This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 January 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 14 January 2021). 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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Questions marked thus [R] indicate that a relevant interest has been declared. Questions with identification numbers of 900000 or greater indicate that the question was originally tabled as an oral question and has since been unstarred.
**Answers**

**Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

- **Additional Restrictions Grant**
  
  **Lucy Powell:**
  
  To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much and what proportion of funding received by each local authority through the additional restrictions grant has been disbursed, by local authority.

  **Paul Scully:**
  
  The Government has put forward an unprecedented package of support to help businesses which are severely affected by restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives. This package of support includes the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) which was announced in November 2020 to provide discretionary business grants and wider business support in England. An initial £1.1 billion was allocated to Local Authorities under this scheme in November, and a further £500 million of top-up ARG funding was announced at the start of the third lockdown period in January 2021.

  This support is available through all Local Authorities in England and they have the discretion to use this funding to help businesses in the way they see fit. We are working closely with Local Authorities to ensure that funding is delivered to businesses that are in scope as quickly as possible.

- **Business: Coronavirus**
  
  **Lucy Powell:**
  
  To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding each local authority will receive from the £594 million discretionary fund to support businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak announced by the Chancellor on 5 January 2021.

  **Paul Scully:**
  
  The Government has put forward an unprecedented package of support to help businesses which are severely affected by restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives. This package of support includes the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) which was announced in November 2020 to provide discretionary business grants and wider business support in England. An initial £1.1 billion was allocated to Local Authorities under this scheme in November, and a further £500 million of top-up ARG funding was announced at the start of the third lockdown period in January.

  This funding is shared between all Local Authorities in England and we are working closely with Local Authorities to ensure that support is delivered to businesses that are in scope as quickly as possible.
Rachael Maskell: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether businesses are eligible to apply for additional Government-backed loans from £2,000 up to the value of £10,000 to increase their borrowing in the event that they have already taken out (a) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme loan, (b) Bounce Back Loan and (c) both such loans in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully: Businesses with an existing Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) or Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) facility may be eligible to apply for additional Government-backed funds to increase their borrowing, depending on the circumstances of the business.

a) Where a borrower already has a CBILS facility it is possible, depending on the size of their existing loan, to refinance in order to increase their borrowing. Refinancing can be sought with the same or a different accredited lender. It is at the discretion of the lender whether to consider a borrower’s request for refinancing, and a lenders’ refinancing activity is also subject to certain limits.

b) The Government amended the rules for BBLs in November 2020 to allow businesses to apply to ‘top-up’ their existing BBLs facility – from a minimum of £1,000, up to either 25% of the originally self-certified annual turnover or £50,000, whichever is lesser. Businesses which have received State Aid under another Temporary Framework scheme, or who originally self-declared as being a “business in difficulty”, may only be eligible for a lower loan amount. Top-ups are only available from a borrower’s existing BBLs lender.

c) A borrower can only make use of one of BBLs, CBILs, or Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILs) at one time. However, a business that has, for example, a CBILs facility can apply for a BBLs facility, or vice versa, in order to refinance the original loan in full.

The maximum facility size for any business borrowing under any of the three Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Schemes is subject to affordability limits specific to each business, as determined by the lender.

Business: Grants
Lucy Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses in each local authority are eligible for the one off grant payments announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 5 January 2021; and how much funding each local authority area will receive to pay those grants.

Paul Scully: On 5 January 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced one-off top-up grants, worth up to £9,000 per property, to help retail, hospitality and leisure businesses affected by the new closures through to Spring. This is in addition to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), announced in November 2020 and which
received a £500 million top-up in January 2021 to support other businesses affected by the new lockdown rules.

We have worked with Local Authorities to best calculate the amount of funding required, using business rates data and local business information, and are working with places to ensure that funding reaches businesses that are in scope as quickly as possible.

### Conditions of Employment: Re-employment

**Peter Grant:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 83925, on Conditions of Employment: Re-employment, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to prevent businesses from firing and rehiring employees.

