation: Finance**Dawn Butler:**[\[124692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what organisations have been allocated funding as part of the £500,000 allocation of the Windrush Schemes Community Fund; and what the future allocations will be made through that fund.

Priti Patel:

The Home Office has been working with the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group to co-design and deliver the £500,000 Windrush Community Fund. Further details, including eligibility criteria and when the Fund will be open for bids will be released shortly.

The Community Fund will provide community and grassroots organisations with funding to run promotional and outreach activity to raise awareness of the Windrush Compensation Scheme and the Windrush Scheme.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing: Construction****Rachael Maskell:**[\[124789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking, following the closure of the Community Housing Fund outside of London, to support the delivery of innovative low-cost mutual homeownership homes developed by community led housing groups which require capital grant funding but are not eligible for the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme.

Rachael Maskell:[\[124790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking, following the closure of the Community Housing Fund outside of London, to support the delivery of innovative low-cost mutual homeownership homes developed by community led housing groups which require capital grant funding but are not eligible for the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme.

Christopher Pincher:

Appropriately constituted community-based organisations (such as housing co-operatives or community land trusts) are able to apply to the Affordable Homes Programme for capital grant for low cost rental and shared ownership properties. The tenures for which capital grant is awarded from the Affordable Homes Programme are limited to social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, and rent to buy. Although anyone can apply for grant, subject to meeting Homes England's Investment Partners status, for low cost rental properties the landlord must be a registered provider of social housing. Under the Homes England Community Housing Fund, appropriately constituted community-based organisations were able to apply for capital grant in respect of mutual homeownership homes. That programme closed in March and there is therefore currently no provision for awarding capital grant in respect of mutual

homeownership homes. Homes England has no record of any applications for capital grant for “low-cost mutual homeownership” schemes having been submitted under the Community Housing Fund.

■ Domestic Abuse: Tower Hamlets

Apsana Begum: [\[124896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to ensure an adequate level of funding for the statutory duties in the Domestic Abuse Bill to enable Tower Hamlets council to provide support and protection to people experiencing domestic abuse and their children.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Following the outcome of the Spending Review announced on 25 November, £125 million new burdens funding will be allocated for the new duty to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation. My Department will publish further details on when funding will be released to local authorities in due course.

■ First Time Buyers: Government Assistance

Rosie Cooper: [\[124700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to support first-time buyers to buy their own home.

Christopher Pincher:

First Homes, our new home ownership scheme, will be prioritised for first-time buyers and will allow them to buy a new home with a discount of at least 30 per cent under market value. In some areas, the discounts could be as high as 50 per cent. This will significantly reduce both deposit and mortgage requirements and open up the dream of home ownership to even more people.

Our new Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme from April 2021 to March 2023 will be targeted at helping first-time buyers to get a foot on the property ladder.

As set out in the Conservative manifesto of December 2019, the Government will encourage a market in long-term fixed rate mortgages with low deposits to promote home ownership. We stand ready to work with the sector to explore the possible options to bring these products to market.

■ Floods and Green Belt: Planning Permission

Dr Liam Fox: [\[124649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that local communities' knowledge of green belt and flood plains is taken into account when planning applications are under consideration.

Christopher Pincher:

Local authorities are required to undertake a formal period of public consultation of not less than 21 days, prior to deciding a planning application. Effective consultation allows the local authority to identify and consider all relevant planning issues associated with the development proposed. Consultees, particularly those living near the site in question, may offer views or detailed information relevant to the consideration of the application. Where material considerations are raised by local residents, these must be taken into account by the local authority. The weight attached to a particular consideration is a matter of judgement for the local authority as the decision-maker in the first instance.

The Government's general expectations of the planning system with regard to the Green Belt and to flood risk are made clear in our National Planning Policy Framework. The Framework states, for instance, that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be directed away from areas at highest risk. If new homes are necessary in a flood risk area, and no suitable sites at lower risk are available, the local authority should ensure that the development will be safe, appropriately flood resistant and resilient, and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Where those tests are not met, development should not be allowed.

