



## Daily Report

Monday, 14 December 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 December 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 14 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

#### ■ Offences against Children: Prosecutions

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[126888\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions for causing or inciting sexual exploitation of a child there have been under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in each year since its enactment.

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[126889\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions for controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation there have been under Section 49 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in each year since its enactment.

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

[\[126890\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions for arranging or facilitating exploitation of a child there have been under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in each year since its enactment.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children, under Sections 10, 14 and 47 – 50.

- Section 10 makes it an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to cause or incite a child aged under 16 to engage in sexual activity.
- Section 14 makes it an offence for a person intentionally to arrange or facilitate any action which will involve an offence under any of sections 9 - 13 being committed against a child.
- Section 47 – 50 provides a number of child exploitation offences including paying for the sexual services of a child and controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintains a central record of the number of offences in which a prosecution commenced, including the offences charged by way of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Since the Act came into force, and up to the end of March 2020, the number of child exploitation offences charged by way of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 is as follows:

	SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003 { 10 }	SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003 { 14 }	SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003 { 47 }	SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003 { 48 }	SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003 { 49 }	SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003 { 50 }
2004-2005	62	6	0	1	0	0
2005-2006	327	29	15	26	1	2
2006-2007	528	57	18	21	8	0
2007-2008	507	48	19	22	3	1
2008-2009	589	41	37	32	2	2
2009-2010	732	59	15	33	7	7
2010-2011	1001	92	12	51	4	8
2011-2012	949	83	18	57	3	17
2012-2013	943	78	26	90	8	10
2013-2014	995	81	36	89	9	39
2014-2015	1310	132	49	198	3	31
2015-2016	1556	163	79	277	11	11
2016-2017	2020	190	38	263	15	67
2017-2018	1978	184	57	191	7	28
2018-2019	1240	100	48	160	7	7
2019-2020	977	277	33	72	0	4

Data Source: CPS Case Management Information System

There is no indication of the number of individual defendants prosecuted for these offences or the final outcome of the prosecution proceeding or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at the time of finalisation. It is often the case that defendants will be prosecuted for more than one offence in the same set of proceedings.

It is not possible to separately report the nature of, or type of sexual exploitation carried out on victims of child sexual offences other than by manually examining case files at disproportionate cost.



**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY****■ Business: Government Assistance****Grahame Morris:****[126833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the timeframe for the European Commission's response to the UK's notification of 20 October 2020 requesting approval for providing greater support to businesses under the Temporary Framework.

**Paul Scully:**

On 20 October, the Government notified the European Commission that it wished to amend the Covid-19 Temporary Framework for UK authorities to increase the budget of the scheme from £50bn to £80bn, to provide for subsidised interest rates for subordinated loans and to include support for uncovered fixed costs.

The Commission approved the re-notified scheme on 8th December 2020. This was within the two-month period which the Commission has to make a preliminary examination of notified aid.

**■ Certification Quality Marks****Paul Blomfield:****[125233]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish a list of UK-recognised approved bodies that can carry out conformity assessments for UKCA-marked goods after the transition period.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department published a list of UK approved bodies on 8 December 2020 on the UK Market Conformity Assessment Bodies database (UKMCAB) which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/uk-market-conformity-assessment-bodies>.

The bodies on this list are the same bodies who already provide conformity assessment services now. This has been previously communicated to industry to help them make plans for the new regulatory regime.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Chi Onwurah:****[127551]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the £6 billion announced in the Spending Review 2020 for development and procurement of vaccines is inclusive of existing covid-19 vaccine procurement contracts.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Yes, the £6 billion announced in the Spending Review 2020 for development and procurement of vaccines is inclusive of existing covid-19 vaccine procurement contracts.

## ■ Electricity Generation: East Anglia

**Clive Lewis:**

[\[125282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential for local electricity generation schemes in East Anglia.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

In 2017 as part of the Local Energy Programme, BEIS provided funding to all Local Enterprise Partnerships to develop an energy strategy. New Anglia's strategy was part of the tri-LEP approach including Greater Cambridgeshire, Greater Peterborough and Hertfordshire LEPs. This strategy identified, assessed and prioritised low carbon energy projects including local energy generation across the region.

The Local Energy Programme also funds 5 local energy hubs covering all of England to support the development of energy projects. The Greater South East hub is based in Greater Cambridgeshire, Greater Peterborough and supports projects across New Anglia.

BEIS has also allocated over £2.5m to the Greater South East region to support rural communities develop renewable energy schemes under the Rural Community Energy Fund.

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[127610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 26 November 2020 to Question 119331 on Green Homes Grant Scheme, what the reasons are for the difference in the number of (a) energy efficient jobs that will be created by implementing Point 7 of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan up to 2030 and (b) energy efficiency jobs supported by the Green Homes Grant Scheme in 2020-21.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Further to the response on 26 November to Question 119331, the 50,000 jobs supported by 2030 relate to the package of measures from 'Point 7: Green Buildings' outlined in my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan. The 2030 figure is based on the expected additional work required by 2030 in order to align with our plans for buildings to improve their energy efficiency and align with our Carbon Budgets.

The 80,000 jobs supported by the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme relates to the £1.5 billion funding allocated for 2020/21. It is a time-limited scheme to help boost employment and support economic recovery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ■ Hospitality Industry and Leisure: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[126994]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to provide local authorities with additional guidance on support schemes for the (a) leisure and (b) hospitality sector in tier 2 local covid alert level areas.

**Paul Scully:**

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) scheme provides Local Authorities with discretionary funding to support businesses in the hospitality, accommodation and leisure sectors who have been severely affected by local restrictions but are not required to close. Local Authorities will be eligible for this scheme when under Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions. The updated guidance for the period from 2<sup>nd</sup> December has been published on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-restrictions-support-grants-lrsg-and-additional-restrictions-grant-arg-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

For those businesses mandated to close on a sector basis, regardless of the local restriction in place, such as nightclubs, the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Sector) will provide grants of up to £3000 per 28-day period. This guidance is also available on GOV.UK.

The Christmas Support Payment for 'wet-led' pubs is a one-off £1,000 grant to support the wet-led pubs during the festive period in Tier 2 and Tier 3. This guidance is also available on gov.uk.

Businesses mandated to close under Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions will be eligible for Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) payments of up to £3,000 per 28-day period. This guidance is also available on gov.uk.

## ■ Incinerators: Carbon Emissions

**Esther McVey:**

**[125236]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the use of waste incinerators on the Government's progress on the 2050 net zero emissions target.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The latest data shows that, in 2018, an estimated 6.0 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) were emitted from waste incineration in the energy supply sector and 0.3 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e from waste incineration in the waste sector.

The UK's climate change framework enables the Government to determine how best to balance emissions reductions across the economy. Emissions are managed within the Government's overall strategy for meeting carbon budgets and the 2050 net zero target, as part of an economy-wide transition.

The UK Government has reduced carbon emissions by over 40% since 1990.

**Esther McVey:**

[\[125237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including waste incineration in the UK Emissions Trading scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government Response to the Future of UK Carbon Pricing set out that the scope of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme will provide continuity and a smooth transition for participants. Most consultation respondents agreed with this approach. Energy from waste plants will not be in scope of the UK ETS for the period of 2021 to 2025. We do recognise the case for expanding carbon pricing and we committed to considering the option of expanding the scope of the UK ETS in the 2023 review.

## ■ Intellectual Property: Reciprocal Arrangements

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[127668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing EEA and UK practitioners to have reciprocal rights of representation across (a) the UK Intellectual Property Office and (b) EU Intellectual Property Office after the transition period.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Rights of representation, whether before domestic courts in Member States or EU institutions, are the preserve of the Single Market and so do not form part of the UK approach to negotiations with the EU.

## ■ Motor Neurone Disease: Research

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[126801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support research on motor neurone disease.

**Amanda Solloway:**

In 2019/20, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), through the Medical Research Council (MRC), spent around £13.4 million on Motor Neurone Disease (MND) research. This included research which aims to increase our understanding of the causes and genetic mechanisms of MND and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) a form of MND. Over 5 years (2015/16 - 2019/20) MRC expenditure relevant to MND and ALS totalled £45 million.

In addition, UKRI, through the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, supports a diverse portfolio of neuroscience research and innovation totalling around £30 million per annum. This work may underpin MND research by furthering current understanding of: the structure and function of the nervous system; cell biology and genetics; mental processes including learning and memory, and neurodegeneration as a result of normal ageing. Their portfolio of funded research also includes awards seeking to understand the biology of neuromuscular systems

and motor control which has underpinning relevance to MND has an average annual spend of £1.2 million.

Additionally, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). It is not usual practice to ring-fence funding for particular topics or conditions. The NIHR welcomes funding on applications for research into any aspect of human health, including MND. Applications are subject to peer review and judged on open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money, and scientific quality.

Over the past five years, DHSC has spent over £9 million on MND research through NIHR programmes and infrastructure. In 2018-19 alone, the NIHR invested £2.2 million in MND research through the NIHR research programmes and the NIHR Clinical Research Network. Additionally, the NIHR research infrastructure supported 73 research studies and trials on MND in 2018-19.

Furthermore, you be interested to hear about the NIHR Sheffield Biomedical Research Centre which has a research theme dedicated to MND. Further information on the AMBRoSIA study can be found at: <http://sheffieldbrc.nihr.ac.uk/research-themes/motor-neurone-disease/>.

## ■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:**

[126996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when further (a) guidance and (b) funding will be provided to local authorities to enable them to pay the £1,000 grant to wet-led pubs in tier 2 and 3 local covid alert level areas.

**Paul Scully:**

Officials are working closely with local authorities to deliver the Christmas Support Payment for 'wet-led' pubs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 restrictions.

Guidance for the Christmas Support Payment for 'wet-led' pubs is now available on GOV.UK:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/942452/christmas-support-payment-la-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942452/christmas-support-payment-la-guidance.pdf).

## ■ Research: Expenditure

**Chi Onwurah:**

[127549]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase charitable research and development spending in 2021.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government has committed £14.6bn to R&D next year. This funding will support the life sciences sector within which Medical Research Charities operate alongside other research areas.

**■ Research: Finance****Chi Onwurah:**[\[127548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the November 202 Spending Review, how much of the £15bn committed to R&D has been ring fenced to replace lost funding from EU R&D programmes in 2021-22.

**Amanda Solloway:**

No decision has been made on whether the UK will associate to upcoming EU R&D Programmes as negotiations remain ongoing. Whatever the outcome of negotiations, this government is committed to maintaining and enhancing the UK's position at the forefront of global science collaboration.

We have made clear in the R&D Roadmap that we aim to maintain a close and friendly relationship with our European partners, seeking to agree a fair and balanced deal for participation in EU R&D schemes. We will make a final decision once it is clear whether such terms can be reached. If we do not associate to Horizon Europe, the Government will implement ambitious alternatives as quickly as possible from January 2021 and address the funding gap.

**■ Toys and Games: Safety****Martyn Day:**[\[125281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 9 November 2020 to Question 109389 on Toys and Games: Safety, whether the review of the Product Safety framework includes (a) ensuring that consumers receive warranties from the online marketplace on the quality and fitness for purpose of the products purchased via their platforms and (b) liability for unsafe toys and games being sold via their platforms.

**Paul Scully:**

The review of the UK's Product Safety framework being led by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is focused on the safety of products and liability for them and will not review regulation of unfair or misleading trading practices. It is essential that the framework of laws which protect consumers from unsafe products are fit for purpose, protects consumers, and enables businesses to innovate and grow.

The review will take account of new technologies and business models including those used by online marketplaces. In carrying out the review OPSS will engage widely with consumer and business representatives and others with an interest in the framework.

The Consumer Rights Act (CRA) 2015 provides statutory rights to consumers in respect of satisfactory quality or for goods to fit their description. Guarantees and warranties form a binding contract between the party offering them and the consumer and under UK law, are not required to be given, but are benefits in addition to consumers' rights under the CRA.

## ■ Trade Marks

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[127669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on UK Chartered Trade Mark Attorneys in the event that EEA attorneys continue to have access to both the UK and EU markets and UK attorneys have access to just the domestic market after the transition period.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is aware that this is an important issue for stake holders, in particular UK-based trade mark attorneys.

Consistent with its overall approach to the UK's exit from the EU, the government has laid legislation to change the 'address for service' requirement at the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) from EEA-wide to UK-only. Subject to legislative implementation, following the transition period only a UK address for service will be accepted for new trade mark applications and other IP rights. This change will also apply to registered rights when certain proceedings are brought before the IPO.

## ■ Wind Power

**Alan Brown:**

[\[125265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the capacity in gigawatts is of (a) onshore wind generation connected to the National Transmission Grid and (b) consented onshore wind under construction.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Latest figures from September 2020 indicate that, across the UK, we currently have 14.1GW of onshore wind generation installed across both transmission and distribution networks[1], and 0.6GW consented and under construction.[2]

*[1] BEIS Energy Trends (September 2020)*

*[2] Renewable Energy Planning Database (September 2020)*

## CABINET OFFICE

## ■ Animal Products: Exports

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[127596\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Oral Statement of 9 December 2020 on Withdrawal Agreement Update, whether the grace period for supermarkets which waives export health certificates extends to independent (a) retailers and (b) food producers.

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[127597\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Export Health Certificates will be required for non-supermarket agri-food products on 1 January 2020.



**Louise Haigh:**

**[127598]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) exit and (b) safety and security declarations will be required on goods travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland on 1 January 2020.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

I refer the hon. Member to the Government's Command Paper, 'The Northern Ireland Protocol', laid in Parliament on 10 December. This provides details of the agreement in principle reached by the Co-Chairs of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee regarding the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, as well as further information on the UK Government's work to implement the Protocol and support businesses as it comes into force.

#### ■ Civil Servants: Pensions

**Grahame Morris:**

**[127530]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much and what proportion of the cost to the public purse of errors with civil service pensions has been recovered by the Government from pensions scheme administrator MyCSP.

**Julia Lopez:**

In the last full financial year (19-20), £605,000 was paid by MyCSP to Cabinet Office in lieu of erroneous overpayments. MyCSP and Cabinet Office have an agreement whereby Cabinet Office is refunded for overpayments arising from a MyCSP error.

#### ■ Elections: Proof of Identity

**Cat Smith:**

**[126912]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department plans to take to monitor the effect of the new voter ID requirements on voting uptake by (a) different disability groups and (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the hon. Member to my answers to PQs [104752](#), [100442](#), and [100441](#).

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

**Nicola Richards:**

**[127702]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support his Department is providing to armed forces personnel who have been discharged from service during the covid-19 pandemic.



**Johnny Mercer:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 29 September 2020 to Question 95005 to the hon. Member for Halton (Derek Twigg).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-24/95005>

**Attachments:**

1. 95005 - Armed Forces; Discharges [95005 - Armed Forces; Discharges.docx]

**■ Armed Forces: Drugs****Imran Ahmad Khan:****[127691]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the armed forces were dismissed for drug usage in 2020.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The misuse of drugs within the Armed Forces is considered unacceptable. It has always been the view of the Ministry of Defence that drug misuse threatens the efficiency and discipline of the Services, where individual responsibility and teamwork are essential to operate highly technical, expensive, and potentially lethal equipment. The Services campaign against drug misuse and have a comprehensive education programme to inform all personnel of the dangers and consequences of misusing drugs – including dismissal from service.

The requested information can be found in the table below:

SERVICE	2020 DRUG USAGE DISMISSALS <sup>1</sup>
Royal Navy	86
Army	424
Royal Air Force	33
Total	543

<sup>1</sup> As of 9 December 2020

**■ Army: Contracts****Dan Jarvis:****[126881]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what options a regular soldier in the Army has available to appeal against a decision to not convert their contract from VEng (Short) to VEng (Full).

**James Heappey:**

VEng conversions are made on an offer-and-accept basis following an assessment of the Service's need and the individual's performance during their employment. There is no application process, however a Service person can request an offer for extension through their Chain of Command Regimental Career Management Officer.

Service personnel can seek advice on requesting an extension through their Regimental Career Manager. If the service person feels that they should have been made an offer of extension but were not, they can submit a Service Complaint (in accordance with JSP 831) through their Chain of Command.

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[126882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what guidance his Department provides on the (a) length of notice and (b) means of communication required for informing a British Army soldier their contract will not be converted from VEng (Short) to VEng (Full).

**James Heappey:**

There is no notice period for those personnel who do not convert to VEng(Full) as they are not being compulsorily discharged; they are just not being offered a longer engagement than they currently possess.

At the point of 24 months to End of Engagement, the Service person will be contacted by a Resettlement Officer (in accordance with JSP 534) to discuss options for employment outside of the Army. Discussions with the Service Personnel Unit Admin and Regimental Career Manager will be ongoing during that period to ensure that the individual leaves the service as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Offers of extension can be made up until the end of the extant engagement. The service person can enter resettlement and if offered and accept extension, resettlement entitlements may be reset so as not to disadvantage the soldier at their future End of Engagement date. This is subject to the length of extension offered.

## ■ Army: War Crimes

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[126944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Overseas Operations (Service Personnel and Veterans) Bill on future prosecutions for war crimes committed by British soldiers.

**Johnny Mercer:**

As we do not know what future operations our Armed Forces may undertake, it is not possible to assess the impact of the Bill in relation to future prosecutions.

The measures in Part 1 of the Overseas Operations Bill will apply to alleged offences committed on overseas operations more than five years ago. The Bill will not prevent allegations of offences (including war crimes) by service personnel which occur on overseas operations from being investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Stephen Morgan:**

[\[126965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what role the Information Warfare Unit is playing in tackling covid-19 vaccine disinformation online.

**James Heappey:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is supporting the Government's campaign against COVID-19 disinformation by providing specialist personnel in advisory roles. A team from the MOD, is currently supporting the UK Government's Rapid Response Unit in the Cabinet Office and are working to counter dis/misinformation about COVID-19.

**■ HMS Prince of Wales: Repairs and Maintenance****Stephen Morgan:**[\[126964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department is making on repairing HMS Prince of Wales after its second flooding incident in October 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Repairs of the damage caused by floodwater in the engine room of HMS PRINCE OF WALES are progressing as planned. The Ship's Company is conducting concurrent preparations for their programme of at sea training activity in 2021 which precede her operational commitments.

**■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[126785\]](#)

.To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason the UK's unit price figure for the purchase of F-35b is lower than the figure reported by United States Marine Corps.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The current Unit Recurring Flyaway (URF) cost for the F-35B is \$101 Million. This is the URF for the F-35B aircraft in Lot 14 which will deliver UK aircraft in Financial Year 2022/23.

The unit price figures reported by the United States Marine Corps for the Lots they have procured are a matter for the United States Government.

**■ Maritime Patrol Aircraft: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[126788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) cost and (b) duration is of the P-8 Poseidon Interim Aircraft Support Service spares and repairs contract awarded in February 2020.

**Jeremy Quin:**

This interim support contract for the P-8 Poseidon, value £5 million, was awarded on 12 December 2019 and was initially due to expire on 31 December 2020. In October 2020, its duration was extended until 31 March 2021 and overall value increased to £15 million.

This increase reflects that the amended contract is of greater scope and now also includes measures to de-risk the establishment of longer-term support arrangements,

including long lead spares procurement, and site activation at RAF Lossiemouth. It also reflects the increase in the size of the RAF's P-8 Poseidon fleet.

■ **Minesweepers: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[126784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what financial commitment his Department has made to the existing Anglo-French MCMV programme.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I have interpreted the right hon. Member's question as referring to the Anglo-French Maritime Mine Counter Measures (MMCM) programme. On 26 November the Secretary of State announced a £184 million investment in the joint MMCM programme, which will create new systems to combat sea mines and keep ships and personnel away from danger. Along with a further £70 million currently committed to the demonstration phase, this new investment brings the total UK commitment to some £254 million.

■ **Navy: Coronavirus**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[126164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether people serving on Royal Navy submarines will be required to have a covid-19 vaccine before deployment once a covid-19 vaccine has been widely distributed.

**James Heappey:**

The roll out of a vaccination programme is very welcome, but Defence policy for inoculating Service personnel has yet to be determined. The Ministry of Defence takes all necessary precautions to safeguard its people and assure operational availability.

■ **Saudi Arabia: Military Aid**

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[126105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what advice or assistance Royal Navy personnel have provided to the Royal Saudi Naval Forces on their blockade of Yemen since 2015.

**James Heappey:**

We have a very small number of liaison officers in Saudi Armed Forces headquarters. The role of these liaison officers is to provide the UK with greater insight into Saudi processes and operations. They remain under UK command and control and work to support vital access for food, fuel, and medicine by providing support to help the UN's Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to facilitate commercial imports into Hodeidah and Saleef ports by giving the Coalition confidence that weapons are not coming in on commercial ships. The critical Red Sea ports of Hodeidah and Saleef remain operational and the majority of Yemen's imports are getting in.

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**

[\[126106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the Royal Navy by (a) rank and (b) role are stationed at Musandam Naval Base on Jazirat Umm al Ghanam as at 7 December 2020.

**James Heappey:**

There are no Royal Naval personnel stationed at Musandam Naval Base on Jazirat Umm al Ghanam.

■ **Turkey: Foreign Relations**

**John Healey:**

[\[125942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent engagements he has had with his Turkish counterpart.

**John Healey:**

[\[125943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to his speech at the Air and Space Power conference on 15 July 2020, what recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart on drones.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

I regularly meet with my international counterparts.

My most recent engagement with my Turkish counterpart was in early October when we met and discussed a wide range of Defence and security issues, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) capabilities.

■ **Veterans: Commonwealth**

**Peter Gibson:**

[\[127660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to help Commonwealth veterans immigrate to the UK upon discharge.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Government highly values the service of all members of the Armed Forces, including Commonwealth nationals and Gurkhas from Nepal. As part of specific Home Office immigration rules for the Armed Forces and their families, Commonwealth and Gurkha Service personnel who have served for at least four years on discharge are able to apply to settle in the UK. We do, however, recognise that settlement fees place a financial burden on Service personnel wishing to settle in the UK after service, and we are working with the Home Office to consider how we can offer greater flexibility for these individuals in future.

■ **Veterans: Proof of Identity**

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[127607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when veterans who left service more than 2 years ago are planned to receive their Veteran ID card.

**Johnny Mercer:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 24 November 2020 to Question 115709 to the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston (Justin Madders).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-11-16/115709>

**Attachments:**

1. 115709 - Veterans ID Cards [115709 - Veterans ID Cards.docx]

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Cinemas: Coronavirus****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[127515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to introduce targeted support for cinemas that are (a) open and (b) closed during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The government recognises the significant cultural and economic value of cinemas, and has supported them through sector-specific and economy-wide support.

Cinemas have been able to benefit from the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until March 31 2021, which sees employees receive 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. In addition, the government has further supported cinemas through the VAT cut on tickets and concessions and a business rates holiday. We recognise how tough the measures are for people and businesses in Tier 3, and businesses in England that are forced to close will receive up to £3,000 for each 28 day period affected.

On a sector-specific level, as part of the £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations, independent cinemas are eligible for a share of £30m of this package. Funding has previously started to be allocated to cinemas across England and we will be making a further announcement on funding allocations in due course.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Chi Onwurah:**[\[127555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to tackle misinformation on the covid-19 vaccine.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Government takes the issue of misinformation and disinformation very seriously. That is why we stood up the Counter Disinformation Unit up on 5 March to bring together cross-Government monitoring and analysis capabilities.

We are working closely with social media platforms to help them identify and remove incorrect claims about the virus, particularly around the vaccine, and to promote

authoritative information. Vaccine misinformation is harmful and it is everyone's responsibility to access information from authoritative sources and not share false or misleading information.