**Peter Grant:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to amend the Employment Rights Act 1996 to prevent or discourage companies from (a) laying off and (b) rehiring staff on less favourable terms.

**Paul Scully:**

Despite the unprecedented package of support provided by this Government, some employers will need the flexibility to be able to offer different terms and conditions to ensure the sustainability of their business and avoid redundancies. However, using threats about firing and re-hiring as a negotiating tactic is unacceptable and if the employer changes any of the terms without the employee’s agreement, the employee may be entitled to seek legal redress.

Laws are in place to ensure that there is fair procedure in redundancy and dismissal matters as well as contractual terms and conditions cannot discriminate unlawfully. If the employer changes any of the terms without the employee’s agreement, the employee may be entitled to seek legal redress. Both employee and employers can contact ACAS, who provide free advice to workers and employers to enable them to understand their rights and responsibilities.

### Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

**Andy McDonald:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to update its guidance entitled Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) to include details on ventilation in workplaces following the discovery of the spread of the VUI-202012/01 strain of covid-19 in the UK.

**Paul Scully:**

The Working safely guidance was last updated on 6 January to reflect the new national lockdown. The guidance is kept under constant review based on the latest scientific evidence we receive.
Motor Neurone Disease: Research
Jessica Morden:

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January to Question 130668, if he will name the projects that received funding in 2019-20 from the (a) Medical Research Council and (b) National Institute for Health Research.

Amanda Solloway:
The Medical Research Council (MRC) funded seven Motor Neurone Disease-related projects in 2019-20 in pursuant to the Answer of 11 January to Question 130668. Details of the projects can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH ORGANISATION</th>
<th>PROJECT TITLE</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>END DATE</th>
<th>AMOUNT AWARDED (£M)</th>
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<tr>
<td>University College</td>
<td>The impact of TDP-43 on translation and the response to axonal damage in Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis</td>
<td>01/10/2019</td>
<td>30/09/2024</td>
<td>£1.9m</td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Elucidating early stage ALS pathomechanisms that drive mitochondrial dysfunction</td>
<td>01/01/2020</td>
<td>31/12/2022</td>
<td>£0.9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
<td>Regulation of ER-mitochondria contacts in neurodegeneration</td>
<td>01/07/2019</td>
<td>30/09/2022</td>
<td>£0.6m</td>
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<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>A 5 year prospective follow-up clinical and imaging investigation of demyelinating clinically isolated syndrome (CIS)</td>
<td>01/09/2019</td>
<td>31/08/2023</td>
<td>£0.8m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imperial College</td>
<td>Regulated proteolysis of</td>
<td>01/02/2020</td>
<td>31/01/2023</td>
<td>£0.5m</td>
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The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funded no Motor Neurone Disease-related projects during this period.

Further details of all projects funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which MRC has been integrated into, can be found at https://gtr.ukri.org/.

### Podiatry: Coronavirus

**Andrew Gwynne:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether and in what circumstances (a) foot health practitioners and (b) chiropodists and podiatrists are permitted to practise during the national covid-19 lockdown in England that has been in place since 5 January 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

Foot health practitioners, chiropodists and podiatrists can continue operating under the National Lockdown regulations.

### Public Houses: Coronavirus

**Dan Jarvis:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of permitting pubs to sell takeaway alcohol on (a) pubs’ financial recovery from the covid-19 outbreak and (b) the economy.
Paul Scully:
Under the current restrictions, hospitality businesses are not permitted to sell takeaway alcohol. This is to reduce instances of social interactions that could undermine the Government's primary objective of reducing the spread of COVID-19. The Government recognises the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the sector, which is why it has put in place a £284bn package of business support measures including grants of £3000 per month for businesses forced to close. The Government announced on 5 January an extra £4.6 billion to protect jobs and support affected businesses and includes a one off additional grant of up to £9000. Local Authorities in England will be given an additional £500 million discretionary funding to support their local business and builds on the £1.1 billion discretionary funding which Local Authorities have already received.