■ Housing: Health Hazards**Tulip Siddiq:****[124811]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he has taken to provide (a) oversight of and (b) funding for the process of tackling damp and mould in the homes of at-risk and vulnerable groups.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone, including vulnerable people, has a decent home. We are committed to improving standards in rented accommodation, including tackling damp and mould. MHCLG collects and published data on damp and mould here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/dwelling-condition-and-safety>

Social homes must be kept in a reasonable state of repair. On 14 November 2020, we published The Charter for Social Housing Residents: social housing white paper that sets out actions the government will take to ensure that residents, including those who are vulnerable and at risk, are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong.

For privately rented homes, we have given local authorities tough new powers to tackle poor conditions in the private rented sector including financial penalties of up to £30,000, Rent Repayment Orders, Banning Orders and the Database of Rogue landlords. Since 2019, we have awarded £6.7 million of grant funding - helping over 180 local authorities boost their enforcement work and support innovation.

■ Islam: Religious Hatred

Apsana Begum: [\[124889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of trends in Islamophobic hate crime since 2016.

Luke Hall:

The Government engages with Muslim communities in order to tackle hatred against them, this includes understanding issues and trends that drive hate crime. The Government publishes an annual hate crime statistical bulletin which shows the number of hate crimes recorded by the Police that are perceived to have an anti-Muslim motivation. In 2017-18 there were 2965 reports, in 2018-19 there were 3530 reports and in 2019-20 there were 3089 reports.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[124698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 2 October 2020 on a retrospective claim for a home modification, reference ZA53467.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The response was sent on Tuesday 8 December.

■ Private Rented Housing: Energy

Tulip Siddiq: [\[124810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he has taken to (a) identify at-risk and vulnerable groups in unlawful F- and G-rated homes for energy and (b) ensure that the landlords of those homes comply with minimum energy efficiency standards regulations.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government is committed to ensuring that everyone has a decent home, which is why minimum energy efficiency standards apply to all privately rented homes which are required to have an EPC, not just those occupied by vulnerable people.

As of April 2020, privately rented homes in England and Wales must have a minimum energy performance rating of EPC Band E, unless a valid exemption has been registered, but we are currently consulting on raising the minimum energy standard to EPC C by 2028.

Key to the effective delivery of minimum energy efficiency standards is their enforcement, which is the responsibility of local authorities. If a breach is confirmed, a local authority can issue a publication penalty and/or a total financial penalty of up to £5000 per breach per property.

To support local authorities, my colleagues at BEIS are conducting a Private Rented Sector Enforcement Pilot Study. The first phase of the study, which involved seven

local authorities in England, explored and tested bottom-up, local authority-generated solutions to monitoring, compliance and enforcement of minimum energy efficiency standards.

■ Religious Hatred: Islam

Apsana Begum: [\[124890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to tackle Islamophobia.

Apsana Begum: [\[124892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to tackle the level of Islamophobic hate crime in England and Wales.

Apsana Begum: [\[124899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps his Department has taken to tackle Islamophobia in (a) Tower Hamlets, (b) London and (c) England.

Luke Hall:

This Government has pledged to tackle prejudice, racism and discrimination. We already have some of the strongest legislation in the world to tackle hate crime and, where groups incite racial hatred or are engaged in racially or religiously motivated criminal activity, we would expect them to be prosecuted.

This Government's work to tackle the scourge of anti-Muslim hatred is extensive, and includes:

- supporting Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) with more than £2.8 million since 2016, helping to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred;
- providing almost £5 million through our Places of Worship Security Grant in the last two years alone - helping to secure and protect mosques and other places of worship

■ Rent to Buy Scheme

Mike Amesbury: [\[124309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many tenants under Rent to Buy schemes funded through Homes England or its predecessor, the Homes and Communities Agency, have transitioned to full ownership in the last (a) five and (b) 10 years in England.

Christopher Pincher:

Homes England does not collect post sales information on the Rent to Buy scheme.

■ Shared Ownership Schemes

Rosie Cooper:

[\[124702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Government's Shared Ownership Scheme.

Christopher Pincher:

Shared Ownership has a vital role to play in offering a route into home ownership to those who would otherwise struggle to afford it. In 2018-19, there were over 13,000 shared ownership sales recorded, with the median deposit required to buy a shared ownership home at £13,000. In total, 100,000 Shared Ownership homes have been delivered since 2010.

We recognise there is more to do to make Shared Ownership work better for aspiring homeowners which is why we have committed to reforming the standard model and extending it as widely as possible.