In a meeting with the Digital Secretary and Health Secretary last month social media companies agreed to continue to work with public health bodies to ensure that authoritative messages about vaccine safety reach as many people as possible; to commit to swifter responses to flagged content and to commit to the principle that no user or company should directly profit from COVID-19 vaccine mis/disinformation.

## ■ Data Protection

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[126870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what citizens' rights over their own data will the Competition and Markets Authority's Digital Marketing Unit (a) promote and (b) enforce.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The CMA market study into online platforms and digital advertising highlighted that weak competition leads to consumers having less choice and control over their data. The CMA proposed a new pro competition regime for digital markets, including measures to improve consumer control over their data, such as opt-ins for personalised advertising and measures to improve how consumer choices around data collection are presented.

On the 27th November, the UK Government announced the establishment of a new pro-competition regime for digital markets. A new Digital Markets Unit (DMU), housed in the CMA, will be set up to begin to establish the new regime and will work closely with key regulators including the ICO and Ofcom.

We will consult on the design and implementation of the new pro-competition regime in 2021, building on the work of the Digital Markets Taskforce, who published their advice to the Government on 8th December. Following the consultation, we will legislate to put the DMU on a statutory footing as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Government is committed to a regime which will boost innovation and growth across the economy, unlocking the full benefits of digital markets for consumers.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[126871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the remedies that are available for people when so called anonymised data is sold on and they can be personally identified from it, for example through location tracking.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) do not apply to personal data that has been truly anonymised in such a way that the individual is not identifiable. If it is possible to use any reasonably available means to re-identify the individual, then the data protection legislation will apply.



The DPA creates a number of recordable criminal offences relating to the misuse of personal data. In particular, Section 171 DPA criminalises the re-identification of personal data that has been de-identified.

If an individual is concerned about the handling of their personal data by any organisation, they can approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for advice or to make a complaint. The ICO has a number of powers under the DPA to tackle the unlawful processing of personal data, including the power to serve enforcement notices requiring organisations to stop the processing or to erase the data, and the power to serve civil monetary penalties. The ICO can also investigate and prosecute criminal offences under the DPA. Those guilty of such offences can be subject to unlimited fines in the courts. Details of the ICO's enforcement activity can be found on its website at: <https://ico.org.uk/action-weve-taken/>

People have a number of rights to redress under the DPA, including the right to seek a court order to ensure compliance by an organisation, and the right to claim compensation from an organisation through the courts if they have suffered damage as a result of it breaking data protection law. This includes both material damage such as financial loss and non-material damage, including any inconvenience and distress associated with the data breach.

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[127556]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on British (a) businesses and (b) citizens of the UK not receiving EU data adequacy recognition by the end of the transition period; and what contingency plans he has in place from 1 January 2021 in the event that the UK has not received EU data adequacy recognition.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

If at the end of the transition period the UK has not received fully ratified data adequacy decisions, and if the appropriate protections are not put in place, EU organisations sending data to the UK could be operating unlawfully and face regulatory action. This could mean organisations cease to send personal data to the UK.

To avoid this, businesses and other organisations should put in place alternative legal mechanisms to continue the transfer of personal data. Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) are the most common legal safeguard and will be the relevant mitigation for most organisations. The Government has issued guidance on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/standard-contractual-clauses) and the [ICO's](https://ico.org.uk) websites and is engaging directly with organisations on the need to prepare.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Electric Vehicles**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

**[124838]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department on Government business are electric vehicles.



**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The department uses four vehicles overall, two main and two support. Both of the main vehicles are listed as electric on the Vehicle Enquiry Service via gov.uk. Both of the support vehicles are older models and are not electric.

**■ Golf: Coronavirus****Dan Jarvis:**[\[126883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of permitting indoor one-to-one golf tuition under the covid-19 public health restrictions introduced on 2 December 2020 in England.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As the Prime Minister said on 23 November national restrictions ended on Wednesday 2 December, and gyms and sport facilities including golf courses are able to reopen across all tiers. One to one golf tuition indoors can take place across all tiers as long as strict social distancing is observed.

**■ Independent Press Standards Organisation****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[127602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether IPSO has met the 38 recommendations set out in the Leveson Inquiry report 2012.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[127603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of IPSO's procedures for processing complaints from individuals affected by press abuse.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The media landscape has changed significantly since the Leveson Inquiry, and with it, the system of press self-regulation. We now have a stronger system through The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO).

The government is committed to independent self regulation of the press, and does not intervene in or oversee the work of IPSO.

In 2016 IPSO commissioned its own external review which found it had made some important achievements in demonstrating it was an independent and effective regulator, and that it was largely compliant with the recommendations of the Leveson Report.

**■ Internet: Safety****Chris Elmore:**[\[127606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Online Harms Bill will take a twin track approach to regulatory standards and enforcement of (a) illegal and (b) legal but harmful content; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Our online harms legislation will take a risk-based and proportionate approach to ensuring companies protect their users from harmful content and improve their safety. Regulation will establish differentiated expectations on companies for illegal and legal but harmful content and activity. Importantly, it will also require companies to ensure a higher level of protection for children.

In scope services will need to ensure that illegal content is removed expeditiously and that the risk of it appearing is minimised by effective systems. For legal but harmful content accessed by adults, companies will be required to explicitly state what content and behaviour they deem to be acceptable on their sites and enforce this consistently and transparently. For children, companies will need to use a proportionate range of tools including age assurance, and age verification technologies to prevent them from accessing age-inappropriate content and to protect them from other harms. Further detail will be provided in the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper which will be published this year.

**■ Motor Vehicles: Technology****Chi Onwurah:**[\[126028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on access to the data recorded by vehicles using Automated Lane Keeping System technology by (a) manufacturers and (b) insurers in the event of an incident.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[126029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the digital skills education required to ensure that drivers using Automated Lane Keeping System (ALKS) digital technology understand (a) the limitations of that technology and (b) their responsibilities when using ALKS vehicles.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

To date, I have not had discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on the Automated Lane Keeping System. Work on the Automated Lane Keeping system, including the development of an approach to ensure its safe use in the UK, is being led by the Department for Transport. The Government published a Call for Evidence in August which covered both access to data and driver education. As set out in the Call for Evidence, access to data will be subject to the requirements of national law - including data protection legislation. Officials in the Department for Transport are currently analysing the responses and plan a public consultation by the Spring.

The Department for Transport will work with DVSA and industry to ensure that drivers are appropriately educated on the abilities and limitations of vehicles equipped with Automated Lane Keeping System, as well as their remaining responsibility.

## ■ Rugby: Coronavirus

**Colleen Fletcher:**

[\[125253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how the Sports Winter Survival Package allocated to Championship Rugby clubs will operate; and what (a) process clubs will need to follow to apply for funding, (b) criteria such applications will be judged against and (c) funding will be allocated in the form of (i) grants or (ii) loans.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Sport England will publish details of the process for applications to the Sports Winter Survival Package in the coming days, along with further information about the criteria and how funding will be allocated.

## ■ Vaccines: Misinformation

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[124329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to introduce financial penalties for companies that allow misinformation about vaccines to be spread on their platforms; and if he will set up a taskforce to tackle online vaccine misinformation.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Government takes the issue of misinformation and disinformation very seriously and is working closely with social media platforms to help them identify and take action to remove incorrect claims about the virus, particularly around the potential Covid-19 vaccine in line with their revised terms and conditions, and to promote authoritative sources of information.

The Cross-Whitehall Counter Disinformation Unit was stood up on 5 March 2020, bringing together cross-Government monitoring and analysis capabilities. Its primary function is to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent, scope and the reach of disinformation and misinformation linked to Covid-19, and to work with partners to stamp it out.

At a joint roundtable hosted by the DCMS and DHSC Secretaries of State in November, Social media platforms agreed to continue to work with public health bodies to ensure that authoritative messages about vaccine safety reach as many people as possible; to commit to swifter responses to flagged content and to commit to the principle that no user or company should directly profit from COVID-19 vaccine misinformation or disinformation. This work is being taken forward through an ongoing counter-disinformation policy forum which brings together platforms, civil society organisations and academia.

The Online Harms White Paper highlighted disinformation as potentially being in scope of the regulatory framework, and set out a list of potential steps that platforms could take ahead of regulation. Further details about how the legislation and the regulator will tackle disinformation will be published in the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper. The regulator will have strong enforcement powers

to deal with non-compliance, including the power to issue notices, warnings and fines.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices and Further Education

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[124166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with (a) UCAS and (b) the Institute for Apprenticeships on the reform of the Higher Education admissions process to boost apprenticeships and Further Education.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Our government manifesto committed to “improve the application and offer system” in a way that is “underpinned by a commitment to fairness, quality of learning and teaching, and access”.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has announced his intention to consult widely on the options for reforming the university admissions system in favour of a post qualification admissions system.

The consultation process will give bodies such as UCAS and the Institute for Apprenticeships ample opportunity to make their views heard, along with other bodies from across the educational sector that could potentially be affected. A post-qualification admissions system would aim to make university admissions more transparent and to better help students make the choices that are right for them, from the full range of opportunities available in both the higher education and further education sectors.

We have introduced legislation designed to increase the number of opportunities for young people to meet providers and find out more information about technical options. The Baker Clause requires all maintained schools and academies to publish a policy statement setting out opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to visit schools to talk to all year 8 to 13 pupils and to make sure the statement is followed.

### ■ Assessments: Coronavirus

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[127600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Oral Statement of 3 November 2020 on Exams and Accountability 2021, Official Report, col 435, what recent discussions he has had with universities on grading exams generously in response to disruptions to student learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government will continue to work closely with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), professional bodies and the Office for Students (OfS) to

ensure students continue to leave university with qualifications that have real value, reflect their hard work and allow people to progress.

The government expects providers to make all reasonable efforts for student achievement to be reliably assessed and for qualifications to be awarded securely. The OfS, the higher education regulator in England, has issued guidance to the sector setting out expectations about provider approaches to teaching and assessment during this time. OfS guidance is clear - standards must be maintained, but clearly changes to assessments may be required in some circumstances.

The QAA has also published a series of guides and information to support providers to secure academic standards and to support student achievement during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes a paper, published in April, which provides an overview of what 'no detriment' policies aim to achieve and some of the measures providers can put in place to ensure that the academic standards of awards remain secure, while also recognising the challenging circumstances for students.

We expect providers to develop solutions appropriate to each course, considering the needs of individual students and to ensure that continuing and prospective students receive the clear, accurate and timely information needed to make informed decisions. If students have concerns, there is a process in place. They should first raise their concerns with their university. If their concerns remain unresolved, students at providers in England or Wales can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education to consider their complaint.

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[127670]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Expert Group established to look at how to make the 2021 exams fair, will be allowed to assess the potential merits of optionality in exams.

**Nick Gibb:**

We recognise the challenges faced by schools, teachers, and students, and know that disruption has been felt differently across the country and between schools and colleges in the same area and between students within individual institutions.

In addition to a package of measures announced to ensure exams are delivered fairly next summer, the Department confirmed the launch of an expert group to consider the differential impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on students and recommend mitigations for these impacts. The expert advisory group will ensure that any further policies recommended to my right hon. friend, the Secretary of State for Education support the measures already announced and are developed with the education sector. We are working to finalise the terms of reference and membership of the group and additional details will be provided shortly.

## ■ Children in Care

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[127535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the proposals of the Every Child Leaving Care Matters report entitled, Planning – The English Care Review – how should it be done?, published on 20 November 2020; and if he will make it his policy to undertake a review of the care system.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government announced that it will review the care system in its 2019 manifesto. This review will be broad, bold and independently led, taking 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 the COVID-19 outbreak has delayed the launch of the review, but the department is making preparations to launch as soon as possible and will set out further details at that point.

## ■ Children: Disadvantaged

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[127531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Opportunity Areas in improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The effectiveness of the Opportunity Areas (OAs) in improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children is being assessed in 2 main ways.

My officials sit on the local partnership boards in each of the 12 areas and work closely with the relevant local authority to design, procure, and monitor each local board's chosen projects. Progress on every single project, across all 12 areas, is assessed on a monthly basis. Monthly spending figures, along with local intelligence regarding the take-up and effectiveness of different projects, is reported back to the department every month and reviewed by the senior official responsible for the programme as a whole. We continue to receive very positive feedback on the programme from schools and other stakeholders in each of the 12 areas.

In addition to this, the programme is subject to a detailed, formal evaluation process. Given the entrenched nature of some educational attainment issues, progress on any given measure is always likely to take time and be incremental. We are monitoring the programme very closely.

The evaluation has 3 main elements:

- a qualitative evaluation, for the programme as a whole, being carried out by an external, independent contractor, the findings from which will be published in due course;

- 5 smaller evaluations looking at individual projects in particular OAs (Blackpool, Bradford, Hastings, Norwich and North Yorkshire Coast), the findings from which will be published in the spring or summer of 2021; and
- an internal evaluation by the department's analysts assessing the impact of the programme by comparing the progress made in the OAs against similar non-OA districts.

Analysis of data from the academic year 2018/19 suggests the OAs are on a positive trajectory. For example:

- early years outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved in 9 of the 12 OAs;
- phonics results for all pupils have increased in 10 of the 12 OAs; and
- key stage 2 combined attainment data for all pupils has increased by more than the national rate (between 2016 and 2019) in 10 of the 12 OAs.

To give some specific examples of progress towards the national average:

- in Oldham, the proportion of all children achieving a good level of development rose 4 percentage points in the academic year 2018/19, to 68.1%, a significant step towards closing the gap with the national average, which increased 0.2 percentage points in that same period to 71.5%.
- in Bradford, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 rose 2.1 percentage points to 62.7% in the academic year 2018/19, a significant step towards closing the gap with the national average, which rose by 0.4 percentage points to 65.3% over the same period.
- in Blackpool, the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in phonics in the academic year 2018/19 rose by 1.5 percentage points to 82.2%, putting it above the national average of 81.8%.

## ■ Coronavirus Catch-up Premium and National Tutoring Programme

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[125313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether every school has received its first allocation of catch-up premium funding; and how many tutors funded by the National Tutoring Programme have been working in schools in England during the autumn 2020 term.

**Nick Gibb:**

The universal catch up premium funding, worth £650 million overall, will be delivered in 3 payments across the 2020/21 academic year. The first payment, 25% of the total, has been made to schools already, totalling to £159,011,640. The second payment of catch up premium funding will be made early in the new year and the third payment in the summer term.

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) will provide additional, targeted support to disadvantaged pupils who need the most help to catch up. Through the programme, schools will be able to access high-quality, subsidised tuition from approved Tuition



Partners and our most disadvantaged schools will be supported to employ in-house Academic Mentors to provide tuition to their pupils.

The NTP went live on 2 November 2020 and schools are now able to access tuition to support disadvantaged pupils that need the most help to catch up. Our delivery partner for the Tuition Partners pillar, the Education Endowment Foundation, has approved 33 Tuition Partners who will offer high-quality, subsidised tuition to schools. For this academic year, it is estimated that, through the Tuition Partners, approximately 15,000 tutors will support the scheme offering tuition to around 250,000 pupils.

In addition to this, the first 188 Academic Mentors have now been placed in schools from November. In total we will place 1,000 Academic Mentors, with the further cohorts starting in schools in January and February 2021.

### ■ Education: Standards

**Robert Halfon:**

[126834]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to update the Department for Education strategy 2015-2020: world-class education and care this calendar year.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department will set out its strategy in its forthcoming Outcome Delivery Plan, to be published by the Cabinet Office in 2021.

### ■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

**Sir Alan Campbell:**

[125213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his planned timescale is for reviewing guidelines on wearing face masks in educational settings during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has worked closely with Public Health England to develop a system of controls to reduce the risk of transmission in schools. This system of controls includes use of face coverings in schools in certain circumstances, as set out in our guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-education/face-coverings-in-education>. When implemented in line with a revised risk assessment, these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

At each stage of its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has listened to and acted on the latest medical and scientific advice. As the prevalence of the virus across the country and communities changes, the Government has always been clear that it will not hesitate to take swift and decisive action to control the virus and save lives.



## ■ Further Education: Northwich

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[127638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what capital funding stakeholders in Weaver Vale constituency can apply for to build a further education campus in Northwich.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Following the merger which led to the creation of Warrington and Vale Royal College, the college identified that the Hartford campus was not financially viable due in part to low student numbers. The college therefore assessed that it could provide education for its learners through fewer campuses, taking into account the other options available locally for learners. The college closed its Hartford Campus (near Northwich) and supported the Hartford learners with subsidised or free travel arrangements depending on their circumstances. The college's nearest campus is five miles from Northwich.

The college continues to review its curriculum offer across Warrington and Vale Royal and is committed to developing the offer to meet local demand where possible. To date, however, the college has not identified evidence of sufficient demand to require an additional facility in the Northwich area. Cheshire West and Chester local authorities have also not raised concerns about the sufficiency of provision for 16-18 year old learners in the Northwich area following the closure of the Hartford campus.

## ■ Holiday Play Schemes: Free School Meals

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[127532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the extended £220 million Holiday Activities and Food Programme will be spent in part by local authorities to provide (a) educational activities and (b) academic catch-up support to children who have lost learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government recognises that school holidays can be difficult for some families, with children at risk of missing out on healthy meals, activities, and learning opportunities. Children should not go hungry and our ambitious plans will mean disadvantaged children have access to healthy food and enriching activities during the main holiday periods in which children can have fun experiences, be they through sport, the arts or many other activities.

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

We will expect local authorities to ensure the following minimum standards:

a) Holiday clubs are required to offer an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children.

These could, for example, include activities such as getting children involved in food preparation and cooking, growing fruit and vegetables, and taste tests.

b) Clubs must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members which provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.

c) Clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. This could include sessions or information provided by Citizen's Advice, healthcare practitioners, Family Support Services or Children's Services, Housing Support Officers, and organisations providing financial education.

Education recovery lies at the heart of our national mission as we recover from the disruption caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Schools have been open for all pupils full-time since the start of the autumn term. It continues to be our aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time as this is the best place for them to be for their education, development and wellbeing.

However, we recognise that all children and young people have had their education disrupted as a result of COVID-19. The government has announced a catch up package worth £1 billion, including a 'Catch up Premium' worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. Alongside the £650 million universal catch-up premium, we have launched the £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) for disadvantaged pupils. The NTP went live on 2 November 2020 and schools are now able to access tuition to support disadvantaged pupils that needed the most help to catch-up.

Understanding the long-term impact of COVID-19 disruption on attainment and progress is a key research priority for the government, and we have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to consider catch up needs and monitor progress over the course of the year. This will help inform strategic policy for supporting the school system.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[124697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 2 October 2020 on an incident suffered by a constituent's child at school, reference ZA53261.

**Nick Gibb:**

I can confirm that a response has been sent to the letter dated 2 October, ref ZA53261, from the hon. Member for West Lancashire.

## ■ Primary Education: National Curriculum Tests

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[126863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made on the importance of KS2 SATs results for the 2020-21 Year 7 cohort during the transition period into secondary schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak and associated school closures, the Department made the decision to cancel key stage 2 national curriculum assessments in the 2019/20 academic year. As a result, there were no formal assessment and reporting requirements for that year. The Department recognises the gap in information this creates on pupils' attainment for the year 7 cohort of pupils in the 2020/21 academic year. Schools must continue to share pupils' common transfer files with secondary schools and make arrangements to share additional information as required.

## ■ Pupils: Attendance

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[122809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether students who are absent from school because their school is partially closed due to a shortage of staff are recorded as being absent for covid-19 related reasons in his Department's Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak statistical releases.

**Nick Gibb:**

All pupils, in all year groups, should be in school full time this year. If schools have concerns about accommodating pupils due to staff absence related to COVID-19, they should discuss this with their local regional schools commissioner team.

Whilst pupils will be recorded as absent in circumstances where there are staff shortages, they should not be recorded as absent for COVID-19 related reasons in the 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' statistical releases.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[126864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made for the implications of his policies for (a) regional variations in covid-19 infection rates, and (b) the number of days of schooling lost as a result of covid-19 restrictions on school exams in 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department works closely with relevant partners such as the Joint Bio Security Centre, Public Health England, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Office for National Statistics to understand regional trends in COVID-19 infection. Furthermore, our regional REACT teams gather information about the challenges facing individual schools and supports them to respond to their local circumstances.

The Department collects data from schools, nurseries, and colleges detailing absences related to COVID-19. We are also conducting research to understand the learning lost by school aged pupils as a result of disruption caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Department recognises that pupils, including those due to sit exams and assessments next year, will have experienced disruption to their education due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The measures announced on 3 December are the best way to ensure pupils have a fair chance of showing their knowledge and understanding of a subject in exams. These include grading that is more generous than previous years and adaptations to exams, such as giving pupils exam support materials and advance notice of topic areas.

## ■ Secondary Education: Admissions

**Daisy Cooper:**

[127672]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many secondary schools have confirmed they will not use SATS tests in their 2021 admissions criteria.

**Nick Gibb:**

Only selective schools can take ability into account for the purposes of admissions. They are not required to inform the Department of the measures they use to assess ability. We are not aware of any schools which routinely use SATs to assess a child's eligibility for admission.

## ■ Students: Coronavirus

**Emma Hardy:**

[124853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the cost to universities of testing all students returning in the new year 2021; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing financial support to universities to deliver those tests.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Following the end of term break, our top priority for January 2021 is the welfare of students, staff and the wider communities around higher education (HE) providers. As stated in the January 2021 student return guidance, published on 2 December 2020, all HE providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return. The guidance is available here:

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

The Department for Education is actively working with the Department for Health and Social Care to ensure that all HE providers can deliver government supported asymptomatic test sites utilising lateral flow devices, which will help to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the staggered return.

Personal protective equipment and kits will be provided to HE providers at no cost, along with access to digital solutions, training and clinical guidance to support testing.

A cost recovery model is also in place for providers to recover costs for workforce, site set up and site furnishings.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

**[125217]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to provide covid-19 tests for students returning to university in January 2020.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Following the end of term break, our top priority for January 2021 will be the welfare of students, staff, and the communities around higher education (HE) providers. As stated in the January 2021 student return guidance published on 2 December 2020, all higher education providers should offer asymptomatic mass testing to all students on their return. The guidance is available here:

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

The department has sent communications to all HE providers on 2 December detailing the roll-out plans for January tests on return. Providers must return their data capture forms, including lateral flow device (LFD) test kit orders, to the department by 8 December. Providers selecting LFD testing will receive their kits by 18 December, thus ensuring testing of returning students can commence on 4 January.

The department and the Department of Health and Social Care have been hosting a series of webinars in December 2020 to discuss roll-out plans for January 2021.

These sessions are also being used to hear and address providers' concerns about signing up to the testing programme.

## ■ Supply Teachers: Coronavirus

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[126865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the amount schools have spent on supply teaching in the last eight months by region.

**Nick Gibb:**

Information on school spending is found in the schools financial benchmarking tool which contains local authority maintained schools' Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) returns and academies' accounting returns (AARs). The tool is found here: <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/Help/DataSources>.

The CFR and AAR results publish spending by schools on supply teachers. The latest information available is for the 2018/19 financial year for maintained schools, and 2018/19 academic year for academies.

Local authority maintained schools have submitted their 2019/20 financial year data which is due to be released shortly. This will include the period up to 31st March 2020. The Department will not have the school financial data for the last 8 months until the 2020/21 financial data is released in late 2021.

Schools have continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in the 2020/21 financial year compared to 2019/20.