Wind Power
Karl Turner:
To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many UK-owned offshore wind farm sites under construction are within the UK territorial water limit.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:
There is currently one offshore windfarm under construction within the UK territorial water limit (between 3 and 12 nautical miles), Neart Na Gaoithe, being built by EDF Renewables off the Fife coast in Scotland. The other windfarms under construction are being built in UK waters further from shore.

Karl Turner:
To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of skilled workers for employment on vessels engaged in construction and maintenance projects in the offshore wind sector.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:
In March 2020 the “Offshore wind Sector Deal - one year on” policy paper was published on the GOV.UK website, which includes a section on developing skills and improving diversity in the sector. It noted that the sector has introduced a workforce and skills model developed by the National Skills Academy for Rail to track and report on workforce data, and that data was being gathered from the operators, developers and original equipment manufacturers, with plans to gather data from regional offshore wind clusters over the longer term.
Civil Servants: Business Interests

Dan Carden: [136041]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to review the Government's business appointment rules for civil servants.

Chloe Smith: 

The government monitors policies and procedures, such as the Business Appointment Rules, and whether or not they can be improved on an ongoing basis.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Sarah Champion: [133871]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a limit applies to the number of adults from the same household visiting essential retail venues during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown period.

Penny Mordaunt: 

On 4 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown in England. Details and guidance are available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), as well as information on restrictions applicable in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Visiting essential retail venues constitutes an essential activity that is legally permitted. The guidance states that you can leave home to buy things at shops or obtain services but that you should stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household.

The number of adults from the same household permitted to visit essential retail venues is at the discretion of the store with customers asked to respect the measures essential retailers are putting in place to help manage social distancing in stores.

Mr Gregory Campbell: [135833]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government has spent since March 2020 on advertising regarding the need for public vigilance during the covid-19 outbreak on (a) local and national commercial radio, (b) local and national commercial television, (c) national newspapers, (d) regional, provincial or local newspapers, and (e) commercial online platforms.

Penny Mordaunt: 

I refer the Hon. member to the answers given to PQ 33512 on 23 March 2020, PQ 40655 on 27 April 2020, and to PQ 45460 on 11 May 2020.

Coronavirus: Lung Diseases

Jon Trickett: [135810]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people suffering from (a) chronic bronchitis, (b) emphysema or (c) pneumoconiosis have died from covid-19.
Chloe Smith:
The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Attachments:
1. Response to PQ135810 [PQ135810.pdf]

Debts
John McDonnell:
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to the Fairness in Government debt management consultation which closed on 21 September 2020.

John McDonnell:
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent meetings on Government debt management (a) Ministers and (b) senior officials of his Department has held with the (i) Local Government Association, (ii) Credit Services Association and (c) Civil Enforcement Association.

Julia Lopez:
The government will publish an update regarding the call for evidence in due course and will make further announcements in the usual way.

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on gov.uk.

Fisheries: UK Relations with EU
Luke Pollard:
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many members of the UK’s team in the negotiations on the UK’s future relationship with the EU in December 2020 were subject specialists in fisheries.

Penny Mordaunt:
Further to the answer given to PQ48377, negotiations with the EU were led by Task Force Europe, a small central unit led by the Chief Negotiator Lord Frost. By December, there were 38 civil servants working in this team. Negotiations were a cross-departmental effort and accordingly involved a larger number of staff overall, including subject specialists in all key negotiating areas.

Iron and Steel: Procurement
Holly Mumby-Croft:
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment has he made of the effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the Government’s ability to procure more UK-made steel.

Holly Mumby-Croft:
To ask the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the (a) effectiveness of Government procurement policy and (b) the potential merits of including (i) environmental and (ii) social factors as future Government procurement priorities.
Julia Lopez:
The Government has been clear that we want to do all we can to support our steel industry. The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement does not affect the Government's ability to procure more UK-made steel. The Agreement incorporates our existing commitments on non-discrimination under the World Trade Organization's Government Procurement Agreement that does not allow preferential treatment of UK steel producers in public procurement.