We have confirmed a new model for Shared Ownership, which will reduce the minimum initial share required to 10 per cent, introduce 1 per cent staircasing and introduce a 10-year period during which the landlord will support with the cost of repairs.

We believe these reforms will make the scheme more consumer friendly, more accessible and fairer, leading to a better experience for a future generation of shared owners.

■ Sleeping Rough: Veterans

Jon Trickett:

[\[124131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many ex-military personnel were sleeping rough as at (a) 1 January 2020 and (b) 1 December 2020.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Our veterans have played a vital role in keeping our country safe and we owe them a duty to ensure they are provided with all the support they need.

The annual Statutory Homeless Release for April 2019 to March 2020 showed that, of the total number of households assessed as owed a homelessness duty, 0.7 per cent had a support need relating to having served in Her Majesty's armed forces.

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires certain public authorities to refer members of the regular forces in England they consider to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days to a local housing authority, with the individual's consent. A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular armed forces has a priority need for accommodation.

■ Social Media: Bullying

Apsana Begum:

[\[124893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to reduce Islamophobic bullying and harassment on social media.

Luke Hall:

Muslims in our country should be able to practise their faith in freedom.

We have some of the strongest legislation in the world to tackle hate crime and, where groups incite racial hatred or are engaged in racially or religiously motivated criminal activity, we would expect them to be prosecuted. To strengthen this, we are working on the Online Harms policy. The online harms policy is focused on making the UK the safest place in the world to be online. Our approach to tackling online harms will support more users to participate in online discussions, by reducing the risk of bullying or being attacked on the basis of their identity (for example their gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion or age).

■ Veterans: Sleeping Rough

Luke Pollard:

[\[124861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the number of veterans of European armed forces rough sleeping in the latest period for which figures are available.

Kelly Tolhurst:

MHCLG does not collect data on how many veterans of European armed forces are sleeping rough.

We recognise that our veterans have played a vital role in keeping our country safe and we owe them a duty to ensure they are provided with all the support they need.

The annual Statutory Homeless Release for April 2019 to March 2020 showed that, of the total number of households assessed as owed a homelessness duty, 0.7 per cent had a support need relating to having served in Her Majesty's armed forces.

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires certain public authorities to refer members of the regular forces in England they consider to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days to a local housing authority, with the individual's consent. A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of Her Majesty's regular armed forces has a priority need for accommodation.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Morocco**

Navendu Mishra: [\[124336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government has issued arms exports licences for equipment or technology to Morocco for use in Western Sahara.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK. 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: 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. However, to determine whether licences granted were for use in the Western Sahara would require searches on each individual application, which could only be completed at disproportionate costs.

■ Department for International Trade: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[124837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of the vehicles used by her Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade uses the Government Car Service for vehicle provision. Cars provided to Departments by the Government Car Service will be included in the return for the Department for Transport.

■ Equal Rights Coalition

Emily Thornberry: [\[124694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the UK's co-chairmanship of the intergovernmental Equal Rights Coalition since July 2019.

Emily Thornberry: [\[124695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her (a) Commonwealth and (b) other international counterparts on progress towards the founding principles and commitments of the intergovernmental Equal Rights Coalition as a condition of agreeing or maintaining preferential trading relationships with the UK.

Greg Hands:

The Secretary of State continues to engage with a wide range of colleagues on issues across her portfolio. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is responsible for managing development of the Equal Rights Coalition

(ERC). In its role as co-chair of the ERC, the FCDO has conducted extensive engagement on the development of a UK led Five Year ERC Strategy, with both international partners, as well as Commonwealth member states. The Strategy is based on the founding principles and commitments of the ERC, which feature the important role business has to play in advancing LGBT equality.

■ **Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[124313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September to Question 78468 on Mozambique: Liquefied Natural Gas, what assessment he has made of when his Department will be able to conclude whether the Mozambique gas project funded by UKEF has resulted in lower emissions.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) concluded its climate change review of the Mozambique Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project (“the Project”), which considered its potential operational Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, in 2020.

The review concludes that the Project has used the best available technology to minimise emissions where possible, and these reductions are a result of optimisations to the Project’s Front-End Engineering and Design. As energy is to be generated on site (Scope 1), no Scope 2 emissions are expected from purchased electricity.

The Project’s Scope 3 emissions are produced predominantly by the use of the Project’s LNG.