The Department has announced a new COVID-19 workforce fund to support schools that are eligible with some of the costs of covering staff absences in schools, including employing supply staff to cover these absences. The announcement can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-support-schools-and-colleges-during-covid-pandemic>.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Cats: Tagging

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[127699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish his Department's response to the consultation on the microchipping of cats in England that closed on 4 January 2020.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government is committed to improving the welfare of cats and has a manifesto commitment to introduce compulsory microchipping of cats. In October 2019 Defra published a call for evidence on compulsory microchipping for cats, which attracted over 3,000 responses. We will be publishing a summary of the responses alongside the launch of a public consultation shortly.

### ■ Government Departments: Environment Protection

**Alex Sobel:**

[127632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress has been made in developing the framework for the 2021-25 Greening Government Commitments.

**Alex Sobel:**

[127633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to include the business use of taxis and PHVs by the public sector in the next iteration of the Greening Government Commitments.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Greening Government Commitments are designed to improve the environmental sustainability of the Government's estates and operations. We are progressing the development of the new framework for 2021-25 and aim to publish new commitments in spring 2021.

The new framework will ensure the public estate continues to reduce its environmental footprint, align with commitments in our 25 Year Environment Plan and be consistent with a trajectory to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. As part of this, we are exploring a range of measures aimed at reducing the

environmental impact of government travel, including through increasing the use of low- or zero-emission transport options by Government officials.

## ■ Horticulture: Imports

**Alan Brown:**

[\[125273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on what dates he has had discussions with representatives of the Horticultural sector on requirements to facilitate the import of goods after the end of the transition period.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra officials have maintained regular engagement with the horticultural industry on post-transition period planning, both with individual operators and through key stakeholder groups. For instance, the Plant Health Advisory Forum, the Tree Health Policy Group and the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group, as well as frequent bilateral engagement with key stakeholders such as the Horticultural Trade Association, Fresh Produce Consortium, the National Farmers Union and the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association.

Most recently Defra has undertaken a series of feasibility sessions joined by more than 300 participants, describing in detail the end-to-end import process for plants and plant products into Great Britain from the European Union after the end of the Transition Period. The policy behind GB's post-Transition Period plant health regime and its implementation has been informed by the invaluable feedback received from stakeholders at these feasibility sessions, other events and regular conversations with industry groups.

## ■ Plants: Imports

**Alan Brown:**

[\[125274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of inspection agents required for the inspection of high priority plants imported from the EU from (a) 1 January 2021 and (b) 1 July 2021; how many trained and qualified agents are employed by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Victoria Prentis:**

GB plant health authorities have undertaken significant recruitment to increase the number of plant health inspectors in order to service the demand for import and export checks and certification. We will have sufficient resources to meet demand from 1 January 2021 when checks of high-priority plants from the EU begin, and July 2021 when we will have arrived at our end-state regime, to ensure minimal disruption to trade.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) delivers plant health services in England and Wales where the majority of additional inspectors will be required. APHA is well advanced in its recruitment of plant health inspectors, with nearly 200 new field and desk-based staff undergoing training in time for 1 January 2021.



Further recruitment campaigns are being progressed which would enable adaptation of the number plant health inspectors if volumes prove to be higher than anticipated. Additionally, Defra officials also have well developed contingency plans in place, which involve re-prioritisation of services and securing temporary resources to ensure no disruption to trade.

**Alan Brown:**

**[125275]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what arrangements he has in place for the provision of plant passports for the movement of plants when the transition period ends on 31 December 2020.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Movements of plants which currently require a plant passport from the EU will need to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate after the end of the transition period. Further details on this change can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-and-exporting-plants-and-plant-products-from-1-january-2021>.

For internal GB movements, GB will continue to use a domestic plant passport system from 1 January 2021, which will be similar to the current EU plant passport system. The plant passport system is necessary to maintain traceability for internal movements of plants and ensure that operators who issue plant passports meet a minimum standard of plant health.

We have aimed to keep the domestic plant passport system similar to the current system to ease the burden on operators.

For example, imports from the EU will require a plant passport from the First Place of Destination; this is the same process as for imports from third countries now. Furthermore, existing authorisations to issue EU plant passports will roll over from 1 January 2021, and therefore there is no need for operators to fill out further forms for plant passporting if they are already authorised.

The vast majority of guidance regarding plant passports will remain the same, and movements of plants within GB which require a plant passport now will continue to require one after the transition period; therefore for most operators the post-transition domestic plant passport system should not present additional burden to the existing system.

Changes that will occur, for example the content and format of the new UK plant passport, have been communicated to industry to ensure they are ready for those changes.

## ■ River Severn: Floods

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

**[125220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the implementation of flood defences down the River



Severn will not cause further flooding; and what recent discussions he has had with local farmers on that matter.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA), along with other members of the River Severn partnership, is investigating options to reduce overall flood risk and benefit communities along the River Severn, now and from the increasing risk of climate change.

The EA is also considering new approaches for managing the effects of too much and too little water, for example with the Severn Valley Water Management scheme, and land use practice in the upper catchment.

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is one of the partners in the River Severn Partnership and has represented farmers in a number of meetings where projects have been discussed. On 1 December, the joint chairs of the River Severn Partnership (EA and Shropshire Council) met the NFU to hear members' views and discuss the early options appraisal work for the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme and to discuss plans for future engagement and consultation with landowners.

**Daniel Kawczynski:**

[\[125221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the safety of residents in towns along the River Severn which are at risk of flooding during winter months.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Over the winter of 2019-20 the River Severn catchment saw some of the highest river levels ever recorded. Unfortunately, 1,600 properties were flooded across the West Midlands. The Environment Agency's (EA) flood risk management assets prevented over 14,500 properties from flooding.

Since the winter floods, the EA has been inspecting and repairing flood assets where necessary that were affected by significant flooding. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the EA has continued to maintain its existing assets and has dedicated teams in place to operate them 24 hours a day. It is also making sure our rivers are clear from debris.

In the 2020 budget, the Government announced a £120 million package to repair flood risk management assets damaged as a result of the winter floods. For the Severn corridor, the EA secured £4.2 million, covering 18 projects. Repair work to these assets is ongoing, but the defences will remain fully operational and will function as intended, including both demountable and temporary defences at a number of locations such as Shrewsbury and Ironbridge.

The EA has also been carrying out incident response preparation and training to ensure we can respond to whatever weather comes our way.

## ■ Transport: Refrigeration

**Alan Brown:**

[\[125269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2020 to Question 109136 on Transport: Refrigeration, who his Department has commissioned to conduct research on improving the evidence base on emissions from non-road mobile machinery emissions, including transport refrigeration units; what the (a) timeframe and (b) terms of reference is for that research; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In the Clean Air Strategy 2019, we committed to exploring further action to tackle non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) emissions in England. In September 2019, Defra commissioned Ricardo Energy & Environment to conduct research to improve the evidence base on emissions from NRMM, including transport refrigeration units, and inform policy development.

Over the next few months, we will be engaging with stakeholders to discuss initial findings of the research. This exercise will help to ensure that we have a robust and accurate evidence base from which to consider policy options.

## ■ Veterinary Services: Internet

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[126915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of online veterinary services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the regulatory body of the veterinary profession, has temporarily permitted the remote prescribing of medicines as part of allowing practices to operate safely and effectively during the pandemic. This is subject to ongoing review by the RCVS.

## ■ Wines: Imports

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[127592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of indefinitely suspending the requirement for wine imports to the UK to be accompanied with a wine-specific VI-1 certificate.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Further to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Ogmere on 27 November 2020, [PQ UIN 117332](#), no assessment has been made of the potential benefits of removing the requirement for wine imports to the UK being accompanied by a VI 1 certificate.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Wayne David:**[\[127488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2020 to Question 106364 and the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 114083 and with reference to the CPS response of 19 November 2020 to the Freedom of Information Request reference 9433 that state that the CPS made applications to the Integrated Activity Fund/Gulf Strategy Fund in financial years 2018-19 and 2020-21, for what reason that information was not disclosed in the Answers to those Questions.

**James Cleverly:**

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) did not apply directly to the Integrated Activity Fund in 2018-19 or to the Gulf Strategy Fund in 2020-21. Any CPS activities undertaken in those years would have been as part of an application by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to operate a country programme.

■ **Bangladesh: Rohingya****Afzal Khan:**[\[127645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Bangladeshi counterpart on the decision by the Government of Bangladesh to relocate Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char island.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government is aware that the Bangladesh authorities have started relocating Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char. We are monitoring the situation closely. The UK supports the UN position that independent, full and detailed technical and protection assessments are needed to evaluate the safety and sustainability of living on Bhasan Char, and that any relocation should be voluntary and based on relevant, accurate and updated information.

The Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, underlined the importance of these points in a call with Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Momen on 19 November, and has discussed the issue several times with the Bangladesh High Commissioner in London. The British High Commissioner in Dhaka regularly engages with the Government of Bangladesh on Bhasan Char, most recently with the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Adviser on 6 December.

■ **British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[126163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people residing in the British Overseas Territories are able to access a covid-19 vaccine.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK Government has been supporting the Overseas Territories throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling seven to establish local testing facilities, and ensuring none ran out of personal protective equipment, testing, and other medical supplies. UK Ministers have written to the leaders of the Overseas Territories, confirming that the UK Government will supply the Territories with a proportionate share of the vaccines that the UK procures, in line with the UK's enduring commitment to the people of the Overseas Territories. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, together with Public Health England, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the UK Vaccine Taskforce, are now coordinating plans to deploy vaccines to the Territories.

■ **China: Detainees****Afzal Khan:**[\[127643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recent leak of a prisoner list from a Chinese internment camp showing how authorities in Xinjiang target Muslim minorities for detention.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are aware of recent reports on the use of data by the Chinese authorities to target Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. These reports add to the growing body of evidence of gross human rights violations perpetrated against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the region. We have repeatedly condemned these abuses and call on China to end arbitrary detention, in line with its international obligations.

■ **Diplomatic Service****Wayne David:**[\[127489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which countries the UK does not have any direct representation (a) through an embassy and (b) consulate office.

**Nigel Adams:**

We do not have a list of countries where we do not have embassies or consulate offices. The extent of the UK's diplomatic and consular representation overseas is information publicly available on Gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies>.

■ **Diplomatic Service: Staff****Lisa Nandy:**[\[126853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of the UK's overseas diplomatic posts have two or fewer UK-based staff.

**Nigel Adams:**

For security reasons, the FCDO provides headcount detail in bands. The smallest band that is provided is fewer than 10 UK-based members of staff. Therefore it is not

possible to provide the number of the UK's overseas diplomatic posts that have two or fewer UK-based members of staff.

## ■ **Drugs and Organised Crime**

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[127675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of his Department's role in the delivery of the (a) Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (2018) and (b) Drugs Strategy (2017) in the context of the merger of the Department for International Development with his Department.

**James Cleverly:**

The creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has brought together our diplomatic, developmental, and programmatic levers to maximise our international influence and to ensure more secure and prosperous lives for people in the UK and overseas. Serious and organised crime is often transnational and requires cross-government responses which tackle underlying causes as well as direct threats to the UK and our interests.

The FCDO is committed to continuing to deliver this Government's international serious and organised crime objectives, including those relating to illicit drugs. Our teams continue to work closely with the Home Office and other partners in Government which are collectively responsible for delivering these strategies.

## ■ **Embassies: Staff**

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[126854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of the UK's embassies in EU states have three or fewer UK-based staff.

**Nigel Adams:**

For security reasons, the FCDO provides headcount detail in bands. The smallest band that is provided is fewer than 10 UK-based members of staff. Therefore it is not possible to provide the number of UK Embassies in EU states that have three or fewer UK-based members of staff.

## ■ **Ethiopia: Armed Conflict**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[126031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Government of Ethiopia and (b) other Governments on ending the violence and humanitarian crisis in Tigray.

**James Duddridge:**

The Foreign Secretary spoke with Prime Minister Abiy on 10 November and called for the immediate de-escalation of violence, for the protection of civilians and for unfettered humanitarian access. He reiterated these messages when he met Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Demeke on 25 November. I also stressed these

points when I spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador in London on 18 November, as well as in my tweets of 24 and 19 November. Our Ambassador in Addis Ababa continues to engage across the Ethiopian leadership in support of these objectives.

The UK continues to liaise closely with a wide range of regional and international partners in support of these objectives. The Foreign Secretary spoke on 16 November with Foreign Minister Pandor of South Africa, communicating our support of President Ramaphosa's efforts towards a political solution. He also discussed approaches with his French and German counterparts in Berlin on 23 November, with President Kenyatta of Kenya on 24 November, and with Prime Minister Hamdok of Sudan on 12 November. I also reiterated our concerns about the need for an urgent peaceful settlement in Tigray when I spoke with Foreign Minister Kutesa of Uganda on 26 November, and raised the situation in Ethiopia, and the role Ethiopia plays in regional stability, with the Governments of Somalia and Kenya during my visit to those two countries on 9 and 10 December. The Minister for Middle East and North Africa has done similarly with counterparts in the Gulf.

## ■ Falkland Islands: Fisheries

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[126791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to secure continued tariff-free market access for the Falkland Islands fisheries exports.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government always represents the interests of the Falkland Islands robustly, particularly in relation to supporting the Islands' exports to the EU and elsewhere. The Government is confident that a viable and profitable trading relationship between the Falkland Islands and the EU will continue after the transition period.

## ■ Foreign Policy

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[126855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has a soft power strategy.

**Nigel Adams:**

The role of soft power is being considered as part of the *Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*. This will be informed by the conclusions of the cross-government work already undertaken on our strategic approach to this area.

The UK has huge soft power strengths and the FCDO is supporting these, for example through our funding of the British Council, BBC World 2020 programme and Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth Scholarships. Our determination to work as a force for good in the world is an important part of our soft power, as we are seeing through our hosting of COP26, which is showcasing our leadership on climate, the

introduction of 'Magnitsky' sanctions to hold human rights abusers to account, and our support for a globally accessible Covid-19 vaccine.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Office: Brexit**

**Lisa Nandy:**

[126856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the Foreign and Commonwealth Office spent on preparing for the UK leaving the EU in financial year 2019-20.

**Nigel Adams:**

Details on former FCO spending for 2019-20 can be found in the annual report, published at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/903478/](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903478/)

FCO1413\_FCO\_Annual\_Report\_2019\_-\_accessible.pdf

These figures do not include funding spent from within our core allocation, including that received as part of other uplifts or which was funded by the Cabinet Office following the dissolution of DExEU.

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

**Sarah Champion:**

[126887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any financial assistance will be available to staff from the Department for International Development who are non-UK nationals who wish to become UK citizens or apply for new jobs in his Department.

**Nigel Adams:**

Civil Service policy is that departments do not fund naturalisation application costs.

Non-UK national staff are still able to work in the FCDO and to apply for new roles without applying for naturalization.

■ **Gulf States: Overseas Aid**

**Wayne David:**

[126780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 114083 on Gulf States: Overseas Aid, how many applications were made to the Gulf Strategy Fund in 2020-21 by (a) the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (b) the Department for International Trade, (c) the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and (d) HM Revenue and Customs; and how many of each Department's applications were for activities delivered in one country.

**Wayne David:**

[126783]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, further to the answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 114083, how many regional



applications made to the Gulf Strategy Fund in the financial year 2020-21 were approved for each of (a) the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (b) the Department for International Trade and (c) HM Revenue and Customs.

**James Cleverly:**

The Department for Environment Food & Rural, the Department for International Trade, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and HM Revenue and Customs each made one application to deliver a regional programmes. The application from DCMS was not approved. Country-specific programmes are operated by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

**Wayne David:**

[\[126781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 114083, with regards to Gulf Strategy Fund activities in the financial year 2020-21, in which countries the six country-specific projects were conducted; and how many projects were conducted in each of those countries.

**Wayne David:**

[\[126782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 November 2020 to Question 114083, to which countries his Department made six country-specific applications for funding from the Gulf Strategy Fund in financial year 2020-21; and how many of those approved applications were for projects in each of (a) Saudi Arabia (b) Bahrain (c) Kuwait (d) United Arab Emirates (e) Oman and (f) Qatar.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office applied to the Gulf Strategy Fund to operate a programme in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As of December 2020, the programme teams in each country will oversee delivery of nine projects in Bahrain, four in Kuwait, nine in Oman, two in Qatar, six in Saudi Arabia and seven in the United Arab Emirates in 2020/21.

■ **Israeli Settlements**

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[126910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish a response to EDM 1139 on Israeli annexation of Palestinian land.

**James Cleverly:**

We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including settlement expansion within the West Bank. As the UK made clear on 16 October, in a joint statement alongside France, Germany, Italy and Spain, we are deeply concerned by the recent decision taken by the Israeli authorities to advance more than 4,900 settlement building units in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I also expressed concern about settlement advancement in Givat Hamatos on 18 November and Har Homa on 25 November. We regularly raise

settlements with the Government of Israel; UK officials raised settlements with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 18 November. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. Settlement expansion is also a counterproductive move in light of the positive developments of normalisation agreements reached between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

#### ■ **Kashmir: Humanitarian Situation**

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[127644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on the humanitarian situation in Kashmir.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are aware of reports on the humanitarian situation in Kashmir. We urge the Governments of India and Pakistan to ensure that the needs of those who live in India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir are being met.

We regularly discuss Kashmir with the Governments of India and Pakistan. Most recently, the Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, discussed the situation in Kashmir with the Pakistani Foreign Secretary on the 8 September and the Indian Foreign Secretary (both Permanent Under-Secretary equivalents) on 3 November. Lord Ahmad is also in regular contact with the Pakistani and Indian High Commissioners in London.

#### ■ **Nagorno Karabakh: Armed Conflict**

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[127527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help hold perpetrators to account for atrocities committed by Azerbaijanis (a) during and (b) after the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are deeply concerned of accusations from both sides that atrocities are being committed and continue to urge de-escalation. On 13 November I urged the Azerbaijani FM to ensure any such accusations were the subject of thorough investigation. An investigation is currently underway and we continue to monitor the situation.

#### ■ **Nagorno Karabakh: Humanitarian Situation**

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[127524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to help tackle the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh; and what the results of that support have been to date.

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[127525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps have been taken to allocate funding to tackle the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh from the £1 million he announced in October 2020 for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Wendy Morton:**

In line with the Foreign Secretary's announcement of 30 October, the UK Government has provided the International Committee of the Red Cross with £1 million in support of its humanitarian efforts in the region. This financial support is being used to provide urgent medical supplies, food and shelter to thousands of people affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We continue to work with international partners and NGOs to understand the needs in the region and what further support we can provide. The UK Government is supporting the wider international response by providing funding for additional monitoring and analysis of the humanitarian situation through organisations such as the Humanitarian 2 Humanitarian network and supporting additional posts within the UN offices in-country. The UK Government is keeping the situation under close review, coordinating with local and international partners and will continue to explore opportunities to support partners to deliver an effective international response.

## ■ Nagorno Karabakh: Peace Negotiations

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[127526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what practical steps his Department has taken to secure the release of Armenians held as prisoners of war after the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Wendy Morton:**

I spoke to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister on 13 November and the Armenian Foreign Minister on 30 November where I welcomed the cessation of hostilities. I urged both Foreign Ministers to ensure the International Committee of the Red Cross were able to access the conflict zone to allow for the facilitation of the return of prisoners of war and the remains of the deceased. Our Embassies in Yerevan and Baku continue to engage their hosts in support of these efforts.

**Matthew Pennycook:**

[\[127601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh ceasefire agreement signed by the President of Azerbaijan, the Prime Minister of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation on 10 November 2020, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that the exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees, and the remains of the fatalities, is carried out.

**Wendy Morton:**

I spoke to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister on 13 November and the Armenian Foreign Minister on 30 November where I welcomed the cessation of hostilities. I

urged both Foreign Ministers to ensure the International Committee of the Red Cross were able to access the conflict zone to allow for the facilitation of the return of prisoners of war and the remains of the deceased. Our Embassies in Yerevan and Baku continue to engage their hosts in support of these efforts.

## ■ **Palestinians: Education**

**Wayne David:**

**[127490]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that Palestinian Authority teaching programmes in receipt of support from UK development spending promote common values of peace, freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK does not fund textbooks in the OPTs. The UK Government is concerned about allegations of incitement in the Palestinian Authority's (PA) curriculum. We have a regular dialogue with the PA in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, any type of action and language that makes it more difficult to achieve a culture of peaceful coexistence and a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The EU is also financing a study of Palestinian textbooks against defined benchmarks (based on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation standards on peace, tolerance and non-violence in education). This review is currently underway. We have regular discussions with our European Partners on the review and we continue to encourage them to finalise the report as soon as possible. The UK will continue to raise our concerns about incitement in education, and Foreign Secretary raised this issue with the PA during his visit to the OPTs in August 2020.

**Wayne David:**

**[127491]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to help ensure that the Georg Eckert Institute review of Palestinian textbooks includes an assessment of compliance with UNESCO-derived standards of peace and tolerance in education.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK does not fund textbooks in the OPTs. The UK Government is concerned about allegations of incitement in the Palestinian Authority's (PA) curriculum. We have a regular dialogue with the PA in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, any type of action and language that makes it more difficult to achieve a culture of peaceful coexistence and a negotiated solution to the conflict.

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Organisation standards on peace, tolerance and non-violence in education). This review is currently underway. We have regular discussions with our European Partners on the review and we continue to encourage them to finalise the report as soon as possible. The UK will continue to raise our concerns about incitement in education, and Foreign Secretary raised this issue with the PA during his visit to the OPTs in August 2020.

## ■ **Palestinians: Health Services**

**Mr Alistair Carmichael:**

**[126790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reported attack by Israeli forces against Palestine Red Crescent Society paramedics treating an injured man in Jordan Valley on 24 November 2020, what recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterparts to encourage prompt, independent and thorough investigations into and accountability for incidents of obstruction and attacks against health workers in the occupied Palestinian territory.

**James Cleverly:**

We condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinians. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, and urge restraint in the use of live fire. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance to bring those responsible to justice.

## ■ **Palestinians: Radicalism**

**John Howell:**

**[126811]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2020 to Question 120022 on Palestinians: Radicalism, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies in the event that the Palestinian Authority does not (a) remove material allegedly inciting violence against Israel and Jews from the school curriculum and (b) change the names of official Palestinian Authority schools reportedly named after terrorists.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is concerned about allegations of incitement in Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks. The UK does not fund textbooks in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The PA is in the process of revising its textbooks and we understand that it has already updated Grades 1-6 and hopes to update the remaining textbooks as soon as possible.

An independent review of the content in Palestinian textbooks led by our European partners is currently underway. The final report is due in the near future and we will study its findings carefully before deciding any next steps. We have also raised our

concerns about school naming at senior levels within the Palestinian Authority and will continue to do so.

## ■ **Palestinians: Terrorism**

**John Howell:**

[\[126812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2020 to Question 120023 on Palestinians: Radicalism, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness of UK Government representations to the Palestinian Authority on that matter and (b) effect of the Palestinian Authority's practice of paying salaries to prisoners convicted of terrorist offences on the prospects for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**James Cleverly:**

We are clear that the prisoner payments system should be reformed and is one among many hurdles in the way of a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UK has made frequent representations to the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the matter, which have helped establish it as a priority of the PA to address. Coordination between the parties, suspended in light of Israel's threat to annex parts of the West Bank illegally, has now resumed. We hope that the parties will soon again be resolving the problems between them.

## ■ **Russia: Propaganda**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[126035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent prevent cyber propaganda from Russia.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK takes the issue of disinformation very seriously and is working at pace with partners to combat false and misleading narratives. We are working collaboratively by providing ourselves and our international allies, such as G7 partners, with a better understanding of how different techniques are used as part of malicious information operations, so we can protect against those techniques more effectively.