Our international obligations do still allow the UK to develop an independent procurement policy to save taxpayers money, drive wider social benefits and strengthen the resilience of domestic supply chains. The publication of indicative pipelines of government steel requirements alongside steel procurement guidance, ensures that UK steel producers have the best possible chances of competing for public sector projects.

We have recently published a Green Paper consultation on radical reform of the UK’s public procurement regulations. Our proposals aim to create a simpler regime that reduces costs for business and the public sector alike whilst complying with our international obligations. New rules will meet national needs, drive improved commercial outcomes, increase innovation and remove complex and unnecessary bureaucracy - all leading to improved value for money.

Alongside the Green Paper, our new social value approach, which came into effect for Government departments on 1 January, will help streamline and standardise the procurement process. It rightly aligns with government’s priorities on:

- tackling regional inequality with new jobs and skills, including retraining the unemployed in clean growth sectors, and helping communities recover;
- promoting economic growth and prosperity by supporting SMEs, VCSEs and start-ups to lead or be part of government supply chains; and
- tackling climate change and supporting our net zero goals.

National Security Council: Coronavirus
Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [134443]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, in pursuant to the Answer of 17 December to Written Question 128992, what number of meetings occurred; and which Cabinet members attended at each such meeting.

Penny Mordaunt:
As stated in the answer to PQ 105615, in line with the practice of successive administrations, details of the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, how often they have met, and who attended is not normally disclosed.

Membership of the National Security Council is publicly available on GOV.UK.

Police and Crime Commissioners: Elections
Cat Smith:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the May 2021 elections, what criteria the Government would use to decide to postpone the elections scheduled for 6 May 2021; and what the Government's timeline is for making that decision.

Ben Lake:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of postponing the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Ben Lake:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Electoral Commission regarding the potential postponement of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections due to be held in May 2021.

Ben Lake:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

Chloe Smith:  
I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the question on 13 January 2021.

Schools: Procurement  
Daisy Cooper:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish updates to Procurement Policy Notices (PPN) 02/20 and 04/20: Supplier relief due to coronavirus (COVID-19) - additional sector guidance for state funded schools, which expired on 30 June 2020 and 31 October 2020 respectively.

Julia Lopez:  
The guidance was issued to schools to offer support for implementation for PPN 02/20 and 04/20 for the provision of supplier relief. These PPNs have now expired and the Cabinet Office has no plans to issue further PPNs for supplier relief. Contracting Authorities can still make their own arrangements for contractual relief.

Veterans: Suicide  
Grahame Morris:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many military veterans have died from suicide in each of the last five years.

Johnny Mercer:  
Historically, governments have relied on specific studies relating to the cause of death, including suicide, amongst veterans’ cohorts from specific campaigns, such as the 1982 Falklands campaign and the 1990/1991 Gulf conflict. There are currently
two studies which will provide important data on suicide within the veteran community. The MoD is finalising a study to track causes of deaths, including suicides, in all personnel who have served in the UK armed forces since 2001 and all future veterans. The study will be updated on an ongoing basis to provide near real-time monitoring of suicides in veterans. This will be complemented by a study being conducted by Manchester University, funded by MOD and NHS England & Improvement, looking at the antecedents to suicide in both serving personnel and veterans focusing on the year prior to the death. The study will include all suicides between 1995-2017 and is due to complete in August 2022.

We recognise the importance of accurately measuring suicide within the veteran community, in order to help inform support and interventions aiming to prevent suicide. In addition to the above ongoing studies, we are working on developing a new and robust method for measuring suicide within the veteran community. This is as part of our broader commitment to improve data collection and analysis, to ensure the Government has the insights needed to provide the support and services our veterans deserve.

**DEFENCE**

### Armed Forces: Health Services

**John Healey:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many combat medics are serving in each branch of the armed forces.

**Johnny Mercer:**

There are circa 2,750 Combat Medical Technicians in the whole of the Armed Forces. Of these circa 570 are in the Royal Navy, circa 1,800 are in the Army, and circa 380 are in the Royal Air Force.