The Project will report annually on its Scope 1 and 2 emissions once it is operational. UKEF will monitor the Project’s environmental, social, and human rights, including its annual reporting on emissions.

JUSTICE

■ **Domestic Abuse: Poplar and Limehouse**

Apsana Begum:

[\[124898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the availability of support services for victims of domestic abuse and violence in Poplar and Limehouse constituency.

Alex Chalk:

The Government continues to support victims of domestic abuse, including the provision of safe accommodation with support to ensure anyone fleeing from abuse has somewhere safe to go.

The Government pledged an unprecedented £76 million in May to help the most vulnerable in society during this challenging time. In addition, we announced a further

£11 million will go towards sexual violence and domestic abuse support services to ensure they continue providing their vital services during the pandemic.

£125m new funding was also provided towards the duty in the Domestic Abuse Bill, currently before Parliament, for Tier One local authorities to assess the need for, and commission, support to victims and their children in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England.

At a local level, for 2019/20, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime have spent over £8m on their London Victim and Witness Service which includes specialist support for survivors of domestic abuse and provision of Independent Domestic Violence Advisors. Also, we have:

- Provided £16.6m to 75 local authority led projects for delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse, within safe accommodation, helping up to 43,000 survivors in 2020/21. This included £3.96 million for projects led by London local authorities, including £94,452 for Tower Hamlets;
- Launched a £10 million Emergency Support Fund for refuge charities, with all funding now allocated to over 160 organisations, providing almost 1900 bed spaces; and
- Announced £6 million Domestic Abuse Capacity Building Funding for councils to help them prepare for the new duty to provide support in safe accommodation. This included £50,000 for the Greater London Authority.

■ Ministry of Justice: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[124843\]](#)

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

Alex Chalk:

Of the 225 vehicles used by the MoJ on Government Business, 11% are electric vehicles.

The MoJ is committed to reducing our carbon emissions and follow Government guidelines to ensure we consider the environmental impact when purchasing/using vehicles. By replacing vehicles with those that achieve the latest European Environmental standard and installing charging points across the estate, the MoJ is currently on target to achieve 25% of electric vehicles by the end of 2021.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ Leader of the House: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[124841\]](#)

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

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. member to the response from the Cabinet Office (124846).

TRANSPORT**■ Coastal Areas: South East****Giles Watling:**[\[124860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) Clacton constituency and (b) deprived coastal areas in the South are included in the Government's levelling up agenda.

Andrew Stephenson:

We are committed to levelling up opportunity across the UK – by boosting jobs, wages and prospects for all communities. The government is launching a new Levelling Up Fund worth £4bn for England. This will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery. We will publish more detail on the criteria for assessing bids in the prospectus.

The Department is also working to implement the findings of the Green Book Review to better reflect the government's strategic objectives in business cases, particularly on levelling up.

■ Govia Thameslink Railway: Maidstone Railway Line**Tom Tugendhat:**[\[124231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answers of 6 March 2020 to Question 22006 and 24 March 2020 to Questions 30018, 30019 and 30020, if he will urgently meet with representatives of Govia Thameslink Railway, Network Rail and local hon. Members to discuss progress on ensuring the delivery of Thameslink rail services on the Maidstone East line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I have asked my officials to arrange such a meeting with my Honourable Friend and other relevant MPs.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Regulation**Jim Shannon:**[\[126037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with transport associations on regulating the size of so-called mega lorries.

Rachel Maclean:

There have been no meetings between the Secretary of State or junior ministers with transport associations specifically about larger lorries. Ministers have had many meetings with transport association representatives about policy issues in other

contexts (for example responding or recovering from COVID-19 and EU transition). In some cases, the issue of permissible lorry dimensions has been discussed, including in relation to two proposals being consulted about related to longer semi-trailers and the maximum weights for certain intermodal journeys.

■ Railways: Fares

Jo Gideon: [\[124338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reforming the regulations governing rail fares to reflect changes in working patterns.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government recognises the impact of Covid-19 on people's travel patterns and therefore the need to accommodate a more flexible style of working and commuting.

The Department has proactively approached the rail industry and is currently considering proposals received from train operators that try to ensure better value and convenience for travellers, but these are unprecedented times and our immediate focus must be on ensuring that we keep the railway available and safe for those who need to rely upon it.