We know that Russia routinely uses disinformation as a foreign policy tool. We will continue to monitor for any disinformation campaigns so that we are ready to respond to them quickly and effectively. We are focused on addressing disinformation by any actor, whether state or non-state.

## ■ **Sri Lanka: Water Supply**

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[126956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Sri Lankan counterpart on an independent international investigation into the Chunnakam water contamination in Sri Lanka.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are aware of the challenges Sri Lanka faces around water management and quality and the unique challenges faced by communities in Northern Sri Lanka. Staff at the British High Commission in Colombo raised the issue of water quality during a visit to the North in July. A number of public bodies in Sri Lanka, including the national water supply and drainage board, have conducted tests and compensation was offered to those affected by water pollution caused by the Chunnakam Power plant. We will continue to engage with local government in the North to ensure these concerns around water management and quality are understood, and that measures are taken to ensure clean water.

■ **Syria: Foreign Relations****Sarah Olney:**[\[126941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the demands of Syrians and active Syrian civil society groups are taken into account when formulating its policies on Syria for 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

HMG regularly engages with Syrian civil society groups to ensure their views are taken into account when developing Syria policy, at both official and Ministerial level. On 7 December, I discussed the UK's Syria policy with UK-based members of Syrian civil society. The previous week I met Syrians affected by the conflict and scholars of our Chevening scheme during my visit to Lebanon. The UK Syria Envoy hosted a virtual roundtable on 9 December with over 10 UK-based Syrian Civil Society groups and NGOs. Additionally the UK is clear that civil society, women and minorities must play a role in the UN-facilitated political process to reach a lasting settlement to the conflict.

■ **Syria: Humanitarian Aid****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[126096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the continued delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria during the covid-19 pandemic.

**James Cleverly:**

The impact of COVID-19 on lives across Syria is alarming. Health care capacity across Syria is overstretched; the regime's brutal pursuit of conflict and bombing of its own hospitals has left the whole of Syria ill-prepared for a pandemic that continues to spread. Deaths due to lack of humanitarian access are unacceptable, and the UK will continue to work with the international donors, the UN and humanitarian partners to pressure all parties to the conflict to allow unfettered humanitarian access across the whole of Syria.

The UK is one of the largest donors to the humanitarian response to the Syria Crisis across the region. Since 2012, we have committed over £3.3 billion to help Syrian



civilians displaced and vulnerable within their country, and host communities and Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. This includes a pledge of at least £300 million for 2020 at this year's Brussels conference that ensures the most vulnerable Syrians continue to have access to life-saving and essential services, including healthcare, food, water and sanitation. We continue to monitor the situation and work closely with UN and NGO partners in Syria to respond to the outbreak and to adapt our ongoing programming effectively to ensure the safe delivery of sustain life-saving services in light of the pandemic.

## ■ Syria: Overseas Aid

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[126970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) maintain the delivery of UK Aid to Syria and (b) secure a political solution to the conflict and (c) ensure the continuation of the ceasefire by all sides.

**James Cleverly:**

We continue to use our position at the UN Security Council to push for greater aid access into Syria and we remain committed to supporting aid delivery, through all mechanisms, to those in need. We are appalled that Russia has twice sought to block cross-border aid access into Syria, placing political support for the Assad regime above lifesaving support for the Syrian people.

On 22 October, the Foreign Secretary and likeminded counterparts issued a statement following a Ministerial meeting of the Syria Small Group: a political settlement in line with Security Council Resolution 2254, which calls for a nationwide ceasefire as part of a political process, is the only way to end the Syrian conflict. To this end, we welcomed UN Syria Envoy Pedersen's convening of the Constitutional Committee for a fourth round of talks in Geneva on 29 November, but regret that due to regime obstruction there has been little progress to date.

The UK continues to call on all parties to the conflict in Syria to adhere to agreed ceasefires and abide by their obligations under International Humanitarian Law. We regularly raise this matter in bilateral discussions and multilateral fora, including the UN Security Council.

## ■ Travel Information: Coronavirus

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[126850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will revise his Department's travel guidance before the Test to Release Scheme starts on 15 December 2020 to restrict advice against non-essential travel in relation to covid-19 to destinations with a very high risk to travellers.

**Nigel Adams:**

From 5 November, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) moved away from advising against all non-essential international travel, returning to

country specific advice. The FCDO travel advice provides guidance on COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 risks abroad and currently advises against all but essential travel to many countries and territories on the basis of COVID-19 risks. All FCDO travel advice pages remain under constant review to ensure they reflect the FCDO's latest assessment of risks to British nationals and include up-to-date information and advice. FCDO travel advice related to COVID-19 is based on Public Health England's assessment of risks. When the FCDO no longer assesses the risks to British nationals to be unacceptably high, travel advice is updated.

## ■ UNRWA: Finance

**Christian Wakeford:** [\[127041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Government's policy is on long-term funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which provides protection and core services to Palestinian refugees across the region. We have consistently been a top donor to UNRWA, providing £51 million in 2020. As announced on 26 November, in order to maximise our strategic focus in the use of Official Development Assistance (ODA) next year, the Foreign Secretary will lead a short cross-government process to review, appraise and finalise all of the UK's ODA allocations. Decisions on support for UNRWA will be taken as part of this process.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

## ■ Abortion: Drugs

**Sir David Amess:** [\[125929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how members of the public can submit a written or email submission in response to his Department's consultation document on Home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 10 December 2020]:* Following a commitment made in Parliament earlier this year, we have now launched a three month consultation on whether to make permanent the current temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. We welcome feedback from anyone with an interest or view on this subject, particularly from those who have been directly affected by the current temporary measure.

Responses can be submitted online to the consultation at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/home-use-of-both-pills-for-early-medical-abortion>

If an individual is unable to complete the online form, they can contact our correspondence team at the following link:

<https://contactus.dhsc.gov.uk/>

## ■ Abortion: Safety

**Sir Edward Leigh:**

**[124108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to an NHS email of 21 May 2020 from a Regional Chief Midwife on the reported escalating risk relating to home medical abortions, what assessment he has made of the veracity of incidents cited in that email of (a) women attending ED with significant pain and bleeding related to the process through to ruptured ectopics, major resuscitation for major haemorrhage and the delivery of infants who are up to 30 weeks gestation, (b) three police investigations including a murder investigation as there is a concern that the baby was live born and (c) a woman receiving pills at 32 weeks' gestation; and whether he holds information on similar incidents and in that or other regions in the last eight months.

**Sir Edward Leigh:**

**[124109]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2020 to Question 99518 on Abortion: Private Sector, whether the incidents of complications relating to home medical abortion referred to in an NHS email of 21 May 2020 from a regional chief midwife describing an escalating risk of the Pills by Post scheme have been investigated.

**Helen Whately:**

Safe, continued access to key services is our priority during this difficult period. We are aware of a small number of incidents which we are looking into alongside with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and other partners.

The Department is aware of reports of two women who died after seeking abortion treatment earlier this year. Both deaths have been appropriately investigated and in one case investigations are continuing. For the other case, the coroner concluded that there was no evidence to suggest the pregnancy or abortion contributed to the death either directly or indirectly. Both women attended an abortion service in person and based on information provided to the Department at least one of these women was supplied with pills to take at home under the 2018 approval.

We continue to closely monitor the impact of the temporary approval for women's homes to be classed as of place where both sets of medication for early medical abortion can be taken. Officials have regular meetings with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the CQC and abortion service providers to ensure the appropriate safeguards are in place to protect women accessing this service.

## ■ Alzheimer's Disease: Eastbourne

**Caroline Ansell:**

**[125284]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the diagnosis rate of Alzheimer's disease in Eastbourne; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

The Challenge on Dementia 2020 sets the ambition for two thirds of people with dementia to receive a formal diagnosis.

NHS Digital collects data on the number of patients with a [recorded dementia diagnosis](#) in their clinical record and report this on a monthly basis, so that the National Health Service, general practitioners and commissioners can make informed choices to plan their services. The latest data for October 2020 shows that the Dementia Diagnosis Rate for Eastbourne was 67.2%. The data is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/recorded-dementia-diagnoses>

## ■ Breast Cancer: Screening

**Sarah Olney:**

**[121895]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the £1 billion from the Spending Review 2020 for tackling the health screening backlog will be used to increase the number of NHS staff working on breast cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2020]:* The Spending Review 2020 provides £260 million to continue to grow the National Health Service workforce and support commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, including continuing to take forward the cancer workforce plan phase one. Full details on funding allocations towards NHS workforce budgets, including Health Education England, in 2021-22 will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

We have confirmed an additional £3 billion for the NHS next year to support the recovery from the impact of COVID-19. This includes around £1 billion to begin tackling the elective backlog, around £500 million for mental health services and investment in the NHS workforce and around £1.5 billion to help ease existing pressures caused by COVID-19.

## ■ Cancer: Health Services

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

**[117199]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which types of cancer are subject to a Government funded audit; and what the criteria is for determining which cancers are subject to those audits.

**Jo Churchill:**

Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership commissions, develops and manages the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme, on behalf of NHS England, Wales and other devolved administrations. The programme currently consists of over 30 national clinical audits, six clinical outcome review programmes and the National Joint Registry. There are five funded cancer audits in prostate, lung, breast cancer in older patients, oesophago-gastric and bowel cancers.

**Care Homes: Visits****Bambos Charalambous:****[117342]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish the clinical guidance which formed the basis of the Government guidance dated 5 November 2020 on visiting care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

On 5 November we published guidance to enable COVID-19 secure visits to take place in care home while national restrictions are in place. Guidance documents are informed by expert advice before publication to ensure that they are based on latest evidence.

We work with Public Health England, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' (SAGE) Social Care Sub-Group and other relevant bodies to closely monitor national and international evidence, to ensure best practice is reviewed and can be applied. SAGE publishes its papers routinely at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies>.

We also work closely with a range of stakeholders who represent the sector to ensure that the recent guidance update encourages and enables care providers to facilitate visiting while keeping residents, staff and visitors as safe as possible.

**Marsha De Cordova:****[121008]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that family members can safely visit and make meaningful contact with relatives in care homes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

On 1 December, we published updated guidance to enable visits to take place for care home residents once national restrictions end. This guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus>

**Emma Hardy:****[122865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to publish updated guidance on care home visitation in areas under tier 3 covid-19 restrictions.

**Helen Whately:**

We recognise how important it is to allow care home residents to meet their loved ones safely, especially for those at the end of their lives. We appreciate the particular challenges visiting restrictions pose for people with dementia, people with learning disabilities and autistic adults, amongst others, as well as for their loved ones.

On 1 December, we published updated guidance to enable COVID-19 secure visits to take place for care home residents once national restrictions end. The guidance advises that enabling visits should be the default position in all care homes, regardless of their local tier. Rapid (lateral flow) tests are being sent to all care homes to enable more meaningful visits to take place in all tiers.

**Laura Trott:**[\[122895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether care home visitors will be required to wear personal protective equipment including masks, gloves and aprons when visiting family members after receiving a negative covid-19 test under the care home visitor testing programme.

**Helen Whately:**

When visiting a care home, all visitors should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the duration of their visit, regardless of whether they have been tested or not. The appropriate PPE for visitors can be determined using the guidance at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-to-work-safely-in-domiciliary-care>

**Helen Hayes:**[\[124807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the change in the level of demand on care home staff required to provide covid-19 tests to visitors; and what steps he is taking to ensure that providers are able to access the staff they need.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 8 December 2020]:* We have issued guidance to help care homes enable safe visiting. Visitors will need to arrange visiting with the care home in advance.

The Infection Control Fund (ICF) is available for care homes to use for extra COVID-19 related costs including visiting. The ICF has been extended until March 2021, with an extra £546 million for the care sector.

**Claudia Webbe:**[\[126176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that detailed guidance on visiting relatives in care homes will be published before Christmas.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department published detailed guidance covering both visits into care homes, and outward visits by care residents, on 2 December. This guidance, along with the rollout of rapid (lateral flow) testing will enable families to spend time with their loved ones, while helping to reduce the risks of COVID transmission to vulnerable care home residents. The guidance is available here at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arrangements-for-visiting-out-of-the-care-home/visits-out-of-care-homes>

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Vicky Foxcroft:****[91097]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effects on people who have previously shielded of recent trends in the number of (a) daily covid-19 cases and (b) local covid-19 lockdowns.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Shielded Patient List (SPL) is comprised of individuals nationally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable using clinical criteria based on data from general practitioner (GP) and hospital electronic records. The SPL also includes those added individually by their GP or hospital doctor after caseload checking and individual consultation.

NHS Digital has published management information on the outcomes for the shielding population which is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mi-tracking-healthcare-activity-and-outcomes-for-shielded-patients-england>

However, the published data states that it cannot be used for evaluation purposes. This is because it is not possible to reliably estimate what the emergency admission and mortality rates would have been if shielding had not been implemented. We also do not know whether those who were advised to shield responded to this advice and whether any effects of shielding were due to this or the wider set of social distancing measures that were also in place at the time.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Caroline Nokes:****[122671]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of retired medical professionals over 60 who could assist in the roll out of vaccinations for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Bring Back Staff programme keep actively engaged with 12,749 retired former healthcare professionals, who have expressed an



interest in returning to the National Health Service in some capacity over the winter. Of the 12,749, 2,697 are aged 60 years old or above. NHS England and NHS Improvement's regional teams are contacting these former professionals to seek their support over the winter with a particular focus on the COVID-19 vaccine programme.

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[122867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to recruit retired NHS staff to assist in the covid-19 vaccination roll out.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Bring Back Staff Programme is actively engaged with 12,749 retired former healthcare professionals, who have expressed an interest in returning to the National Health Service in some capacity over the winter. NHS England and NHS Improvement's regional teams are contacting these former professionals to seek their support over the winter with a particular focus on the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[124788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether health and care professions that can administer medicines, through Patient Group Directions and Independent Prescribing Rights, will be granted rights to assist with the roll out of any covid-19 vaccination programme.

**Jo Churchill:**

Provisions have been made in The Human Medicines (Coronavirus and Influenza) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to expand the workforce legally allowed to administer vaccines. This includes expanding the scope of patient group directions to allow for them to be issued for the administration of any medicine, including COVID-19 vaccines and flu vaccines. These regulations came into force on 16 October 2020. Trained independent prescribers are also able to administer vaccines subject to them having the required skill set.

## ■ Dementia: Health Services

**Caroline Ansell:**

[\[125285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has made of the outcomes of the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

In 2018 we undertook a review of the progress made in implementing the Challenge on Dementia 2020. This was informed by a call for evidence. Respondents told us that we were largely on track to meet our commitments. In a small number of areas additional or refined actions were identified to help ensure that commitments could be met. The report of the review was published on 22 February 2019 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dementia-2020-challenge-progress-review>

We have continued to make significant progress in meeting the commitments made in the Challenge.

## ■ Dementia: Research

**Caroline Ansell:**

**[125283]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that dementia research is not disrupted by the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government remains strongly committed to supporting research into dementia and the United Kingdom research community is playing a significant role in the global effort to find a cure or a major disease-modifying treatment by 2025.

The Department's National Institute for Health Research published a framework in May to support the restarting of research paused due to COVID-19 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/restart-framework/24886>

The NIHR is supporting the research community to amend study protocols for COVID-19 security. The NIHR published guidance in October that NIHR-funded research staff should not be deployed to front line duties except in exceptional circumstances.

## ■ Dental Services

**Rosie Cooper:**

**[102006]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish additional guidance for dental professionals on (a) the resumption of a full service and (b) how to handle fallow times.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 15 October 2020]:* NHS England and NHS Improvement provides guidance which is updated as needed for dentists holding National Health Service contracts on the modified contractual requirements during the ongoing pandemic. Since 8 June, routine NHS dentistry has resumed with the full range of services available. The availability of appointments is however greatly reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, largely due to the need for fallow times. The latest guidance from NHS England and NHS Improvement is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/06/C0839-dental-recovery-sop-v4.01-29-oct.pdf>

■ **Dental Services: Twickenham**

**Munira Wilson:** [\[123716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in Twickenham are on the waiting list for access to NHS dental services.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 7 December 2020]:* Individual practices may keep waiting lists for new patients but there is no national waiting list held by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

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

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[126083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the holding Answer of 30 November to Question 111583, when he plans to respond to Question 77729 tabled by the hon. Member for Ealing Central and Acton, tabled on 31 July 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 10 December 2020]:* We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold the Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[126960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to Answer Question 97001, on Coronavirus: Contact Tracing, tabled on 28 September 2020 by the hon. Member for Slough.

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[126961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to provide a substantive Answer to Question 105515, on Coronavirus: Slough, tabled on 16 October 2020 by the hon. Member for Slough.

**Edward Argar:**

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

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

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[127520]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 109280, tabled on 30 October 2020 by the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion.

**Edward Argar:**

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

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

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[128201]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to named day Question 114249, tabled by the hon. Member for Bristol West on 11 November 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

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

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

■ **Foetuses: Pain**

**Fiona Bruce:**

**[124159]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2019 to Question 269708, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' steps to prevent foetal pain since July 2019.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 7 December 2020]:* The Department does not set clinical practice. To support clinical practice, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has considered the issue of fetal pain and awareness in its guidelines on 'The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion' and 'Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations for Practice', which are available at the following links:

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

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

■ **Food: Advertising**

**Craig Whittaker:** **[125985]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed online advertising restrictions on foods high in fat, salt or sugar on reformulation work being undertaken by food and drink manufacturers.

**Jo Churchill:**

We published an evidence note alongside the consultation on the proposal to introduce a total restriction of online advertising for products high in fat, salt and sugar. The note references non-monetised benefits as result of reformulation of products. This is available at the following link:

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

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/786554/advertising-consultation-impact-assessment.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786554/advertising-consultation-impact-assessment.pdf)

■ **Health**

**Lee Anderson:** **[127654]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 64355 on Health, what his Department's revised timeframe is for publishing the response to the consultation on Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s.

**Lee Anderson:** **[127655]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 64355 on Health, what his timeframe is for publishing the updated version of the 22 July 2019 Green Paper entitled, Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Prevention Green Paper, 'Advancing our health: Prevention in the 2020s' outlined commitments with varying timelines, regarding the services we receive, the choices we make and the conditions in which we live. The Government response to the consultation has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the announcement of the National Institute for Health Protection in August, we are also considering the best future arrangements for the wide range of Public Health England's non-health protection functions that are vital to support health improvement, prevention and delivery of health services and we will be setting out further details of our approach in due course.

## ■ Health Services and Social Services: Protective Clothing

**Claudia Webbe:** [126175]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all health and social care workers have access to FFP3 respirators.

**Claudia Webbe:** [126179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of (a) NHS staff and (b) staff in the social care sector have access to FFP3 respirators.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government has established a four-month stockpile of all key personal protective equipment (PPE), including FFP3 respirator masks, which means we have a secure supply for workers in both the National Health Service and social care settings.

For workers in the NHS, Infection Prevention and Control guidance, which is published on GOV.UK, sets out the occasions when an FFP3 mask should be used. The equivalent guidance for workers in social care settings is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-social-care-guidance>

## ■ Heart Diseases: Health Education

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [126810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) raise awareness of heart failure as a long-term condition amongst (i) system leaders and (ii) generalist healthcare professionals and (b) support them to deliver services that support people to live well with their condition.

**Jo Churchill:**

To raise awareness of heart failure as a long term condition, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with Health Education England to develop e-learning to support health care professionals to better recognise the symptoms of heart failure and to improve heart failure diagnosis, management and support.

In addition, NHS Long Term Plan work on heart failure, including raising awareness of heart failure symptoms, remains a priority for NHS England and NHS Improvement during the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS England and NHS Improvement's work includes improving the early diagnosis and management of patients with heart failure in primary care.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has also published guidance, advice and quality standard products relating to heart failure that are aimed at commissioners, providers and healthcare professionals. NICE recognises the importance of this topic and has further plans to publish an impact report on cardiovascular disease management, including priority areas within heart failure diagnosis and management in the new year.

**■ Heart Diseases: Health Services****Mr Virendra Sharma:****[126806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve heart failure services.

**Jo Churchill:**

Heart failure is a key priority in the NHS Long Term Plan and NHS England and NHS Improvement are taking action to improve heart failure services in line with this.

One of the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan is to raise awareness of the symptoms of heart failure and to ensure early and rapid access to diagnostic tests and treatment.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has a programme of work to support this ambition, overseen by the National Clinical Director for Heart Disease and supported by an Expert Advisory Group of clinical experts from across the country. This work remains a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:****[126807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of access to heart failure services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

Throughout the pandemic, patients have been encouraged to come forward for the treatment that they require and urgent treatments continued to be delivered.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 2020, the National Health Service has run an ongoing media campaign 'Help Us Help You' encouraging patients to seek urgent medical help when they are unwell, including clear messaging for patients with heart attack symptoms to call 999.

NHS England and NHS Improvement promoted restoration of services as a priority, including diagnostic and treatment services for patients with heart failure, as soon as the peak of the first wave of the pandemic began to decline.

NHS Long Term Plan heart failure work, including ensuring early and rapid access to heart failure diagnostic tests and treatment, remains a priority for NHS England and NHS Improvement during the pandemic.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:****[126808]**

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 the delivery of heart failure services in (a) 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.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

**[126809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the variation in the availability and quality of heart failure services (a) in general and (b) that have occurred as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**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 COVID-19 second wave.

## ■ Hospitals: Parking

**Jon Trickett:**

**[123524]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average annual cost to the public purse of managing NHS hospital car parking.

**Edward Argar:**

Data on the total pay and non-pay cost of car parking services, including leases, staffing, maintenance and external contracts is collected annually from the National Health Service through the Estates Return Information Collection. The method for collecting this data has changed and an average cannot be calculated. However, for 2018-19, the latest available period, the total annual cost to the NHS of car parking services was £71,170,922.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Alex Norris:**

**[126963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many flu vaccinations are (a) required and (b) have been ordered in the 2020-21 flu season.

**Jo Churchill:**

Overall, there is sufficient vaccine for more than 30 million people to be vaccinated in England this winter.

General practitioners (GPs) and pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults. In addition, the Department has procured over eight million additional doses of seasonal flu vaccine for the United Kingdom to ensure more flu vaccines are available this winter. GPs, trusts and community pharmacies who have exhausted their own supply are now able to order more flu vaccines from the central stock procured by the Government and these stocks have already begun arriving across the country.

## ■ Insulin: Imports

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[125240]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to secure the supply of insulin from EU manufacturers after the transition period ends.

**Jo Churchill:**

Our priority is to ensure that patients continue to have access to the medicines they need, including insulin. We continue to work closely with the pharmaceutical industry, the National Health Service and others in the supply chain to deliver the shared goal of continuity of safe patient care by mitigating any potential disruption to supply into the United Kingdom of medicines at the end of the transition period.

As set out in a letter the Department sent to the pharmaceutical industry on 17 November 2020, we are implementing a multi-layered approach, that involves asking suppliers of medicines and medical products to the UK from or via the European Union to get trader ready, reroute their supply chains away from any potential disruption and stockpiling to a target level of six weeks on UK soil where this is possible. The letter is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-medicines-and-medical-products-suppliers-17-november-2020>

## ■ Leighton Hospital and Victoria Infirmary: Construction

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[126125]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on assessing the business case for a new-build Leighton Hospital and Victoria Infirmary in Cheshire.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 10 December 2020]:* The Department has not received a business case for a new-build scheme at either Leighton Hospital or Victoria Infirmary from Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. We understand the Trust is currently developing a strategic outline case for the redevelopment of Leighton Hospital.