■ Railways: Freight

Dr Luke Evans: [\[124874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria he uses to determine the site of rail freight interchanges.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government's support for Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) is set out in the National Networks National Policy Statement which provides a clear framework for SRFI developers, local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate. The Secretary of State for Transport uses the framework as a primary basis for making decisions on development consent applications for SRFIs.

The National Policy Statement does not, however, specify where SRFIs should be located. Instead, it provides a framework for private sector developers to bring forward proposals through the planning system if they are deemed to be operationally and commercially viable.

■ Southeastern: Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements

Tom Tugendhat: [\[124232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what incentives are included within the Emergency Recovery Measures Agreement between his Department and Southeastern for good performance and punctuality; and how those incentives differ from the incentives for good performance and punctuality included within the first Emergency Measures Agreement signed between his Department and Southeastern in March 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Under EMA's, Operators will be paid a maximum of 2% of the cost base of the franchise before the COVID-19 pandemic began, with an element of the fee conditional on operators meeting performance, passenger experience and efficiency targets.

The Management Fee is a fixed periodic fee, and is payable at the end of the EMA whilst the Performance Fee covers the EMA Period, with fixed amounts based on an Operators performance, payable after a performance review has taken place.

Tom Tugendhat:[\[124234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on how many days there were delays on the (a) Southeastern Mainline and (b) Medway Valley Line since Southeastern signed an Emergency Measures Agreement with his Department in March 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Unfortunately, the information required to provide answer to this Parliamentary Question is not held within the Department and therefore should be directed to Network Rail on PublicAffairs@networkrail.co.uk who will be able to assist.

■ Southeastern: Kent**Tom Tugendhat:**[\[124233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many services on the Southeastern Mainline terminating at (a) Dover Priory and (b) Ramsgate have skipped stops since the franchise signed an Emergency Measures Agreement with his Department in March 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Unfortunately, the information required to provide answer to this Parliamentary Question is not held within the Department and therefore should be directed to Network Rail on PublicAffairs@networkrail.co.uk who will be able to assist.

TREASURY**■ Boats: Import Duties****Jane Hunt:**[\[124348\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if, after the transition period, he will extend import duty relief to pleasure craft with UK VAT-paid status which have been purchased in the EU but which have not yet been located in the UK.

Jesse Norman:

Pleasure craft returning to the UK at the end of the transition period will be able to claim the Returned Goods Relief (RGR) for customs duty and import VAT, subject to all conditions for the relief being met. From 1 January 2021 in order to qualify for RGR goods must have previously been located in the UK. The Government has extended the eligibility conditions for RGR to take account of the situation faced by

owners of pleasure craft. The normal three year time limit for returning goods to the UK has been extended so that goods can benefit from RGR if they return to the UK by 31 December 2021 and meet the conditions for relief.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Esther McVey: [\[124741\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a list of the 100 companies and organisations that have received the highest amount of money from (a) the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (b) other Government financial support during the covid-19 outbreak; and how much each of those organisations has received.

Jesse Norman:

As part of their commitment to transparency and to deter fraudulent claims, HMRC will publish information about employers who claim for periods starting on or after 1 December 2020, as set out in guidance published on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Charlotte Nichols: [\[124332\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to publish an equality impact assessment for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

When designing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme policies and subsequent reforms the Government undertook an analysis of how the policies were likely to affect individuals sharing protected characteristics in line with its Public Sector Equality Duties. This is in line with the internal procedural requirements and support in place for ensuring that equalities considerations inform decisions taken by ministers.

The completion and publication of formal Equality Impact Assessment documents is not a legal or procedural requirement. Equality impacts are assessed appropriately and flagged to ministers. HM Treasury has rigorous processes in place to ensure that it complies with its legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

■ Debts: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson: [\[124310\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to tackle the effect of covid-19 outbreak on levels of household debt in (a) Wolverhampton South West constituency and (b) the UK.

John Glen:

The Government has delivered unprecedented support for living standards during this challenging time, protecting livelihoods with the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and temporary welfare measures.

The Government has extended the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme until 31 March 2021. Eligible employees will continue to receive 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The Government has increased the overall level of the third grant under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to 80 per cent of average trading profits, meaning that the maximum grant available has now increased to £7,500.

The Government has provided Local Authorities with £500 million to support people who may struggle to meet their council tax payments this year. The Government expects that this will provide all recipients of working age local council tax support with a further reduction in their annual council tax bill of £150 this financial year.