**Medicine: Education****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[124705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to redistribute medical student places from over-subscribed universities to new medical schools in accordance with the concept of contestability outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan.

**Helen Whately:**

To increase the supply of doctors in under-doctored areas of England, Health Education England is working with partners including the Medical Schools Council to examine the possibility of redistributing some undergraduate medical places to medical schools in these areas.

**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[124706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to maintain the long-term funding of additional medical student places that were needed as a result of the Centre Assessed A level Grades in 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department for Health and Social Care is working with Health Education England (HEE) to monitor these new cohorts in England throughout their degree and postgraduate training, to ensure that all places are sufficiently funded. The Department for Education is also making additional funds available through the Teaching Grant to support increased capacity. In addition, HEE is working with National Health Service providers to ensure that there are enough Foundation Year 1 and Foundation Year 2 training posts available at the point where these students have completed their education and are ready to enter work in the NHS in England.

**Members: Correspondence****Alyn Smith:**[\[106495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Stirling sent on 19 August 2020, ref: AL2706, on the implications for his Department of the UK leaving the EU.

**Edward Argar:**

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

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

**Judith Cummins:**

[\[122736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the joint letter from the British Dental Association, Mencap, the Faculty of Dental Surgery, the Faculty of General Dental Practice, the British Society for Paediatric Dentistry, the British Society for Disability and Oral Health, the British Society for Gerodontology, the British Association of Oral Surgeons and the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry sent to him on 15 September 2020 on waiting times for dental treatment under general anaesthetic.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 December 2020]:* We are working rapidly to provide all Members and external correspondents with accurate answers to their correspondence, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

■ **NHS Trusts: Surgery**

**Craig Whittaker:**

[\[126824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure NHS Trusts make use of independent sector facilities to provide elective procedures

**Edward Argar:**

A national agreement is in place between NHS England and NHS Improvement in collaboration with the Independent Healthcare Providers Network and independent sector providers to ensure National Health Service patients benefit from an unprecedented partnership with private hospitals as we battle the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked with the independent sector to secure all appropriate inpatient capacity and other resource across England.

■ **NHS: Pay**

**Clive Lewis:**

[\[124799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timescale is for the NHS pay review body to commence work on the recommendations for the next pay round.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government intends to issue a remit letter to the NHS Pay Review Body shortly. This will formally commence the pay round.

The NHS Pay Review Body will report as usual next spring and the Government will carefully consider their recommendations before responding.

**Clive Lewis:**[\[124800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State, what plans he has to implement an (a) early and (b) significant pay rise for Agenda for Change staff.

**Helen Whately:**

Agenda for Change Staff are in their third and final year of a multi-year pay and contract reform deal, 2018/19 to 2020-21, agreed with National Health Service trade unions and employer representatives. The deal has seen the pay of those below the top of their pay band increase by at least 9% and pay for most staff at the top of their pay band increase by 6.5%.

To protect jobs, pay rises in much of the public sector will be paused next year. However, the Government will provide pay rises for over 1 million NHS workers. We will also prioritise the lowest paid, with 2.1 million public sector workers earning less than the full time equivalent £24,000 receiving a minimum £250 increase. This will include a number of NHS staff employed on Agenda for Change contracts. The NHS Pay Review Body will report next year and the Government will take their recommendations into account in setting Agenda for Change pay.

#### ■ **Nurses: Coventry**

**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[124203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurses were employed in Coventry in each of the last 10 years.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 7 December 2020]:* NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care, general practitioner surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) HCHS nurses and health visitors, employed by National Health Service hospital trusts in the Coventry local authority area as at September in each of the last 10 years, along with the latest figure of August 2020.

	FTE NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS IN UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE NHS TRUST	FTE NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS IN COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST
September 2010	1,738	752
September 2011	1,600	760
September 2012	1,670	1,046
September 2013	1,631	1,030

	FTE NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS IN UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE NHS TRUST	FTE NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS IN COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST
September 2014	1,642	990
September 2015	1,765	957
September 2016	1,864	920
September 2017	1,920	916
September 2018	1,996	767
September 2019	2,113	790
August 2020	2,143	842

Source: NHS Workforce Statistics published by NHS Digital. Some of the year-on-year changes may reflect transfer of responsibilities and staff between organisations.

#### ■ Protective Clothing: China

**Chris Evans:** [\[126008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of whether personal protective equipment used in the NHS has been made by forced labour in the Xinjiang province of China.

**Chris Evans:** [\[126009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that no personal protective equipment procured for the NHS has been made by forced labour.

**Jo Churchill:**

Detailed Government guidance is provided to public sector contracting authorities on how to assess and mitigate the risks of modern slavery in procurement. Contracts routinely include clauses requiring Good Industry Practice to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in supply chains. In the event that allegations of modern slavery are substantiated in relation to a supplier, we will consider all available options.

#### ■ Thalidomide

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[123566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when a decision is planned to be made on renewing the Thalidomide Health Grant.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 7 December 2020]:* The current multi-year settlement continues for a further three years running until the end of the 2022/23 financial year. Officials are continuing to meet with the Thalidomide Trust to discuss ongoing health needs after the end of the current Grant.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Asylum****Peter Kyle:**[\[126926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the backlog of 46,000 asylum cases where people have been waiting more than six months for an initial decision on their asylum application.

**Chris Philp:**

We are fixing a broken asylum system and creating a new one which will be fairer and firmer and compassionate towards those who need our help.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the length of time to process and asylum claim but we are determined to clear the backlog to help speed up decisions and prevent people becoming stuck in the system for long periods of time.

We are working to streamline cases and have already made significant progress in prioritising cases with acute vulnerability, those in receipt of the greatest level of support including, UASCs, and those that require a reconsideration.

Asylum Operations has developed a recovery plan focused on returning interviews and decisions back to pre-COVID-19 levels as soon as possible. We are also seeking to secure temporary resources to assist from within the Home Office and other government departments, along with other potential options.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**[\[127697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum decision maker posts are currently vacant.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum Operations has over recent years made good progress on increasing the number of decision makers and support staff. There are recruitment strategies in place to maintain staffing at the required levels to allow us to manage asylum intake and reduce the overall time to make initial asylum decisions. These include rolling recruitment campaigns, a staff retention strategy to ensure it retains its highly skilled asylum decision makers, and the further expansion of digital processes to increase case working flexibility. Recruitment has however been impacted by COVID-19, we are working to return staffing numbers back to pre-pandemic levels as soon as possible and with campaigns due to go live imminently.



**Bicycles: Theft****Dr Rupa Huq:****[126202]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle bicycle theft.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is taking the issue of cycle theft seriously and will be considering a range of measures to tackle this crime through the Department for Transport's cycling and walking plan for England. This is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>

The £25m Safer Streets Fund, announced by my Rt hon Friend, the Home Secretary, on 1 October 2019, is actively supporting areas that are persistently and disproportionately affected by high levels of acquisitive crime, including bicycle theft. A number of Police and Crime Commissioners in receipt of the fund have targeted and invested in projects preventing bicycle theft in hotspot areas. These include providing and promoting secure cycle storage locations, high quality bike locks, and property marking.

**Biometric Residence Permits: Applications****Caroline Nokes:****[128143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for a Biometric Residents Permit were outstanding for more than six weeks in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Kevin Foster:**

Performance against service standards, where service standards apply, are included in the Migration Transparency data which is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data#uk-visas-and-immigration>

**Biometrics: Coronavirus****Mr Alistair Carmichael:****[910190]**

What steps she is taking to ensure that people can enrol their biometric data while covid-19 restrictions are in place.

**Kevin Foster:**

We acknowledge the impact of global travel and health restrictions on people in, or seeking to come to, the UK.

As restrictions eased, commercial partner immigration services reopened in a phased and COVID secure way. UK capacity now exceeds pre-covid levels.

UKVI began reusing existing fingerprint biometrics, for certain UK customer cohorts across summer 2020, allowing customers to progress their applications.

## ■ British Nationality: EU Nationals

**Duncan Baker:**

**[127010]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether people who have not applied for the EU Settlement Scheme and have instead applied for British Citizenship and (a) have or (b) have not received their citizenship by 30 June retain the right to remain.

**Kevin Foster:**

People who have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme but have applied for and are granted British citizenship will have the right of abode in the UK. If they were lawfully resident in the UK under EU law as an EEA citizen at the end of the transition period, they will continue to enjoy relevant rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements even if they did not obtain EU Settlement Scheme status before they were granted British citizenship.

Those who have not been granted British citizenship and have not applied to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 will not have the right to remain in the UK after that date. If there are reasonable grounds for the person missing the deadline to apply to the scheme, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

A person who has applied for and not yet received British citizenship can ensure they are in the UK lawfully after 30 June 2021 by making a free of charge application to the EU Settlement Scheme by that date.

## ■ British Nationality: Windrush Generation

**Kim Johnson:**

**[127014]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will amend the British Nationality Act 1981 (Remedial) Order to include British-born Windrush descendants whose families gained rights to settle in the UK via the Immigration Act 1971.

**Priti Patel:**

Individuals born in the UK prior to 1 January 1983 are British citizens. A person born in the UK since 1983 will be a British citizen automatically if either parent was a British citizen or settled in the UK at the time of the birth. This includes any person whose parent was a member of the Windrush generation with indefinite leave to remain granted by the Immigration Act 1971.

A child born before 1 July 2006 will only acquire citizenship automatically through their father if their parents were married. There is a provision in nationality law for such a person to register as a British citizen if they would have become a British citizen automatically had their parents been married. This provision extends to individuals born in the UK to members of the Windrush generation that were granted indefinite leave to remain under the Immigration Act 1971. Those applying under this provision do not have to pay a registration fee.

The British Nationality Act 1981 (Remedial) Order 2019 further provides that such a person may register as a British citizen without needing to meet the good character

requirement. The Order specifically amends the British Nationality Act 1981 to address the Supreme Court's finding that the good character requirement for registration under certain routes was incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

## ■ Criminal Records: EU Nationals

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[127612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether equivalent agreements will be in place by 1 January 2021 to replace the current agreements for the exchange of information between UK police forces and other EU countries on criminals and terrorists.

**James Brokenshire:**

The safety and security of our citizens is the Government's top priority.

We've been negotiating an agreement with the EU to equip operational partners on both sides with capabilities to protect citizens and bring criminals to justice.

As set out in the UK's published *Approach to Negotiations*, we have maintained an agreement in this area should include arrangements that support data exchange for law enforcement purposes. There is a good degree of convergence in what the UK and EU have been negotiating in terms of operational capabilities.

We are also seeking adequacy decisions, on both general and law enforcement processing, from the European Commission, which will allow more broadly the current smooth exchange of data to continue.

In the event that it is not possible to reach an agreement, the UK has well-developed and well-rehearsed plans in place. In particular, we will transition from our current arrangements with EU Member States to alternative, non-EU arrangements by the end of the Transition Period, where available and relevant. Broadly speaking, this means making more use of Interpol, Council of Europe Conventions and bilateral channels.

For other law enforcement data sharing, in the absence of adequacy decisions Member State law enforcement agencies will be able to rely on alternative mechanisms in order to transfer data to the UK.

## ■ Deportation: Sleeping Rough

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[910183\]](#)

What estimate she has made of the number of non-UK nationals who are at risk of deportation under the updated Immigration Rules as a result of rough sleeping.

**Chris Philp:**

The rough sleeping Immigration Rules, which allow for permission to stay in the UK to be refused or cancelled, will be used sparingly and only where a foreign national repeatedly engages in anti-social behaviour and refuses offers of support.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Victims

**Carolyn Harris:**

[\[910180\]](#)

What discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on support for victims of domestic abuse who are travelling to flee their abuser.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We have been clear in our communications and guidance that self-isolation restrictions do not apply to those at risk of abuse who need to leave home to seek help or refuge.

To help make this possible, the Department for Transport announced in June new rail to refuge schemes which provide free travel to those seeking refuge from domestic abuse.

## ■ Durham Constabulary: Finance

**Layla Moran:**

[\[126117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Durham Constabulary has received central Government funding to implement training abroad since it was founded.

**Kit Malthouse:**

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

## ■ Fraud: Internet

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[126100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the (a) Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on ensuring the Government is taking a comprehensive approach to tackling online scams.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[126101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to tackle scams that are enabled by content on (a) search engines, (b) social media sites and (c) other online platforms.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[126102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to tackle online scams during the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government recognises the serious risks presented by online scams and fraud and are committed to tackling fraudulent activity online.

Fraudsters will use any hook, including Covid-19, to commit these terrible crimes and we must therefore remain vigilant to any risks and vulnerabilities. We are working

collaboratively across government to reaffirm messages to the public setting out how they can protect themselves from fraud and stay safe online.

This is why we launched a gov.uk page targeted at coronavirus-related fraud and cybercrime. The page includes easy-to-follow steps for people to better protect themselves as well as signposting all relevant advice and tips and can currently be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>.

As well as this, we continue to work alongside law enforcement to ensure the public has the protection and advice needed to shield themselves from online crimes.

We continue to encourage anyone who has been targeted by a scam to report it. Action Fraud is the central police reporting point for all victims of fraud and can be contacted by phone on 0300 123 2040 or through their website: [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud).

We have also worked with the National Cyber Security Centre to recently establish a Suspicious Email Reporting Service. This service allows the public to report potential scams safely and effectively and to date, has led to the removal of 22,192 scams. Members of the public can forward suspicious emails to this address: [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

## ■ Hate Crime: Internet

**Ruth Jones:** [\[910175\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on tackling online hate speech and extremism.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government's responsibility is to protect all people equally and we are challenging extremism in all its forms.

We are committed to vigorously countering extremist ideology – making sure every part of government is taking action.

This includes recent ongoing work on the implementation of the Online Harms framework to tackle hateful content.

## ■ Immigration

**Steve Double:** [\[910172\]](#)

What progress her Department has made on introducing a points-based immigration system.

**Kevin Foster:**

Mr Speaker the Government has made excellent progress on delivering one of the key promises made to the British people at the last election.

I am very pleased to say we have now launched a number of new routes under our firmer, fairer, skills-based points-based system, including the flagship Skilled Worker route.

## ■ Immigration: Finance

**Chi Onwurah:**

[126874]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many families have no recourse to public funds in (a) the UK, (b) North East and (c) Newcastle.

**Chris Philp:**

The information you have requested is not currently published by the department. The department has written to the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) with regard to this matter. Please see the link below:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-from-daniel-shaw-to-ed-humpherson-parliamentary-question-response/>.

In the Chief Statistician's response to the UKSA, we committed to investigate whether there is data held by the Department which can inform understanding of the effect of the NRPF condition. Following our investigation, we have published information relating to change of conditions. The recent update to the Migration Transparency data in relation to change of conditions which was published on 26 November 2020, broke the data down in to further subsets of age, gender and nationality.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-november-2020>.

As the Home Office has set out to the UKSA, there are a number of reasons why it is not of practical application for the Home Office to produce an estimate of the total population subject to NRPF at any one time.

Home Office administrative data only captures information on whether visas are subject to NRPF conditions for in-country extensions. The information is not available for applications from overseas which form the majority of applications.

The information captured by the Home Office does not take into account individuals who have left the country or all those in the UK without lawful status. Therefore, they cannot be used to accurately measure the resident population subject to no recourse to public funds at any one time.

## ■ Immigration: Overseas Students

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

[910174]

What discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the effect of changes to the immigration system on the UK's ability to attract overseas students.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government welcomes international students and we are committed to increasing their number.

We recently opened the new Student route, which simplifies and improves upon the previous Tier 4 route, and in summer 2021 we will further improve our offer to international students by launching the Graduate route, which will enable students to work or look for work post-study.

## ■ Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

**Wes Streeting:**

**[126076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the judgement of 21 October 2020 of the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission in the case of Arumugam and Others v Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to remove the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam from the list of organisations proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2011.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government was disappointed with the Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission's (the Commission) decision to allow the appeal in the matter of the ongoing proscription of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE remains proscribed at this time and we await a further decision from the Commission on the action that the Government must take in response to the judgment.

The appeal was allowed on a procedural point. The Commission has acknowledged there was material available to support the then Home Secretary's conclusion that the LTTE is concerned in terrorism. The Government has made submissions to the Commission that the decision on whether or not to maintain proscription should be retaken.

## ■ Migrant Workers

**Afzal Khan:**

**[127642]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to resolve highly skilled migrants' cases where a (a) minded to refuse letter and (b) right of appeal given in relation indefinite leave to remain applications have not been received.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has two teams exclusively handling these cases and is considering them within the deadlines of consent orders set by the Courts.

There are no current plans to change our processes and individual cases will be dealt with in sequence. Whilst we do so, those within this cohort will continue to have their status in the United Kingdom protected.



**■ Mukhtar Ablyazov****Damian Collins:**[\[119226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what date officials of her Department were notified of Mukhtar Ablyazov's asylum in France; and whether Mukhtar Ablyazov remains subject to an arrest warrant in the UK".

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not hold this information.

The Home Office is not informed when an individual is granted asylum in another country.

Arrest warrants are a matter for the police and the UK's independent prosecution authorities. There is no Ministerial involvement.

**■ Police: Annual Leave****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[126057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which police forces have annual leave embargos in place to cover the end of the transition period.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We have been working closely with the police to ensure they have sufficiently appropriate and robust plans in place for the end of Transition. Decisions on leave, however, are an operational matter for Chief Constables.

**■ Police: Cambridgeshire****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[126056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been identified to assist other forces when the transition period ends.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We have been working closely with the police to ensure they have sufficiently appropriate and robust plans in place for the end of Transition. Decisions on mutual aid, however, are an operational matter for Chief Constables.

**■ Public Sector: Pay****Sarah Jones:**[\[122852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of the public sector pay freeze above £24,000 on the retention and recruitment of (a) police officers, (b) PCSOs and (c) police staff.

**Sarah Jones:**

[\[122853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of (a) officers, (b) PCSOs and (c) police staff who earn less than £24,000 per annum.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) provides independent advice to the Government on pay and conditions for police officers. The number of officers earning less than £24,000 per annum will be considered by the PRRB in the 2021/22 pay round.

Following the 2020 Spending Review, at least £400m additional funding has been allocated for police forces next year to continue the Police Uplift Programme. This will enable the recruitment of up to 6,000 additional officers next year, continuing the progress on recruitment to date. All forces are well on track to meet their year one allocation and over 5,000 officers have already been recruited as a result of this Government drive.

The retention of experienced police officers is a priority for the Home Office. We are working alongside the National Police Chiefs' Council to maximise opportunities to retain police officers who have valuable skills and policing experience.

The Government has no statutory role in determining the pay and conditions for police staff, including Police Community Support Officers, which are agreed locally by Chief Constables in consultation with trade unions.

## ■ Serious and Organised Crime Review

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[125934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the findings of Sir Craig Mackey's report on serious and organised crime.

**James Brokenshire:**

Tackling serious and organised crime is a critical part of the Government's wider crime reduction agenda; we are committed to disrupting and dismantling the highest harm criminal enterprises. We are considering the findings of the SOC Review alongside the outcome of the recent Spending Review and the constantly evolving threats we face. We will announce details, and key findings from the SOC Review in due course. Any future steps will be developed with colleagues from across Government, policing and the wider law enforcement landscape.

## ■ Terrorism: Arrests

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[126066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been re-arrested after being released on terrorism-related charges in each year since 2020; and what proportion that number is of the total number of people arrested on terrorism-related charges in each of those years.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Home Office collects data from the National Counter Terrorism Policing Operations Centre on how many people have been arrested and charged with terrorism-related offences in Great Britain. These data are published quarterly in 'Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 statistics', which are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000>

Information on how many of these are re-arrests after being released on terrorism-related charges is not collected by the Home Office.

**Terrorism: Prisoners' Release****Conor McGinn:****[126067]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people convicted of terrorism-related charges have been released in each year since 2010.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Home Office collects data from Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service and the Scottish Prisons Service on the number of terrorist prisoners released in Great Britain.

These data are published quarterly in 'Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 statistics', which are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000>

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION****Big Ben: Lifts****Andrea Leadsom:****[127545]**

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what progress has been made on the installation of a lift inside Elizabeth Tower.

**Pete Wishart:**

A lift is being installed in the Elizabeth Tower as part of the Elizabeth Tower refurbishment project. The majority of the lift infrastructure has now been installed and is currently being tested and commissioned by the contractor.

At present there is only a single spiral staircase with 334 steps. The lift is being installed into an existing ventilation shaft to improve safety and to help reduce the time it would take to evacuate a person from the Tower in the event of a medical emergency. The lift will also improve both security and access to the Great Clock for maintenance purposes.

The maximum size of the lift is constrained by the Tower's original design. The restricted dimensions of the ventilation shaft mean that it is not possible to install a lift

that is fully compliant with the relevant legislation. In the New Year teams from across the House will be evaluating how to improve disabled access to the Elizabeth Tower. This work will include exploring how visitors with different access requirements can find out more about the Elizabeth Tower and learn about its history. Making sure as many people as possible are able to learn about and visit the Tower is a key objective.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Building Regulations: Fire Prevention

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[127634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken as a result of the consultation on the technical review of Approved Document B of the building regulations.

**Christopher Pincher:**

In April 2020, the Government published the workplan for the technical review of Approved Document B. We are commissioning the research for this fundamental review which will address a number of key fire safety issues. We have now commissioned 9 research projects including means of escape for disabled people, specialised housing and care homes, smoke toxicity and trigger thresholds.

### ■ Building Safety Fund

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[R\] \[126943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether registrants with the Building Safety Fund who are waiting to hear whether they will be invited to submit a full detailed application will be expected to meet the 31 December 2020 deadline; and what plans he has to extend that deadline.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The timelines for the Building Fund, set out in the prospectus, are intended to incentivise building owners to demonstrate pace of progression with their remediation plans for unsafe buildings. We will keep timelines under review as we continue through the application process.

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[126973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what process he has established to update (a) local authorities and (b) leaseholders on which building owners or freeholders have applied to the Building Safety Fund.

**Christopher Pincher:**

As set out in the Building Safety Fund Application Guidance, an applicant to the Fund is required to inform all leaseholders and residents that they will be applying for funding. Applicants should also inform leaseholders and residents of the nature of the works intended to be carried out and should provide them with regular updates on the

progress of the funding application and remediation works. Where a building is determined as eligible for the fund the Department provides the details to the relevant local authority.

### ■ **Building Safety Fund: Birmingham**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[R] [126942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many and what proportion of registrants with the Building Safety Fund in Birmingham are waiting to be informed of whether they need to submit a full application.

**Christopher Pincher:**

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

### ■ **Buildings: Energy**

**Sarah Olney:**

[126940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps with the Local Government Association to make an assessment of the effectiveness of enforcement activities to ensure (a) that lettings comply with the provision of an energy performance certificate, (b) compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards legislation in private rented sector housing and (c) compliance with annual Display Energy Certificate requirements in public sector occupied buildings of under 1,000 sq metres in size that are frequently visited by members of the public.

**Christopher Pincher:**

In response to a Call for Evidence in 2018, the Department, jointly with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, published an Energy Performance Certificates for Buildings Action Plan, which will investigate ways to improve compliance by working with other actors, such as mortgage lenders and lettings agents, in addition to enforcement bodies. The Action Plan is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/energy-performance-certificates-in-buildings-call-for-evidence>.

My Department is commencing a series of stakeholder engagement sessions to explore the action that could be taken, including opportunities for better enforcement, which will build upon the enforcement pilots which have already been undertaken with local authorities to look at compliance and enforcement in the private rented sector. We expect to extend invitations to representatives of the local government sector, including the Local Government Association.

## ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Peter Kyle:**

**[126927]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2020 to Question 123639 on Buildings: Insulation, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of refining the definition of what constitutes cladding.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Analysis and definitions relating to estimates of EWS1 requirements on residential buildings in England can be found in this release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-estimates-of-ews1-requirements-on-residential-buildings-in-england/building-safety-programme-estimates-of-ews1-requirements-on-residential-buildings-in-england>.

There is no regulatory definition of cladding. Definitions of cladding have been formed and applied for the purposes of this analysis only and are based on materials collected for data collection purposes on external wall systems in use on high-rise buildings.

The purpose of this analysis is to provide information on the estimated effects of policy refinements and assurances from major lenders and wider industry, including the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), that residential buildings with no cladding will no longer need to undergo an external wall survey (EWS1) process before dwellings can be sold or re-mortgages offered.

## ■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[126972]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with HM Treasury in the last three months on establishing a loan system for leaseholders to pay for building remediation for high rise properties at risk.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has been clear that it is unacceptable for leaseholders to have to worry about the cost of fixing historic safety defects in their buildings that they didn't cause. My Department regularly engages with HMT on this important issue. The Department is investigating solutions that will help to protect leaseholders.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[126974]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential economic merits of implementing equivalent schemes to the (a) Australian Victoria development levy system for developers (b) an Australian New South Wales developer remediation loan.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I am determined to protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs. This was why we committed £1.6 billion to fund the remediation of high rise residential buildings with unsafe cladding. It was also why, when the Building Safety Bill was published, we singled out this topic as a key issue to address. We will update on any further measures required before the final Bill is introduced to Parliament.

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Electric Vehicles****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[124842\]](#)

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

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

As a core department, MHCLG uses vehicles from the Government Car Service. I refer the Hon. Member to the answer to Question UIN 112105 answered on 10 November.

The department's executive non-departmental public body, Homes England, uses a domestic car fleet of 192 vehicles. The Agency is already electrifying its fleet with approximately 60 percent now either fully electric or plug-in hybrid.

**Private Rented Housing: Regulation****Sarah Olney:**[\[127609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward proposals for primary legislation to require (a) letting agents and (b) online property platforms to only advertise and let domestic properties that are compliant with private rented sector regulations.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government wants to strike the right balance between supporting good landlords and agents and tackling criminals. This is why it is already the case that rented homes must be fit for human habitation and free from serious hazards, that the property electrics and gas must be safe, and these properties must meet minimum energy efficiency standards. If they don't, local authorities have strong enforcement powers and can impose heavy fines.

We are also committed to raising professionalism and standards amongst property agents, protecting consumers while defending the reputation of good agents from the actions of rogue operatives. The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 impose a general prohibition on traders from engaging in unfair commercial practices with consumers, protecting consumers from misleading trading practices.

In addition, since 2014, it has been a legal requirement for letting and managing agents in England to belong to one of the two Government approved redress schemes. Where an agent fails to comply with their legal responsibilities and fails to



rectify the issue, consumers are able to escalate the matter through the agent's redress scheme, which can investigate and make an adjudication which is binding on the agent.

### ■ Right to Buy Scheme

**Alex Norris:** [\[127628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the time for local authorities to spend right-to-buy replacement funds from 3.25 years to five years.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The 2018 public consultation on the use of Right to Buy receipts put forward possible ways to give local authorities more freedom in how they use money received from Right to Buy sales to help them build more council homes. This included the possibility of extending the time frame in which authorities can spend receipts from 3 to 5 years. We are carefully considering the responses received to this consultation, and the Government will publish its policy response soon.

### ■ Right to Buy Scheme: Coronavirus

**Alex Norris:** [\[127627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on local authority ability to spend right-to-buy replacement funds.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We monitor the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on the ability of local authorities to spend their receipts arising from Right to Buy sales on replacement social housing. We continue to welcome feedback from authorities on the challenges they are facing. In June this year we extended the period that local authorities had to spend their receipts from 30 June 2020 to 31 December 2020. This has allowed them to retain the receipts locally for a longer period, rather than being required to return them to central government.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Businesses: Western Sahara

**Alan Brown:** [\[125268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what (a) advice and (b) support she provides to UK businesses (i) trading and (ii) operating in Western Sahara.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined.

We would advise businesses that our newly transitioned Association Agreement with Morocco, once in force, will apply in the same way as the EU-Morocco Association

Agreement. It treats products originating in Western Sahara in the same way as the EU-Morocco Association Agreement, in line with the European Court of Justice's ruling on that issue and the subsequent amendment of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement.

British businesses trading and operating in the region should take note of our travel advice for Western Sahara.

### ■ **Expert Trade Advisory Groups**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[127536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on disbanding the Expert Trade Advisory Group on Customs and Continuity in Trade.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Our previous 'Expert Trade Advisory Groups' have stopped meeting, in order to minimise unnecessary duplication in our engagement, following the creation of our 11 new sector-focused 'Trade Advisory Groups' (TAGs).

Further, we have now also established a range of cross-government 'Thematic Working Groups' (TWGs), including dedicated Customs and Continuity TWGs. These groups have now met as TWGs and both groups will continue to meet in this format to make sure detailed knowledge is used to inform trade policy.

### ■ **Felixstowe Port: Coronavirus**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[127534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of changes in costs for (a) importers and (b) exporters during 2020 as a result of staff at Felixstowe being furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The Secretary of State for Transport and his officials have actively engaged the Port of Felixstowe to understand the global challenge of a global peak in container traffic, so my department has not made such an estimate. Accordingly, I can assure the Hon. Gentleman that HM Government is continuing to monitor the situation, and is engaged with relevant freight trade associations.

### ■ **Import Duties: USA**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[127510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her Department has had with the World Trade Organisation since 30 September 2020 on the (a) authorisation of the UK to impose tariffs on exports from the US after 31 December 2020 in retaliation against that country's subsidies for Boeing and (b) financial limit up to which those tariffs can be imposed.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK is entitled, under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, to impose its proper share of the authorised retaliatory rights following the end of the Transition Period. The UK has engaged with both the US and EU to explain its position. However, it is our firm belief that instead of escalating, we need to de-escalate the issue and work together towards a swift negotiated settlement as soon as possible. The financial limit of UK countermeasures would reflect the harm suffered by UK industry as a result of US subsidisation of Boeing, in accordance with WTO principles.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[127511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what statutory authorisation she will have to re-impose retaliatory tariffs on exports from the US after 31 December 2020 if satisfactory progress towards an agreeable settlement of the Boeing-Airbus dispute is not made; and what the financial limit is for the re-imposition of those tariffs.

**Greg Hands:**

The power to vary import duties in response to a trade dispute, or other issues, is provided in Section 15 of the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018. Section 15 allows the Secretary of State for International Trade to make regulations which vary the applicable import duty on goods originating from a particular country or territory. These changes can be made where the Secretary of State considers it is appropriate to do so, having regard to international arrangements to which the UK is party and any other relevant matters.

**Emily Thornberry:**[\[127512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on what date she first sought legal advice on the authorisation of the UK to impose tariffs on exports from the US after 31 December 2020 in retaliation against that country's subsidies for Boeing.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK has received comprehensive and robust legal advice on the topic of World Trade Organisation disputes. Detailed legal consideration of the relevant matters started over 2 years ago.

UK industry has suffered harm from U.S. subsidies awarded to Boeing, in just the same way as the industry of the other Airbus nations that remain within the EU. In response, we have the legal right to impose Boeing retaliatory tariffs against the U.S. post-Transition Period if required. However, it is our firm belief that we need to de-escalate the issue and work together towards a swift negotiated settlement as soon as possible.

**■ Overseas Trade: Egypt****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[126166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the UK-Egypt Association Agreement announced on 5 December 2020, what steps her Department is undertaking to increase the UK's volume of trade with Egypt.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom-Egypt Association Agreement will allow British businesses and consumers to benefit from continued preferential access to the market after the end of the transition period, which will help boost vital trade and investment.

The Department for International Trade engages with hundreds of businesses every day on a wide range of issues and we have a large and experienced network of around 300 Trade Advisors who provide face-to-face support to exporters across the country.

Through our work in Egypt and around the world, we are making it simpler and more cost effective for businesses to trade by using preferential trading arrangements.

**■ Trade Agreements: Albania**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Albania.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Vietnam.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Ghana.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Mexico.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Moldova.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Montenegro.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Singapore.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[127031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Turkey.

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[127032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made in securing a free trade agreement with Cameroon.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

In under two years, HM Government has signed, or agreed in principle, trade agreements with 57 countries that accounted for £193 billion of bilateral trade in 2019. The negotiations behind our continuity programme are unprecedented in scale and ambition – and are helping to secure better jobs, higher wages, more choice and lower prices for the British people.

An up-to-date list of trade continuity agreements, signed and in discussion, is available on GOV.UK and our work to secure free and fair trade around the world remains a top priority for the Department.

■ **Trade Agreements: Canada**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[127508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the projected increases over the next 15 years in (a) cash and (b) percentage terms of (i) UK exports to Canada and (ii) growth in UK GDP which will result from the Continuity Agreement signed with Canada on 9 December 2020; and whether those figures are higher, lower or approximately the same compared to the projected increases that were forecast from the EU-Canada Agreement.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department has not produced economic modelling of how the UK-Canada Trade Continuity Agreement (TCA) will affect UK exports or UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the long run. The UK-Canada TCA is designed to maintain continuity of effect of the EU–Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement in advance of a bespoke deal between the UK and Canada which will be negotiated starting in 2021.

■ **Trade Agreements: Vietnam**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[127509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the projected increases over the next 15 years in (a) cash and (b) percentage terms of (i) UK exports to Vietnam and (ii) growth in UK GDP which will result from the Continuity Agreement agreed with Vietnam; and whether those figures are higher, lower or approximately the same compared to the projected increases that were forecast from the EU-Vietnam Agreement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The Department does not have Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) or similar economic modelling on how the United Kingdom-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will affect British exports or Britain's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the long run.

The United Kingdom-Vietnam FTA is designed to maintain continuity of effect of the EU-Vietnam FTA, providing us with a firm foundation for deepening our trade ties in the years ahead.

## JUSTICE

### ■ County Courts: Kent

**Rosie Duffield:**

[127616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans his Department has to increase county court capacity in Kent.

**Chris Philp:**

In line with the Civil, Family & Tribunals Recovery Plan, published in November 2020, HMCTS has put in place measures to help civil and family courts and tribunals recover as quickly as possible. This includes:

- the capacity of the judiciary to sit as many sitting days as possible
- re-opening our courtrooms where it is safe to do so as quickly as possible and reinforcing this through measures to provide additional capacity, including Nightingale courts, where required.
- ensuring remote hearings continue to be effectively supported with increased staff support and guidance for users
- increasing our staff numbers to support delivery as we adapt to new ways of working

All the above steps have been taken in Kent.

### ■ Employment Tribunals Service

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[127698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many employment claims were waiting to be heard by a tribunal in each quarter since 2017.

**Chris Philp:**

Whilst we do not hold data relating to claims awaiting hearing, the outstanding caseload in the Employment Tribunal for each quarter since 2017 until June 2020 can be found in these published statistics.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020>

### ■ Environment Protection: Judicial Review

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[127498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of applications for (a) judicial review and (b) judicial review involving environmental claims have succeeded at final hearing in each year since the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 came into force.

**Chris Philp:**

The information requested is provided at Annex A covering each year since the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 came into force.

**Attachments:**

1. Data [PQ127498 - data.xlsx]

■ **HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Finance**

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[\[127033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 December 2020 to Question 123733 on HM Courts & Tribunals Service: Finance, how much and what proportion of the £3.364 million of additional covid-19-related funding for tribunals he plans spend on (a) immigration tribunals, (b) social security tribunals, (c) employment tribunals and (d) other tribunals.

**Chris Philp:**

In the answer to question 123733 we set out the proportion of the additional Covid-related funding announced in September 2020 which could be directly attributed to each of the major jurisdictions as well as spend which benefits multiple jurisdictions. The majority of Covid recovery spend is for costs such as additional cleaning of the court estate, the provision of additional safety and security works, the provision of technology to enable remote hearings which have been critical to Tribunals this year, and the provision of some additional court rooms (often referred to as ‘Nightingale Courts’). Much of this spend will be of direct benefit to Tribunals but cannot be directly attributed to it. Very little of the spend is directly attributable to a single tribunal, and so I am unable to provide a further breakdown.

We are also investing record amounts which will also improve our resilience going forward, including £153m investment in 20/21 to improve court and tribunal buildings – the biggest single investment in court estate maintenance for more than 20 years.

■ **Planning: Judicial Review**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[127496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide a list of case citations for cases identified as Aarhus Convention claims in Form N461 that were the subject of a hearing in the Planning Court from 1 January 2017 to date.

**Chris Philp:**

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[127497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will set out the (a) presiding judge(s) and (b) outcome of each hearing in the Planning Court on a case identified as an Aarhus Convention claim in Form N461 from 1 January 2017 to date.

**Chris Philp:**

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.



## ■ Prisoners' Release: Females

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[125242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November to Question 118531, what discussions he has had with (a) the Chancellor the Exchequer and (b) other Cabinet colleagues on ensuring that adequate funding is in place for the services providing support to women leaving prison.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Secretary of State for Justice has regular discussions with the Chancellor and other Cabinet colleagues, including during the recent Spending Review, to ensure that adequate funding is available to deliver departmental priorities. These priorities include working with our partners across government to address the causes of reoffending whilst offenders are in custody and in the community.

This Government is committed to reducing reoffending by ensuring that all offenders have the support they need to turn their backs on crime. Prisons and probation must provide the opportunity together with appropriate support for prisoners to rehabilitate, which will ultimately reduce reoffending and protect the public.

Reducing reoffending is a complex issue and needs to be a combined effort across government and local partners in order to help ex-offenders secure employment, find a home, get treatment for a drug addiction and support for mental health issues.

And we remain committed to delivering the Female Offender Strategy's objectives of fewer women coming into the criminal justice system and reoffending, fewer women in custody (especially on short-term sentences) and a greater proportion of women managed in the community successfully, and better conditions for those in custody.

The Government recognises the important role played by women's community services in supporting women leaving prison. Following the publication of the Female Offender Strategy, the Government invested £5.1 million over two years in women's community sector organisations, including women's centres. Thirty different organisations across England and Wales received funding, which included the creation of six new women's centres. On 5 May, the Government announced further funding of £2.5 million for the sector.

## ■ Prisoners: Females

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[125243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2020 to Question 118531 on Prisons: Coronavirus, how many (a) pregnant women and (b) mothers of dependent children have entered prison since the end of March 2020.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Pregnancy data is collected locally by individual prisons, to ensure the appropriate support can be provided to women in our care. I can confirm that an ad hoc data collection exercise was undertaken last year, which found that at 15:00hrs on 28

October 2019, 47 women in prison self-declared as pregnant, including those on remand and who had been sentenced.

On 31 July we published a summary report of our review of operational policy on pregnancy and women separated from children under 2. This includes an undertaking to extend the range of data we publish in relation to pregnant women in prison, and can be found at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/905559/summary-report-of-review-of-policy-on-mbu.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905559/summary-report-of-review-of-policy-on-mbu.pdf).

We have already taken steps to increase our internal national data collection processes to support the policy review, and to enable us to plan for future publication.

At the moment, information on a prisoner's caring responsibilities and children living in the community is monitored locally by prison Governors/Directors to ensure the appropriate support can be provided to women and their families.

On reception into custody, all prisoners are asked if they have any children living at home and what their ages are. Currently, this information is not captured in a way that can be centrally monitored, and we know that there are challenges around parents being reluctant to disclose this information due to fear of involvement from social services. However, we are considering how to monitor and publish this information.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

**Simon Hoare:**

**[126920]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to correspondence from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee relating to matters raised at the oral evidence session on Wednesday 16 September, dated 11 September 2020, which (a) victims' groups and (b) individuals he has consulted since that date as part of that period of sensitive engagement with key stakeholders, and on which dates those meetings took place.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials from the Northern Ireland Office regularly meet representatives from civic society, including victims groups, community representatives, religious leaders and individuals from across academia and the peace and reconciliation sector. Engagement on the subject of legacy is ongoing.

The Government is committed to publishing details of ministers' meetings with external organisations on a quarterly basis. Publications for the Northern Ireland Office can be found on Gov.UK.

**Simon Hoare:**

**[126921]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his Answer to the hon. Member for North Dorset during his oral statement on 30 November 2020, Official Report, column 59, on what date stakeholder engagement on forthcoming legacy legislation was paused by his Department; and on what date this engagement was resumed.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

In the Spring, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials met a number of victims groups and other key stakeholders to discuss legacy issues. Following these discussions, it was clear that the full and sensitive engagement required on this difficult subject would be difficult to deliver effectively while the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic were ongoing.

Notwithstanding this, a degree of engagement has and continues to take place where possible. The Secretary of State remains committed to engaging with all parts of the community in Northern Ireland, including victims groups, in order to make progress on legacy issues.

**Simon Hoare:**

**[126922]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his Answer to the hon. Member for North Dorset during his oral statement on 30 November 2020, Official Report, column 59, which civil society (a) organisations and (b) individuals (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in his Department have met as part of the legacy engagement process in each of the last nine months.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials from the Northern Ireland Office regularly meet various representatives from civic society, including community representatives, religious leaders and individuals from across academia and the peace and reconciliation sector. Engagement on the specific issue of legacy is ongoing, where possible within the constraints imposed by current circumstances.

The Government is committed to publishing details of ministers' meetings with external organisations on a quarterly basis. Publications for the Northern Ireland Office can be found on Gov.UK.

**Simon Hoare:**

**[126923]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his Answer to the hon. Member for Luton South during his oral statement on 30 November 2020, Official Report, column 69, when he plans to bring forward legislation based on the proposals and framework outlined in Written Ministerial Statement HCWS168 published on 18 March.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

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

We have also made clear our commitment to working with all parts of the community in Northern Ireland as part of this process. While the challenging circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic have had an impact on our ability to engage effectively and sensitively, we remain determined to make progress on legacy issues as quickly as possible.

## PRIME MINISTER

### ■ Ministerial Responsibility

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[127696]

To ask the Prime Minister, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a Ministerial portfolio with responsibility for protections for future generations; and if he will make a statement.

**Boris Johnson:**

Such considerations are already taken into account by Ministers in relation to their existing responsibilities. For example, the Government has a clear commitment to leave our environment in a better state for future generations.

A full list of Ministerial Responsibilities is published online:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/938090/List-of-Ministerial-Responsibilities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938090/List-of-Ministerial-Responsibilities.pdf).

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Airports and Railway Stations: Coronavirus

**Jim McMahon:**

[127605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the decision to provide financial support to airports but not international railway stations during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Robert Courts:**

During the Covid-19 response, Government has provided unprecedented financial support that has been made available to all sectors of the economy.

On 24 November, the Department announced a financial support scheme to support eligible commercial airport and ground handling businesses by reducing cash burn, enabling businesses to unlock shareholder and lender support. Eligible businesses will be able to apply to the scheme from early 2021. Further details will be published shortly.

The Government has been engaging closely with international rail operators since the outbreak of Covid-19 earlier this year to monitor its ongoing impact and support operators to access available support to address their particular needs, where appropriate, and will continue to do so.

## ■ Aviation: Coronavirus

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[126884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress has been made on establishing an air bridge trial route for flights from London to New York using a pre-departure covid-19 testing regime.

**Robert Courts:**

As set out in the Global Travel Taskforce report, the UK continues to explore pre-departure testing pilots with partner countries on a bilateral basis, including exploring different possible models for such a scheme.

## ■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

**Cat Smith:**

[\[127593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether bus operators in receipt of the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant are permitted to amend ticket validity times.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The terms and conditions of the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant do not exclude operators from amending ticket validity times. However, payment of the grant is based on the operator's original fare structures.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[127594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether prior consent is required from his Department for a bus operator in receipt of the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant to change ticket validity times.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The terms and conditions of the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant does not require operators to seek consent from the Department to change ticket validity times. However, payment of the grant is based on the operator's original fare structures.

**Cat Smith:**

[\[127595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the terms of the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant define an amendment to ticket validity times as a fare price increase.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The terms and conditions of the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant does not define an amendment to ticket validity times as a fare price increase. However, payment of the grant is based on the operator's original fare structures, and operators are not permitted to increase or decrease the price of tickets.

## ■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[126914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on the completion of driving tests.

**Rachel Maclean:**

To help stop the spread of coronavirus, restriction periods were introduced during which time driver testing was suspended.

Driving tests that were booked to take place during the restrictions were rescheduled to the next available slots. Candidates had the option of a test fee refund if their rescheduled date was not suitable.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency continues to work with Transport Scotland to resume testing services in a COVID-secure way and ensure the Scottish Government's five-level system is adhered to.

## ■ Motorways: Repairs and Maintenance

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[126885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many additional smart motorway emergency refuges have (a) been constructed and (b) have entered the design phase since the publication of his Department's report entitled *Smart Motorway Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan*, published on 12 March 2020.

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[126886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many miles of smart motorway were covered by stopped vehicle detection technology in (a) March and (b) December 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Since 12 March 2020, 10 additional emergency areas have been installed on the M25, in line with Action 5 of the *Smart Motorway Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan*. A further 27 emergency areas have been built as part of new upgrades currently in construction and which come into use as those projects open to traffic.

In March 2020, there were 23.86 miles of smart motorway covered by stopped vehicle detection (SVD) technology. At the end of December 2020, there will be 36.78 miles. This is in line with Highways England's programme to install SVD on all existing all lane running (ALR) sections of the motorway network, by March 2023, which it is on course to achieve.

## ■ Network Rail: Finance

**Rachel Hopkins:**

[\[127045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the recent £1 billion reduction in Network Rail railway enhancement budget for Control Period 6, what the (a) regions and (b) locations are of the specific planned schemes affected by that matter.

**Rachel Hopkins:**

**[127046]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the planned schemes affected by the recent £1 billion reduction in Network Rail railway enhancement budget for Control Period 6, (a) when those schemes were due to start, and (b) whether contracts with contractors and suppliers had already been signed.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

We continue to deliver ambitious improvements, investing in key priorities including the Transpennine Route Upgrade, restoring lines and stations closed during the Beeching cuts and in HS2, with an unrelenting focus on levelling up our country and ensuring all communities have the connections they need to support growth and prosperity.

In terms of impacts on individual schemes, it remains the case that no schemes have been cancelled nor formal investment decisions taken as a result of the Spending Review. We are currently working with Network Rail to agree a new baseline for the portfolio that fits with the new funding envelope.

**Rachel Hopkins:**

**[127047]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the £1 billion reduction in Network Rail railway enhancement budget for Control Period 6, what discussions Network Rail executives had, prior to the Spending Review settlement, with (a) his Department and (b) HM Treasury.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Spending Review involved a considerable amount of detailed discussions between the Department, Network Rail and HM Treasury. As a consequence, Network Rail were heavily involved throughout the Spending Review negotiations, with both the Department and HM Treasury.

**Rachel Hopkins:**

**[127048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the £1 billion reduction in Network Rail railway enhancement budget for Control Period 6 on (a) frequency and reliability of affected services, (b) jobs in Network Rail and the wider supply chain and (c) the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan and carbon reduction targets.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

There are no current train services that have been impacted by the outcome of the Spending Review. The Spending Review has not cancelled delivery of any improvement works.

The Spending Review confirmed that the government is supporting the railway and we will continue investing in ambitious improvements to modernise it. We are currently working with Network Rail to agree a new baseline for the portfolio that fits with the new funding envelope. As such we are not yet in a position to fully assess the impact on Network Rail jobs and/ or the wider supply chain.



Furthermore, decarbonisation remains central to investment being made in Rail.

We are committed to building a railway that is greener and fit for the future and that is why we continue to look at ways to decarbonise our network in a way that makes best use of taxpayers funding.

#### ■ Railways: Fares

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[126951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with rail operators on the potential merits of temporarily suspending peak fares during the Christmas period.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

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

#### ■ Railways: Freight

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[126957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with freight rail operating companies on the end of the transition period.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department has engaged extensively with the rail freight industry in the run up to the end of the transition period. Officials meet regularly with rail freight operators and relevant industry bodies, through both Ministerial and senior official led roundtable meetings, to ensure freight operators are preparing effectively for our new trading relationship with the EU. We have published formal guidance on running domestic and cross-border rail operations from 1 January 2021.

The Department also engages on a very regular basis specifically with cross-border freight operators to ensure they have the necessary arrangements in place and are well prepared for all scenarios from 1 January 2021.

#### ■ Railways: Passengers

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[126958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has undertaken modelling on the number of passengers planning on travelling by rail from 23 to 27 December 2020.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department is working closely with rail operators and industry partners to ensure the railway is prepared to meet passengers' needs. This includes on-going work to analyse bookings data and passenger travel intentions over the Christmas period.

Operators are reviewing their operational plans, and are taking all necessary steps to provide information and support for passengers. The industry is implementing measures to manage passenger flows at busy stations, including at locations that may be served by rail replacement buses during engineering works.

The Chair of Network Rail, Sir Peter Hendy, is carrying out a rigorous assessment of transport operators' preparedness to ensure everything possible is being done to help.

As transport routes may be busier than normal, it is essential that people plan their journeys and book tickets in advance wherever possible. Operators are highlighting on their websites the services that are quieter or busier to enable travellers to make informed decisions, but we strongly urge passengers to take all suitable precautions this winter.

#### ■ **Road Signs and Markings: Lancaster**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[127499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of encouraging local authorities and Highways England to mark the historic boundaries of the County Palatine of Lancaster, which are still extant administrative boundaries for certain Duchy purposes, in accordance with section 3.47 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[127500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to mark the boundaries of the historic county Palatine of Lancaster and of historic Cheshire on the M60 and M67 motorways through Stockport and Tameside in accordance with section 3.47 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[127501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of marking England's historic county boundaries on the motorway network in accordance with section 3.47 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The decision on whether to mark historic county boundaries on road signs is for each local highway authority, or, in the case of the Strategic Road Network, for Highways England, to consider. Highways England has no plans to install any such signs.

#### ■ **Stockport Viaduct: Repairs and Maintenance**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[127502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to restore the Stockport rail viaduct.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Stockport Viaduct is a vital part of the railway infrastructure and Network Rail take seriously the responsibility to maintain it in safe working order. They carry out detailed examinations of the structure and address any defects or problems these highlight. This year Network Rail have spent £50k on repairing the brick work in areas highlighted by their examinations.

Network Rail have a specific £1m fund for Control Period 6 (1 April 2019- 31 March 2024) to be used on brick repair and de-vegetation work on the viaduct.

Network Rail look to manage any graffiti on the viaduct in accordance with their policies and will review any specific areas of concern and will take action where appropriate.

**■ Transport: Biodiversity****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[126794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including major transport projects progressed through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime within the mandatory biodiversity gain objective provided for in the Environment Bill.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The 25 Year Environment Plan committed to seek to embed 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure. There are a number of ways in which this could be implemented and it is important that we work with stakeholders to develop an appropriate approach. We will be consulting on further details in due course.

**TREASURY****■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme****Patrick Grady:**[\[126909\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of the financial sector on allowing non-banks to access direct funding for the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, as is available to high street banks.

**John Glen:**

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

The British Business Bank has so far accredited 29 lenders for BBLs, including several challenger banks and non-bank lenders.

The Treasury recognises the vital role that non-banks and challenger banks play in the provision of credit to SMEs. It is grateful for the way the sector has responded to

the current crisis, and remains committed to promoting competition, and widening the funding options available to UK businesses.

The Government does not provide funding to lenders who are participating in the government loan schemes; lenders must source their own funding, as they do for standard business lending.

We have made changes to allow the transfer and assignment of the Government guarantee for all government-guaranteed loan schemes loans, which is something that NBLs have requested, to support their ability to access funding. We will continue to work with non-bank lenders to support their participation in the loan schemes.

### ■ **Child Benefit: Separated People**

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[127604\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the equity of the correlation between the allocation of child benefits to individuals who share joint custody of a child and the costs that those individuals incur.

**Jesse Norman:**

At present, the law provides for Child Benefit to be paid to one parent only. The parent who claims Child Benefit can voluntarily choose to pay an agreed proportion to the other parent. Where parents separate and both have care of their child, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) encourage them to agree who should claim Child Benefit. Where they cannot reach an agreement, the law allows HMRC to decide, at their discretion, who should receive the payment based on information from both parents, including the number of days the child lives with them, and the actual costs incurred by each of them on things such as clothing, food and accommodation.

Currently there are no plans to change the law to split payments of Child Benefit where parents have separated and share care of their children. The Government believes that directing payment to the person mainly responsible for the child best ensures that the money goes to the person most likely to bear the weight of everyday care and expenditure.

### ■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[126945\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much money in furlough grant funding has been repaid by organisations to HMRC.

**Jesse Norman:**

As of 3 November 2020, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) grants to the value of £382 million have been recorded as returned. This figure consists of £198 million in payments being repaid and £184 million in adjustments to existing claims.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[127613\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what safeguards are in place to ensure that payments made to employers under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for (a) salary and (b) pension contributions are administered to employees.

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[127614\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what enforcement powers HMRC have used to ensure that employees receive payment from their employers under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The employer must pay the employee all of the grant they receive for an employee's gross pay in the form of money from the claim made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The employer cannot enter into any transaction with the employee which reduces the amount an employee receives. This includes any administration charge, fees or other costs in connection with the employment.

Where the employee has authorised the employer to make deductions from the salary, these deductions can continue while furloughed. The employee will still pay Income Tax, National Insurance contributions, Student Loan repayments and any other deductions (such as pension contributions) from their wages.

If an employee is concerned that an employer is abusing the scheme, they should report them to HMRC via their online fraud reporting tool on the GOV.UK site.

HMRC will check claims made through the scheme. Payments may be withheld or need to be repaid in full to HMRC if the claim is based on dishonest or inaccurate information or found to be fraudulent. HMRC will not hesitate to act on reports of abuse.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Disability

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[127615\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the furlough scheme on workers living with disabilities.

**Jesse Norman:**

When designing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and subsequent reforms the Government undertook an analysis of how the policies were likely to affect individuals sharing protected characteristics, including workers living with disabilities, 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 Government's support package during the current pandemic sits alongside a substantial provision of welfare support for disabled individuals. Personal Independence Payment (PIP) remains the primary means of support to help with some of the extra cost of long-term ill-health or disability. Those with a health

condition which prevents them from working or preparing for work may be entitled to an extra amount of Universal Credit.

## ■ Debts: Developing Countries

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[125244\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many countries have (a) had, or (b) are expected to have, debt payments to the UK Government suspended under the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative in (i) 2020 and (ii) 2021; and how much debt has been suspended for each country.

**John Glen:**

The UK has been at the forefront of leading the international response in assisting developing countries to deal with debt challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the G20 and Paris Club, the UK has supported a new Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) which has agreed to defer the debt service repayments of low-income countries until at least June 2021, ensuring they can focus their resources on the health and economic response to Covid-19.

As of 13 November 2020, 46 countries have requested to benefit from the DSSI, amounting to an estimated USD 5.7bn of 2020 debt service deferral. In relation to the UK, 10 countries have requested to benefit from the DSSI in 2020. The following table shows the amounts that the government has agreed to defer for 2020.

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED DEFERRED AMOUNT (USD MILLION <sup>1</sup> )	ADDITIONAL REMARKS <sup>2</sup>
Angola	0.57	1 contract in US (0.1m USD); 1 contract in EUR (0.43m EUR)
Dominica	0.89	1 contract in USD (0.89m USD)
Grenada	0.31	1 contract in GBP (0.24m GBP)
Lesotho	0.006	EU IDA credits, contract in GBP (4,935 GBP)
Myanmar	2.35	1 contract in GBP (1.72m GBP); 1 contract in USD (0.2m USD)
Nepal	0.51	EU IDA credits, contract in GBP (405,864 GBP)
Pakistan	0.66	1 contract in GBP (0.53mGBP)
Samoa	0.0008	EU IDA credits, recently

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED DEFERRED AMOUNT (USD MILLION <sup>1</sup> )	ADDITIONAL REMARKS <sup>2</sup>
		identified by WBG, contract in GBP (663 GBP)
Yemen, Republic of	0.03	EU IDA credits, contract in GBP (23,325 GBP)
Zambia	0.90	1 contract in USD (0.9mUSD)

<sup>1</sup> If the original currency of the agreement/country is not in USD, please convert in USD by using the exchange rates as of 30 April 2020 provided by the IMF

<sup>2</sup> EU IDA credits are the UK's share of EU credits delivered by the World Bank's International Development Association

We cannot at this stage set out the information requested for 2021 as it remains for individual countries to approach the Paris Club and G20 to request to continue or newly take advantage of the DSSI extension.

#### ■ Fuels: Excise Duties

**Mike Kane:**

[\[127569\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to introduce a duty on aviation turbine fuel sold in the UK after the end of the transition period.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The aviation sector currently contributes to the cost of public services through Air Passenger Duty (APD). The government has committed to consult on aviation tax reform and will provide an update on timing in due course.

#### ■ German Property Group: Insolvency

**Ben Lake:**

[\[125289\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he is providing to UK investors in the German Property Group formerly known as the Dolphin Trust.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[125290\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he is providing to UK investors in the German Property Group formerly known as the Dolphin Trust.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[125291\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with his German counterpart on the German Property Group formerly known as the Dolphin Trust on behalf of UK investors.



**Paul Girvan:**

**[126112]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government taking to investigate the actions of German Property Group and the unregulated financial products sold to UK investors.

**John Glen:**

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) are working closely with financial advisers who have advised customers to make these investments and operators of Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs) whose customers currently hold investments with the German Property Group (GPG).

The FCA have published a joint statement with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and the Financial Ombudsman Service. The statement sets out what UK consumers should do if they invested in GPG via an FCA authorised firm, either a financial adviser firm or a SIPP operator, and they believe they were mis-sold. It can be accessed at <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/statements/gpg-companies-preliminary-bankruptcy-proceedings>.

Companies under the German Property Group are incorporated in Germany and have never been authorised by the FCA. However, consumers should be assured that the FCA are working closely with all relevant external stakeholders on this matter and will share any further updates as and when they are able to.

The FCA also hold a public record that shows details of firms, individuals and other bodies that are, or have been, regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and/or the FCA. Consumers who are considering an investment opportunity are encouraged to use the register to check the regulatory status of the firm in question ahead of transferring any funds. The register can be found here <https://register.fca.org.uk/>.

The FCA's ScamSmart website also aims to help consumers protect themselves against investment scams, by allowing users to search a warning list to check an investment opportunity and report scams or unauthorised firms.

## ■ Hospices: Finance

**Martin Docherty-Hughes:**

**[125248]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the £125 million for hospices announced on 23 November 2020 will result in Barnett consequentials; and what estimate he has made of how much of that funding will be allocated to the Scottish Government.

**Steve Barclay:**

To give the Scottish Government the certainty to plan and deliver their coronavirus response, we have provided them with an upfront guarantee that they will receive at least £8.2bn in additional funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding.

Any additional funding provided to the Department of Health and Social Care for hospices will result in Barnett consequential for the Scottish Government that will contribute towards the guaranteed £8.2bn.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[126995\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional support, further to the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme, he will make available to local authorities for (a) pubs and (b) hospitality businesses who are able to trade but have been adversely affected by the tier 2 local covid alert level restrictions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises that in areas which are subject to restrictions on socialising, in particular a ban on indoor household mixing, many businesses which are able to remain open may nonetheless experience a reduction in demand. The hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors are particularly vulnerable to these kinds of restrictions because a significant portion of their revenue comes from households socialising together.

This is why the Government has introduced the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) (LRSG (Open)). This scheme provides local authorities in areas which are subject to a ban on indoor household mixing with funding to make grants of up to £2,100 per month to accommodation, hospitality (including pubs) and leisure businesses which are able to remain open but are nonetheless significantly affected by these restrictions. Local authorities which were subject to these kinds of restrictions between 1 August and 5 November have also received additional funding to enable them to make backdated grants from the LRSG (Open) scheme.

Local authorities have the discretion to provide further support to pubs and hospitality businesses, including supply chain businesses, through the Additional Restrictions Grant, which has provided all English local authorities with additional funding worth £20 per head of population, a total of £1.1 billion across England.

## ■ Job Retention Bonus

**Ian Lavery:**

[\[127562\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2020 to Question 115670 on Offshore Industry and Shipping: Coronavirus, what recent estimate he has made of the number of employees aged (a) 16-24 and (b) 25 years or over that have benefited to date from the Job Retention Bonus payment introduced in the Plan for Jobs; and how many employers have received that payment in each industry.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The purpose of the Job Retention Bonus (JRB) was to encourage employers to keep previously furloughed staff in work until the end of January. However, as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been extended to the end of March 2021, the policy intent of the JRB falls away. As such, the JRB will not be paid in

February. We will set out details of how a revised retention incentive will work in due course.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rachel Hopkins:** [\[127043\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Luton South of 24 November 2020 on pay in the civil service and related bodies.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Member's correspondence is receiving attention in line with the Cabinet Office's guidelines for responding to Ministerial correspondence within 20 working days. HM Treasury will have a response with the member in due course.

■ **Pensions: Fraud**

**Neil Gray:** [\[126891\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that HMRC pursues pension scammers holding stolen funds.

**John Glen:**

Most pension avoidance scheme promoters do not break the tax rules. But where they do, HMRC will pursue them. HMRC is responsible for pension tax relief but not for the regulation of pension schemes. Regulation is the responsibility of the Pensions Regulator and the Financial Conduct Authority. HMRC works with other regulators and law enforcement agencies, through Project Bloom, to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up approach is taken to tackle pension avoidance schemes.

**Neil Gray:** [\[126892\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many tax rule breaches resulting from pension scams have been identified by HMRC in each of the last five years.

**John Glen:**

HMRC deals with tackling tax avoidance, evasion and other forms of non-compliance.

HMRC is responsible for pension tax relief but not for the regulation of pension schemes. Regulation is the responsibility of the Pensions Regulator and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Since 2015 individuals over 55 have been able to legally withdraw amounts from their pension pots, pay tax on the amounts withdrawn and invest the amounts however they wish. However, as the amounts withdrawn and the investment occurs outside of the pensions tax wrapper, this does not give rise to tax breaches, provided the relevant tax charges are paid.

Pension investment frauds are arguably a subset of investment frauds. Serious or complex fraud is a criminal offence and is investigated by the Serious Fraud Office

(SFO). The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), also has as one of its statutory objectives the reduction of financial crime, which includes fraud.

HMRC empathises with anyone who believes that they may have been misled about their pension investments. We will continue working closely with the Pensions Regulator and Financial Conduct Authority to tackle pension avoidance schemes.

## ■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[127599]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional financial support his Department plans to provide to wet-led pubs affected by covid-19 tier restrictions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

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

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

This grant will be a one-off for December and will be paid on top on the existing £3,000 monthly cash grants for businesses. In addition to these grants, the Government has acted to deliver support to the hospitality sectors by extending the CJRS until March, and made £1.1 billion of Discretionary Grant funding available for local authorities to target support to the businesses that are most important to their local economy.

Businesses are also still able to access wider support, including:

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

## ■ Public Sector Debt

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

**[125993]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the level of public sector net debt in the 2021-22 financial year.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Treasury does not publish forecasts of the economy or the public finances; the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) is the UK's official forecaster. Reflecting the current high levels of uncertainty, the OBR's 25 November forecast set out a range of scenarios for the outlook of the public finances. In their central forecast, public sector net debt is expected to reach 108% of Gross Domestic Product in 2021-22.

**Public Sector: Pay****Conor McGinn:****[126916]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many employees in (a) St Helens Borough Council, (b) St Helens CCG, (c) St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, (d) Merseytravel, (e) Merseyside Police and (f) Liverpool City Region Combined Authority are paid more than (i) £80,000, (ii) £100,000, (iii) £150,000, (iv) £200,000 and (v) £250,000 per annum.

**Jesse Norman:**

The information cannot be provided in the form requested due to taxpayer confidentiality and the low numbers of recipients in the bands requested, which could be identifiable.

However, HMRC in collaboration with the ONS publish Employment and Earnings statistics that show that fewer than 5% of UK employees each month are paid more than an annual equivalent income of £80,000 and less than 1% of employees are paid more than an annual equivalent income of £150,000 <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationuk/november2020> (Figure 5)

**Travel: Coronavirus****Marion Fellows:****[126913]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will provide dispensation to people seeking insurance to travel to restricted countries on compassionate grounds during the covid-19 pandemic.

**John Glen:**

Travel insurance is now widely available. It is likely that any policy bought or renewed, or trip booked, after the pandemic was officially declared will not cover cancellation due to COVID-19, including changes to FCDO travel advice, as it is a known risk. This is in contrast to policies sold before the outbreak of COVID-19, which typically covered changes in FCDO advice.

Travelling to countries against FCDO advice is likely to invalidate your travel insurance.

Travel insurance policies differ so, if in doubt, customers should speak to their insurer or check the terms and conditions of their policy.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****Bereavement Support Payment**

**Justin Madders:** [\[127581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the economic effect of the introduction of the Bereavement Support Payment.

**Guy Opperman:**

Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) was introduced in April 2017, to replace Widowed Parent's Allowance, Bereavement Allowance and Bereavement Payments. To date no assessment of the economic effect of the introduction of BSP has been made.

**Cold Weather Payments: Wakefield**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[126169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Wakefield constituency were (a) eligible for and (b) received Cold Weather Payments from 1 November 2020 to 4 December 2020.

**Guy Opperman:**

Cold weather payments are triggered when the average temperature recorded at the weather station has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0°C or below over seven consecutive days, during the Cold Weather season (November to March).

There have been no cold weather triggers in the period 1 November 2020 to 4 December 2020, resulting in 0 payments to eligible claimants in the Wakefield Constituency.

**Food Banks**

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[127568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 84269 on Food Banks; whether the literature review of the factors driving the use of food banks has been updated.

**Will Quince:**

The Department reallocated resources to prioritise work to helping the COVID-19 effort. As such, we will update on this literature review in due course.

**Kickstart Scheme**

**Justin Madders:** [\[122760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question on Kickstart Scheme, how many organisations in each region have applied to be representatives of the Kickstart scheme since that scheme was launched on 2 September 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

So far applications from Gateways and employers covering 32,113 jobs have been approved.

We are currently working on refining our MI data and we will be able to provide further information on organisations taking part early in the new year.

**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[123593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many placements have been created under the Kickstart scheme in each (a) geographical area for which she holds information and (b) sector.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 7 December 2020]:* So far applications from Gateways and employers covering 32,113 jobs have been approved.

We are currently working on MI data for Regional and Sectoral breakdowns and we will be able to provide further information early in the new year.

**Kickstart Scheme: West Midlands****Liam Byrne:**[\[121805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs have been created by the Kickstart programme in the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

**Mims Davies:**

So far applications from Gateways and employers covering 32,113 jobs have been approved.

We are currently finalising our MI data at a local level and we will be able to provide further information such as regional figures early in the new year.

**National Insurance Credits****Alan Brown:**[\[125272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) men and (b) women received national insurance auto credits in each year since 2010; and what the cost was to the public purse of such auto credits.

**Guy Opperman:**

Autocredits were available from 1983 to 2018. They were only available to men who were aged over the female State Pension age (SPa) but below male SPa. They ceased when the SPa for men and women equalised.

Men received autocredits only for the year in which they reached the female SPa and subsequent full tax years before age 65, protecting their National Insurance (NI) records over the period that a woman of the same age could already have claimed her State Pension.



As autocredits were only available to men, and in accordance with the policy and applicable legislation, no women received them (women were already receiving their State Pension at the time men of the same age were receiving autocredits).

Data for the number of individual men receiving autocredits for the period was not collected and is not readily available.

It is not possible to answer the question on costs. NI credits on their own have no intrinsic value or cost.

#### ■ **National Insurance: British National (Overseas)**

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[128266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of automatically issuing National Insurance numbers alongside the issuance of Hong Kong BNO visas.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP and Home Office officials continue to review and assess the best way to support BN(O)s seeking national insurance numbers upon entry to the UK. As it stands a BN(O) holder would be required to attend a face to face appointment where the DWP could validate and confirm their Identity and Right to Work. Due to Covid, the face to face NINo service is currently suspended.

You can apply for and start work without a National Insurance number if you can prove you can work in the UK. Employers are required to conduct mandatory Right to Work checks on all prospective employees. Having a NINo is not part of these checks, and the possession of a NINo does not prove that an individual has a right to work.

#### ■ **National Insurance: EEA Nationals**

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[127650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department may issue National Insurance numbers for (a) EU (b) EEA or (c) Swiss nationals who already have settled or pre-settled status.

**Guy Opperman:**

The department continues to allocate National Insurance Numbers, however, at present this service is currently limited to specific customer groups.

DWP started testing a partial digital solution, on a small scale, in mid-October, to support the issuing of National Insurance Numbers, which is still ongoing. This solution enables collection of the applicant's data, but not the online verification of their identity.

For those customer groups, where a face to face identity check is required, we are developing and testing alternative identity verification solutions. We recently included EU/EEA and Swiss nationals, who have been granted settled or pre-settled status as

part of their EU Settlement Scheme, into the test, as their identity will have been verified, through this process, by the Home Office.

## ■ Occupational Pensions: Hendon

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[126842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have an auto-enrolment pension in Hendon constituency.

**Guy Opperman:**

Since 2012, in the Hendon constituency, 14,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled into a workplace pension and 3,260 employers have declared compliance with their automatic enrolment duties.

This data is updated by The Pensions Regulator each month and published on its website which can be accessed via the following weblink:

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

## ■ Poverty

**Jon Trickett:**

[124122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will bring forward an anti-poverty strategy.

**Jon Trickett:**

[124123]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of recent Legatum Institute research which found that 700,000 people in the UK including 120,000 children have been pushed into poverty as a result of the economic effect of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

Tackling child poverty is a key priority for this Government. We have provided an unprecedented package of support throughout the pandemic, injecting billions into the welfare system for those most in need, including increases to the Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit standard allowances of up to £1040 this financial year, and uplifts to the Local Housing Allowance rates to cover the lowest 30% of market rents. The Covid Winter Grant Scheme builds on that support with an additional £170m for local authorities in England, to support families with children and other vulnerable people, with the cost of food and essential utilities this winter.

Our long-term ambition is to level up across the country and to continue to tackle child poverty, through our reformed welfare system that works with the labour market to encourage parents to move into, and progress in work, wherever possible. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for children.

Our £30bn Plan for Jobs is another step on the ladder to achieving this and will support economic recovery through new schemes including Kickstart and Job Entry Targeted Support. We are also doubling the number of work coaches who, through our Jobcentre network, will provide more people with the tailored support they need to move back into work and towards financial independence.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Children

**Taiwo Owatemi:**

[\[127007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of the policy of limiting welfare benefits to two children on abortion rates since (a) that policy's implementation and (b) the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

DWP has made no such assessment.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[126993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to increase the level of the basic state pension to the level of the new state pension; and if she will make a statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

There are no such plans.