These measures are in addition to the changes this Government has made to make the welfare system more generous, worth over £7 billion according to recent OBR estimates. This includes a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1 billion increase in support for renters through increases to Local Housing Allowance rates.

We have also worked with mortgage lenders, credit providers and the Financial Conduct Authority to ensure the financial sector provides support for people across the UK to manage their finances by providing payment holidays on mortgages and consumer credit products.

The Government has also provided unprecedented support for businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This support includes the Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme, Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme, Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Future Fund which, as of 15 November, have collectively supported over 1.4 million businesses with facilities worth in excess of £65bn. The Chancellor has announced that the Government has extended the application deadline for these schemes to a single date, 31 January 2020, meaning that even more businesses will have access to financial support.

To help people in problem debt get their finances back on track, an extra £37.8 million support package is being made available to debt advice providers this financial year, bringing this year's budget for free debt advice in England to over £100 million.

In May, the Government also announced the immediate release of £65 million dormant assets funding to Fair4All Finance, an independent organisation that has been founded to support the financial wellbeing of people in vulnerable circumstances. The funding is used to increase access to fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services for those in financial difficulties.

From May 2021 the Breathing Space scheme will offer people in problem debt a pause of up to 60 days on most enforcement action, interest, fees and charges, and will encourage them to seek professional debt advice.

Data on levels of over-indebtedness in Wolverhampton South West was last published in 2018 by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), who continue to fund local delivery of debt advice through Wolverhampton Citizens Advice. MaPS will be publishing updated figures in 2021.

■ Directors: Coronavirus

Jane Hunt:

[\[124347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing a covid-19 financial support scheme for directors of limited companies who pay themselves through dividends which is based on the trading profits of the company contained in the corporation tax return.

Jesse Norman:

In the development of the COVID-19 support schemes, HMRC have taken into consideration what is operationally feasible, while managing technical complexities and fraud risks, and ensuring that other schemes the Government has committed to are delivered in a timely way.

Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages. It is not possible for HMRC to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources, and between dividends in lieu of employment income and as returns from other corporate activity.

Payment through dividends would require owner-managers to make a claim and submit information that HMRC could not manageably verify to ensure payments are made to eligible companies for eligible activity.

Company directors who are paid via dividends may be eligible for various elements of the support available, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (in respect of their salary but not their dividends), Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays and other business support grants.

■ Foreign Companies: VAT

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[124683\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to prevent overseas traders from selling products into the UK on foreign platforms to avoid the requirements of VAT payment; and whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of requiring all companies to register for VAT before trading in the UK.

Jesse Norman:

From the end of the transition period a new VAT treatment will be introduced for non-excise goods not exceeding £135 that are sold to UK customers, and located outside

the UK at the point of sale. These changes will make operators of online marketplaces, where they facilitate the sale of these goods, responsible for collecting and accounting for the VAT on those sales. Overseas businesses that sell these goods directly to UK consumers will also be required to register and account for VAT in the UK.

■ **Hilltop Leaf: Enterprise Investment Scheme**

David Mundell:

[\[124146\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress HMRC has made on its assessment of Hill Top Leaf Ltd's application to the Enterprise Investment Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC do not disclose information about individual taxpayers.

■ **Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus**

Jon Trickett:

[\[124127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the business rates holiday for retail and hospitality businesses beyond March 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The unprecedented full business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties for the financial year is worth £10 billion to business in 2020-21. The Government will continue to look at how to adjust its support in a way that ensures people can get back to work, protecting both the UK economy and the livelihoods of people across the country. In order to ensure that any decisions best meet the evolving challenges presented by COVID-19, the Government will outline plans for future reliefs in the New Year.

Karl McCartney:

[\[124730\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to redistribute returned business rates relief from supermarkets to groups that have been excluded from Government financial support during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has been clear throughout the pandemic that businesses should use Government support appropriately, and the Government welcomes any decision to repay support where it is no longer needed. Any funds returned will support the continuing efforts to protect people's jobs and incomes.