Direct comparisons between the old State Pension and the new State Pension systems are not appropriate. Although the systems are different, they both reflect the National Insurance contributions an individual has made.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[\[127546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the judgment of the Court of Appeal of 22 June 2020 in the case of *Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart v. the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions*, if she will make it her policy that claimants whose universal credit award was reduced because they received two wage payments in one assessment period will receive compensation for money previously lost.

**Will Quince:**

The legislation we have put in place to provide a remedy to satisfy the Court of Appeal's Judgment in the case of *Johnson and Others* will mean that in future, for cases affected by this issue, monthly earnings will be reallocated to another assessment period, which means that only one set of earnings will be taken into account rather than two, and certain claimants will be able to benefit from any applicable work allowance.

The Court of Appeal's judgment did not require the Department to apply the new arrangements retrospectively.

■ **Winter Fuel Payments: Correspondence**

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

**[126862]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's issuing of incorrect letters in relation to the winter fuel payment, what assessment her Department has made of the potential for delays in payments of the winter fuel allowance in 2020-21.

**Guy Opperman:**

Every year the DWP send out approximately 12 million winter fuel payment letters. In these letters the bank account details are updated automatically. This year a computer error meant that, of the 12 million letters, sixty thousand contained our customers previous bank or building society account details, rather than their updated account details. All payments have been issued to the correct accounts. No payments will be delayed as a result of incorrect letters being issued to customers.

We aim to pay winter fuel payments to everyone who is entitled by Christmas as is the normal practice. If customers haven't received a payment by 13 January or believe they have received an incorrect payment they should contact the winter fuel payment helpline on 0800 731 0160.

Further details about winter fuel payments can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ Liberal Democrats: Criminal Investigation

**Peter Gibson:**

**[124870]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the status is of the Metropolitan police investigation into the former chief executive of the Liberal Democrats following a request by the Electoral Commission for a prosecution.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 December 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kit Malthouse:**

~~At the conclusion of the Electoral Commission's investigation into the Liberal Democrat Party's 2015 UK Parliamentary General Election campaign spending return, it made a referral to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for its consideration of possible offences outside its remit. The decision to prosecute or not, following such a referral, is an operational matter for the MPS and it would not be appropriate to comment further.~~

**The Hon. Member may wish to ask the same question to the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, as this information may be held by the Electoral Commission.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Business Update

##### **Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):** **[\[HCWS642\]](#)**

Today the Government has published the Energy White Paper which sets out the strategic vision for how we will transform our energy system to build a cleaner, greener future for our country, people and planet.

Building on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, this White Paper provides further clarity on the practical actions that will shift our energy system from one reliant on fossil fuels to one that makes us a world leader in clean energy. We will do this in a way that creates jobs, as we build back greener from Covid-19. And we will protect the most vulnerable in society by keeping bills affordable as we transition to net zero.

#### **Consumers**

We want to create a fair deal for consumers, protecting the vulnerable and fuel poor with support of £6.7 billion; increasing competition to drive better products and services, saving money on bills; and giving us warmer, more comfortable homes to live in.

The White Paper sets out a raft of measures to help households to save money on their bills. We will support the lowest paid through a package of measures that could save families in old inefficient homes up to £400. This includes extending the Warm Home Discount Scheme to 2026 to cover an extra 750,000 households and giving eligible households £150 off their electricity bills each winter. This is on top of the £2 billion Green Homes Grant announced by the Chancellor, extended by a further year in the Ten Point Plan.

We will also keep bills affordable by making the energy retail market truly competitive. This will include offering people a simple method of switching to a cheaper energy tariff and testing automatically switching consumers to fairer deals to tackle "loyalty penalties".

Putting consumers at the forefront of our approach means not just deploying measures that save energy, but making markets efficient, incentivising energy companies and consumers to choose clean energy, and making sure the rules that govern the market are swift to adapt to new technologies. We will make sure our energy system and networks are fit for the low carbon transition by consulting on new strategic guidance for Ofgem, legislating for competition in onshore networks and delivering greater co-ordination of offshore networks. We will also encourage the development and uptake of innovative tariffs and products, and ensure customers have more transparent and accurate information on carbon content when they are choosing their energy services and products.

**Creating jobs and growth**

The Energy White Paper comes at a vital time of rebuilding. It reinforces commitments made in the Ten Point Plan to support a green recovery from Covid-19 through investments in new infrastructure, and technology that will grow the economy, supporting many thousands of jobs and creating new business opportunities at home and abroad.

We estimate that measures in this White Paper could support up to 220,000 jobs in energy by 2030, many in clean industries such as Carbon Capture Usage and Storage, Offshore Wind and Electric Vehicles. Many of these jobs will be created in our industrial heartlands, supporting our promise to level up the whole country and leave no one behind.

**Clean energy transformation**

We will transform our energy system from one that is 80 per cent based on fossil fuels today to one that is consistent with net zero. This will see us changing how we heat our homes and travel. It will lead to a doubling in how much electricity we use and the emergence of a new hydrogen economy.

The White Paper reaffirms our commitment to 40GW offshore wind, including 1GW floating wind, by 2030, and sets out £160 million of support for offshore wind Integrated Manufacturing Hubs. This will support our world-leading offshore wind sector in delivering 60% UK content, and up to 60,000 jobs by 2030.

We have also committed to work with industry to aim for 5GW of hydrogen by 2030 and which will unlock £4bn in investment and support up to 8,000 jobs, and will develop low carbon industrial clusters by 2030 by putting in place the framework required to mobilise investment.

Low carbon electricity will be a key enabler of our transition to a net zero economy with demand expected to double due to transport and low carbon heat. Our trajectory will see us have overwhelmingly decarbonised power in the 2030s, and fully decarbonised electricity generation by 2050.

**New nuclear power**

The White Paper is clear that nuclear power will continue to be an important and proven source of reliable clean electricity. With existing nuclear power plants due to cease generation by the end of the next decade, we need to take action to secure our future energy sources. Therefore, the Government is today confirming that we are entering negotiations with EDF, in relation to the Sizewell C project in Suffolk. EDF has proposed two reactors at the site, based on the design of Hinkley Point C, with a combined capacity of around 3.2 gigawatts of low-carbon electricity. By replicating Hinkley Point C, EDF believes it could be built more cheaply.

No decision has yet been taken to proceed, and the successful conclusion of these negotiations will of course be subject to full Government, regulatory and other approvals, including value for money. I will keep the House informed as we progress our discussions with EDF. And if we do reach a successful outcome, this would lead to tens of billions of pounds of investment into the UK and thousands of jobs during construction.



Today the Government is also publishing responses to the consultation on the Regulated Asset Base (RAB) funding model, which involves an economic regulator granting a licence to a company to charge a regulated price to users of the infrastructure. The funding model is based on private investment and is used in many significant infrastructure projects. Such a model could help secure private investment and cost consumers less in the long run. Following the consultation, the Government will continue to explore a range of financing options with developers, including the RAB model. In particular, we will also continue to consider the potential role of government finance during construction, provided there is clear value for money for consumers and taxpayers.

### **UK Emissions Trading Scheme**

To support businesses to decarbonise the Government is today confirming a new and ambitious UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS), will be in place from 1 January 2021. This new UK carbon market will be the foundation on which the UK achieves net zero emissions cost effectively.

The scheme has been designed by the UK Government jointly with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive and is a crucial step towards net zero, and will bring benefits for business, trade, and innovation.

The UK ETS will replace the UK's participation in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) and will be a market-based measure which will provide continuity for participants. The UK ETS will initially apply to power stations, energy-intensive industries, and aviation.

Our UK ETS is more ambitious than the EU system it replaces - from day one the cap on emissions allowed within the scheme will be reduced by 5 per cent, and we will consult in due course on aligning it with net zero.

The UK ETS will also allow us to expand carbon pricing across the economy and encourage innovation in emerging decarbonisation technologies. We have committed to exploring expanding the UK ETS to the two thirds of uncovered emissions, and will set out our aspirations to continue to lead the world on carbon pricing in the run up to COP26. This will also include how the UK ETS could incentivise the deployment of greenhouse gas removal technologies. In addition to this, the UK is open to linking the UK ETS internationally in principle and we are considering a range of options, but no decision on our preferred linking partners has yet been made.

As we move out of the shadow of coronavirus, this Energy White Paper opens the door to exciting new opportunities for our country, creating new jobs as we build the economy of tomorrow. Taking action now ensures the UK is set on the path to ending its contribution to climate change while enabling UK industry to seize new opportunities.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Designations under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime**

**Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Dominic Raab):** [\[HCWS640\]](#)

On 10 December, I imposed asset freezes and travel bans on 11 individuals and an asset freeze on one entity under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020.

This was the third set of designations under this regime since the Regulations were laid in July 2020. Criteria for designation under the regime include involvement in violations of the right to life, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to be free from slavery. These designations address serious violations of human rights in Venezuela, Chechnya, Pakistan and Gambia, including extra-judicial killings and torture.

In Venezuela, the sanctions target figures in the Maduro regime who are responsible for killing and torturing protestors, especially during the period from 2016-17. The designation of senior officials in Chechnya holds to account those responsible for the campaign of persecution of Chechnya's LGBT community which has included extrajudicial executions and torture. In Gambia, the designations include former President Yahya Jammeh, who was responsible for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, kidnappings, torture; and rape during his tenure as President between 1994 and 2016. We have designated one former senior member of the Pakistani police for his involvement in a series of extrajudicial killings.

The full list of designations is below:

**Venezuela**

1. Rafael Bastardo Commander of FAES (Special Action Forces) until 2019;
2. Remigio Ceballos Ichaso: Head of the Strategic Command Operations of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (CEOFANB);
3. Fabio Zavarse Pabon: Commander of the National Guard (GNB).

**Russian Federation**

4. Magomed Daudov: The Spokesperson/Chairperson of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic;
5. Aiub Kataev: Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation in Argun;
6. Apti Alaudinov: Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic and Major General of the Police;
7. Terek Special Rapid Response Unit.

**The Gambia**

8. Yahya Abdul Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh: Former President of The Gambia;

9. Yankuba Badjie: Former Director General of the Gambian National Intelligence Agency (NIA);

10. Zineb Jammeh: Former First Lady of The Gambia and wife of Yahya Jammeh.

Pakistan

11. Anwar Ahmad Khan: Former Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in Malir District, Karachi.

## ■ Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council

**Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas (Wendy Morton):**  
[\[HCWS641\]](#)

Between Monday 23 and Thursday 26 November, 2020 I chaired, with Baroness Sugg, the Eighth UK-Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council. The meeting was held virtually and was attended by OT Leaders and elected representatives from Anguilla, Ascension Island, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St Helena, the Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, Tristan da Cunha and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The themes of discussion at this year's Council included the impacts of the COVID-19 global health pandemic; the constitutional relationship; economic resilience, the UK's exit from the European Union; trade; border security; prisons; protecting the vulnerable (including mental health, domestic violence and children); the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Instruments Implementation (III) code; environmental protection and COP26.

The Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson addressed the Council. Other Ministerial colleagues attending discussions included The Rt Hon Lord Zac Goldsmith (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), The Rt Hon Robert Buckland, QC, MP (Ministry of Justice), The Rt Hon James Brokenshire, MP (Home Office), James Heappey, MP (Ministry of Defence), Graham Stuart, MP (Department for International Trade), Nadine Dorries, MP (Department for Health and Social Care) and Robert Courts, MP (Department for Transport).

Members of the Council set out a number of important commitments and areas for joint work in the year ahead.

We discussed the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic, where the Territories expressed their thanks to the UK for its support. We also discussed the constitutional relationship and held discussions on economic resilience, trade and the UK's departure from the EU, where we confirmed our commitment to supporting the Overseas Territories in building successful and resilient economies and to taking the needs of the Territories into account when negotiating new trading relationships and when considering new funding programmes.

We discussed how we could better support vulnerable groups in the Overseas Territories, committing to strengthen mental health systems; to identify opportunities and take

measures to tackle domestic abuse and to explore whether a children's commissioner role or similar might be appropriate for each Territory.

We recognised the importance of the biodiversity of the Territories and agreed to work together on ambitious action to tackle climate change at COP26 and agreed to work together on compliance with international maritime conventions.

We also set out programmes of work to support border security and prisons in the Territories.

We agreed a joint communiqué which was issued following the conclusion of the conference and was published on the GOV.UK website.

The communiqué and an associated press statement reflect the commitment of the Governments of the Overseas Territories and of the UK to continue to work in partnership to achieve the vision set out in the June 2012 White Paper: *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*.

In line with our commitment in the White Paper, we will continue to report to Parliament on progress by Government departments.

#### ■ **Publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership in the UK Overseas Territories**

**Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas (Wendy Morton):**  
**[\[HCWS643\]](#)**

On 15 July 2020 a written ministerial statement (HLWS361/HCWS369) welcomed the statements from eight Overseas Territories committing to introduce publicly accessible registers of company beneficial ownership. In a welcome step forward, the British Virgin Islands' Government have also committed to adopt publicly accessible registers, meaning that all on the United Kingdom's inhabited Territories are committed to adopt such registers. This is a major change, and the unanimous action from all the Overseas Territories demonstrates their commitment to tackle flows of illicit finance.

As the next step in the process, the Government is publishing a draft Order in Council, which has been prepared in accordance Section 51 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. The draft Order sets out the Government's expectations of how the Territories will adopt publicly accessible registers. The draft Order has been published on Gov.uk with a short accompanying note.

The draft Order sets minimum requirements for what the UK Government deem to be a compliant publicly accessible register of company beneficial ownership in the Overseas Territories. This includes the form that the register must take and the information that must be made available such that it would be broadly equivalent to that available in accordance with the provisions of Part 21 A of the UK Companies Act 2006.

The draft Order sets out a minimum definition of beneficial ownership. This encompasses both direct and indirect control over companies and includes, but is not limited to, control through shareholdings, voting rights or the right to appoint or remove a majority of

directors. Where a Territory attaches a percentage to the type of control the draft Order sets out that this cannot be higher than 25%.

The information on an individual must include their name, country of residence, nationality, month and year of birth and the nature of their control over the company.

It is the Government's view that only those Territories with companies registered in their jurisdiction need to produce registers, and that Territories' registers should be a proportionate reflection of the number of companies registered in their jurisdiction.

By introducing publicly accessible registers of beneficial ownership, the Overseas Territories are showing that they are responsible jurisdictions and a collaborative partner to the UK. This builds on the Exchange of Notes arrangements which sees the Territories with financial centres share invaluable company beneficial ownership information with UK law enforcement agencies at short notice. A statutory review of these arrangements last year found that they are working well and are providing our law enforcement with invaluable information to support ongoing investigations.

In the light of the firm commitments from all of the inhabited Overseas Territories to adopt publicly accessible registers, the UK Government have decided that it is now not necessary to make the Order under Section 51, but will keep this under review.

The UK Government is spearheading an international campaign to encourage more countries to commit to publicly accessible registers by 2023. The UK will continue to work with all Territories to support their implementation of publicly accessible registers of beneficial ownership by the end of 2023.

I am sure that members of the House will welcome the publication of this draft Order in Council.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Blood Donation

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

[\[HCWS646\]](#)

I would like to inform the House that the Government, along with the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Government, will be updating the blood donor selection criteria. This move will enable men who have sex with men in a long-term relationship to give blood from summer 2021.

In 2011, the lifetime ban on blood donation by men who have sex with men was lifted following an evidence-based review by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO). This introduced a deferral period of twelve months for men who have sex with men since their last sexual contact with another man. In 2017, the UK reduced this period to three months. These changes did not impact the safety of the blood supply in the UK.

Since then, the Government has taken steps to explore if further changes can be made to the deferral period for men who have sex with men, without risking the safety of the blood

supply. At the request of the Department of Health and Social Care, the 'For Assessment of Individualised Risk' (FAIR) steering group was established at the beginning of 2019. The group reviewed whether the UK Blood Services could move to a more individualised blood donor selection policy.

The steering group reported to SaBTO in October 2020, advising that a more individualised risk-based approach to the blood donor selection policy could be taken without risking the safety of the blood supply. SaBTO reviewed the report and formally recommended that the Government implement the changes proposed by the FAIR steering group.

The Government has accepted this recommendation. This will mean a change to the current three-month deferral period for all men who have sex with men to a gender-neutral selection policy, where deferrals are based on higher risk behaviours associated with acquiring infections.

This policy change will mean that anyone who has had the same sexual partner in the last three months will be eligible to donate and men who have sex with men will no longer be asked to declare if they have had sex with another man, making the criteria for blood donation gender neutral and more inclusive.

This is a progressive and welcome step forward, reducing limitations for men who have sex with men to donate blood and creating a fairer system for blood donation. In implementing these changes, the UK will take on a world-leading role as one of the first countries to recognise that a risk-based approach for men who have sex with men does not pose a safety risk to blood donation.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working with NHS Blood and Transplant and devolved administrations to implement changes which we anticipate will be rolled-out by Summer 2021. We will have monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of donors and patients, including continued monitoring of both acute and chronic infections in new and regular donors. The changes will be reviewed in twelve months.

The report from the FAIR steering group can be viewed here –

<https://www.blood.co.uk/news-and-campaigns/news-and-statements/fair-steering-group/>

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for rough sleeping and housing (Kelly Tolhurst):** **[[HCWS644](#)]**

At Spring Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced funding for substance misuse treatment and recovery services for vulnerable people sleeping rough in England. Today, I am announcing the allocations of this year's funding, totalling £23 million across 43 priority areas in England with the highest level of need, in addition to 3 pan-London projects. I am also announcing that this funding will be backed by a further £52 million next year, enabling these individuals to continue to access specialist support.



We recognise the importance of understanding the needs of people sleeping rough so that they can access the right support. Through the Rough Sleeping Initiative and our Everyone In response, we have worked closely with local authorities to get a much better understanding of this at a local level. We have also undertaken national research over 2019-20, interviewing over 500 people with experience of rough sleeping across different areas in England to better understand their support needs and use of services. The full report will be published on GOV.UK shortly.

From this research, we know that many people sleeping rough have substance misuse support needs, and many face challenges in accessing the support they need. These vital funds will provide the specialist support needed, to enable these individuals to rebuild their lives off the streets and move towards longer-term accommodation. It will include evidence-based drug and alcohol treatment, such as detox and rehab services. It will also fund wraparound support which is key to engaging people in drug and alcohol treatment services and improving access, such as co-occurring mental health and substance dependence workers and peer mentors. Public Health England's regional teams and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's expert rough sleeping advisers have worked closely with each of the 43 local areas to develop their plans for this year's funding.

This funding is a critical part of the Government's commitment to ending rough sleeping and to transforming the lives of some of the most vulnerable in society. Backed by significant Government support, these plans are part of over £700 million being provided to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping this year. By September, our ongoing 'Everyone In' scheme had successfully supported over 29,000 vulnerable people; with over 10,000 in emergency accommodation and nearly 19,000 provided with settled accommodation or move on support.

The recently announced £15 million Protect Programme and our Winter Support Package, which includes a £10 million Cold Weather Fund and a £2 million Winter Transformation Fund will build on the continuing successes of 'Everyone In' and ensure that we protect the most vulnerable from the dangers of Covid-19 over the coming months.

Meanwhile, our Next Steps Accommodation Programme has made available the financial resources needed to help prevent as many of those accommodated during the pandemic as possible from returning to the streets.

We are also putting in place an unprecedented level of support to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over 2021-22 with an additional £254 million resource funding. This takes total resource funding in 2021-22 to £676 million, a 60% increase compared to the 2019 Spending Review.

This funding will be supported by wider Governmental work to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our society. For example, the Government recently announced £46 million for a new programme - Changing Futures - to provide better outcomes for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage, including people experiencing homelessness and substance misuse support needs. The prospectus for the Changing Future



Programme, asking for local area expressions of interest, was made available on 10 December.

We are working at pace to prepare for the delivery of next year's funding and will set out further detail about how areas in England can access this additional support under the Substance Misuse Programme shortly.

I encourage all relevant partners and local authorities to consider how they can best use the available support to protect the most vulnerable.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Negotiations on the UK's Future Trading Relationship with Australia: Update

**Secretary of State for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):** [\[HCWS639\]](#)

The third round of Free Trade Agreement negotiations with Australia took place between 23rd November and 4th December. During the two weeks, negotiators completed 46 discussions, spanning the breadth of the Free Trade Agreement.

For every area, text was shared before the round. Both sides continued to have detailed textual discussions, and negotiators are now in the process of consolidating texts in several chapter areas. These include digital, telecommunications, customs, rules of origin, procurement, and cross-cutting provisions such as dispute settlement. Discussions in these chapters indicated areas of common understanding, where progress could be made.

We held detailed technical discussions on text in areas such as investment, professional business services and financial services, including on regulatory cooperation. Across all areas of the Free Trade Agreement negotiation, we identified areas of convergence and some areas of divergence. Both sides are regularly engaging with domestic stakeholders to ensure our respective proposals are informed by their views.

Both sides exchanged their initial goods market access offers before the round. This exchange of goods market access offers is an early milestone, and the speed at which this stage has been reached demonstrates the momentum behind these negotiations. Discussions on market access will continue in parallel with discussions across the Free Trade Agreement.

During the negotiations, the Secretary of State for International Trade had a call with Senator Simon Birmingham, and they agreed on the need to maintain momentum ahead of the next round.

After this round we have agreed to a number of intersessional discussions to ensure the pace is continued heading into the next round.

Below is a summary list of those areas discussed in the round, which continued to take place by video conference:

- Anti-Corruption
- Competition

- Customs and Trade Facilitation
- Development
- Digital/ e-commerce
- Environment & Clean Growth
- Financial Services
- Goods
- Good Regulatory Practices
- Government Procurement
- Innovation
- Investment
- Intellectual Property
- Labour
- Legal and Institutional provisions
- Telecommunications
- Trade Remedies
- Rules of Origin
- Services, including movement of natural persons, professional business services, international maritime transport services and delivery services
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- State Owned Enterprises
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- State-to-State Dispute Settlement
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Transparency
- Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment

Any deal the UK Government agrees will be fair and balanced and in the best interests of the whole of the UK. As we will in all negotiations, we remain committed to upholding our high environmental, labour, product and food safety, and animal welfare standards in our trade agreement with Australia, as well as protecting the National Health Service (NHS).

**TREASURY****■ Operation of the UK's Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime: 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020****The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):****[\[HCWS645\]](#)**

Under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 (TAFA 2010), the Treasury is required to prepare a quarterly report regarding its exercise of the powers conferred on it by Part 1 of TAFA 2010. This written statement satisfies that requirement for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

This report also covers the UK's implementation of the UN's ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida asset freezing regime (ISIL-AQ), and the operation of the EU's asset freezing regime under EU Regulation (EC) 2580/2001 concerning external terrorist threats to the EU (also referred to as the CP 931 regime).

Under the ISIL-AQ asset freezing regime, the UN has responsibility for designations and the Treasury, through the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida (Asset-Freezing) Regulations 2011.

Under EU Regulation 2580/2001, the EU has responsibility for designations and OFSI has responsibility for licensing and compliance with the regime in the UK under Part 1 of TAFA 2010.

EU Regulation (2016/1686) was implemented on 22 September 2016. This permits the EU to make autonomous Al-Qaida and ISIL (Da'esh) listings.

The following tables set out the key asset-freezing activity in the UK during the quarter.

**Attachments:**

1. Counter-Terrorist Asset Freezing Regime Q2 2020 [WMS Q2 of 2020 - Table.pdf]