A range of further measures to support all businesses has been made available, including the extended job retention scheme and business interruption loans.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Angela Crawley:

[\[124243\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to freelance performers and musicians under the measures announced in the Winter Economy Plan.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has provided and will continue to provide support to the self-employed, including freelance performers and musicians who meet the eligibility criteria. The third grant, combined with up to £14,070 worth of support for each individual from the first and second grants, makes the SEISS one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The third grant will be available to self-employed individuals who have been affected by reduced demand or have been unable to trade due to COVID-19, which they believe will lead to a significant reduction in their trading profits. This will ensure that support is targeted at those who most need it.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a substantial package of support for the self-employed. Other elements of the package include Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

The Government has announced a £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund to protect the cultural sectors through the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to help to ensure a vibrant future for the cultural and creative sectors on the other side of the COVID-19 crisis. To date, £560m in grant funding has been allocated to nearly 3,000 cultural organisations in England. Organisations supported include galleries, theatres, museums, orchestras, music venues, comedy clubs and festivals. This funding will help to enable performances to restart, protect jobs and create opportunities for freelancers. Further allocations will be announced in the coming weeks.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[\[124153\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with HMRC on how many small businesses have missed tax payments this year due to the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on their income; if he will make it his policy to waive daily interest payments and delay the threat of legal action in favour of mutually agreed, realistic payment plans for small businesses that are in this position; and whether he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC do not hold payment or debt data based on business size as a matter of routine. How they decide on the appropriate intervention or support for a business that has missed a tax payment is based on the specific circumstances of each business using the data held about their activity. For example, HMRC can estimate

how many businesses that have missed a tax payment have been severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. HMRC have published some data on debt:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmrc-quarterly-performance-report-july-to-september-2020>.

Late payment interest continues to apply to missed tax payments because interest exists solely as recompense to Government for not having use of the money; it is not, as per Finance Act 2008, a financial penalty for the business. HMRC's late payment interest rate is low by any measure, and is currently 2.6%.

■ Social Services: Coronavirus

Paul Girvan:

[\[124834\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing tax relief for those working in the private care sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

Key workers, including social care workers, have demonstrated remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against the virus. The Government hugely values and appreciates these vital contributions to the COVID-19 response.

The Government is targeting support where it is most needed. A new income tax relief for care workers in the private sector would not be targeted in this way. Those paying higher rates of tax would receive the greatest benefit, while low-earning individuals with income below the personal allowance or the higher rate threshold would benefit less or not at all.

The UK's economic response to COVID-19 is one of the most generous and comprehensive in the world. The Government is monitoring closely the impact of measures, having regard to the need to support public services, businesses, and individuals, and will keep all policies under review.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Electric Vehicles

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[124836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of the vehicles used by her Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Guy Opperman:

The number of DWP Government Vehicles (owned or leased) that are electric is 1 out of a total of 745 vehicles.

DWP is working towards fulfilling the Government's Fleet Commitments in line with the [Road to Zero Strategy](#). DWP has plans in place to support the achievement of this commitment including the required infrastructure changes.

■ Natural Gas: Safety

Alan Brown:

[\[124254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 82102, what the timeframe is for the Health and Safety Executive to report back on recommendations of changes to the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is continuing the process of reviewing the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (GSMR). Before any amendments are proposed HSE must be satisfied that there will be no detrimental impact on health and safety as a result.

Assessment of the evidence supporting a safe change is being undertaken, and further information and clarifications have been sought. This assessment will form the basis of a formal public consultation on future proposals for changes to GSMR. HSE expects to publish the consultation document in summer 2021.

■ Universal Credit

Jon Trickett:

[\[124124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policy on universal credit of recent Trussell Trust research which found that individuals using food banks are more likely to owe money to the Government through monthly deductions from universal credit payments than they are to owe family, friends and payday loan companies.

Will Quince:

Tackling poverty will always be a priority for this Government. Our recent focus has rightly been on supporting people financially during these unprecedented times, with an injection of billions of pounds to strengthen the welfare system in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including a temporary increase in the Universal Credit Standard Allowance to support those facing the most financial disruption. Through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme, announced on 9 November, we are extending that support with an additional £170m for local authorities in England so that they can support families with children and other vulnerable people with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter.

From October 2019, the overall maximum level for standard deductions is normally limited to 30% of a claimant's Standard Allowance except for last-resort deductions. From October 2021, this is being reduced to 25% of the claimant's standard allowance except for last-resort deductions. Claimants can ask for New Claims and Change of Circumstances Advance repayments to be delayed for up to 3 months in exceptional circumstances.