### Defence: Expenditure

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the £16.5bn increase in defence spending is planned to come from efficiency savings within his Department.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The 2020 Spending Review Defence settlement provides the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with £16.5 billion over four years above the previous budget assumption and is independent of the MOD's plans for efficiency savings.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much of the £16.5 billion increase in defence spending is to be allocated to fill existing gaps in the defence budget.
Mr Kevan Jones:
To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has allocated any of the £16.5 billion increase in defence spending.

Jeremy Quin:
The Ministry of Defence secured £16.5 billion additional funding in the 2020 Spending Review. While this will help address existing pressures, we will still need to make changes and take difficult decisions to ensure financial sustainability and adapt to current and future conflict. We will decide on the allocation of the settlement funding as part of our normal Departmental financial planning and budgeting process. The financial settlement, alongside the Integrated Review, will allow Defence to meet its priorities and commitments on a sustainable basis.

HMS Montrose: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Kevan Jones:
To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of HMS Montrose's recent repair work in Duqm, Oman.

Jeremy Quin:
The estimated cost of the maintenance work on HMS MONTROSE is £506,000.

HMS Queen Elizabeth: Repairs and Maintenance

Stephen Morgan:
To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) maintenance and (b) repair work has been carried out on HMS Queen Elizabeth in the last year; and what the cost to the public purse has been of that work.

Stephen Morgan:
To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) maintenance and (b) repair work has been carried out on HMS Prince of Wales in the last year; and what the cost to the public purse has been of that work.

Jeremy Quin:
The amounts spent on the repair and maintenance of each of the two Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers in the calendar year 2020 are provided in the following tables, rounded to the nearest half million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>£18 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair</td>
<td>£3.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Supervision for Maintenance and Repair</td>
<td>£2 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HMS PRINCE OF WALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>£11 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repair</td>
<td>£2.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Supervision for Maintenance and Repair</td>
<td>£2 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maintenance activities for both ships during the specified period include the completion of Category B (desirable) safety and environmental maintenance tasks; maintenance of flight deck coatings and markings; and the recertification or replacement of lifed items.

Repair activities encompass the rectification of Operational Defects as and when those occur. Operational Defects can vary in their categorisation and severity, covering minor ancillary components through to major defects. We do not release more detailed information relating to Operational Defects as this would allow deductions to be made about a ship’s capability and may affect operational security.

The costs of the repairs to HMS Prince of Wales as a result of the flooding incident in October 2020 will largely be accounted for in this calendar year.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

British Telecom: Disclosure of Information

Chi Onwurah:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the estimated £900 million clawback from his Department’s Openreach contracts, what assessment he has made of the value to the public purse of the work of the whistleblower who eight years ago identified that BT were potentially inflating its charges for work provided in rolling out rural broadband.

Matt Warman:

I do not recognise the use of the term ‘whistleblower’. The person referred to in the question was, at the time, a contractor for BDUK who shared commercially confidential information without knowledge or authority from either BDUK or DCMS. By doing so they put the information in the public domain and as a result it was shared with the press.

The superfast contracts included capped and maximum prices, as well as clawback mechanisms to ensure that the public sector only paid on the basis of evidenced and eligible costs, which recovers the benefit of higher-than-forecast take-up. There is no opportunity for suppliers to ask for more funding if they overspend. As a result, suppliers such as Openreach reasonably incorporated contingency for higher build costs or lower take-up in their pricing at bid stage. The contract mechanisms have
been effective in correcting the public subsidy requirement based on actual costs and take-up, and local authorities have reinvested funding clawed back to date in further coverage.

As noted in the October 2020 NAO report into the superfast programme, DCMS estimates that these mechanisms to safeguard value for money will return £0.9 billion to the public sector.

**Broadband: Elmet and Rothwell**

Alec Shelbrooke:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department is making on delivering superfast broadband to homes and businesses located in remote, rural areas in Elmet and Rothwell constituency.

**Matt Warman:**

We have achieved 97.55% superfast broadband coverage in the Elmet and Rothwell constituency as a whole which is above the UK and National average. This has increased more than 5% in the last 3 years.

We are, however, not resting on our laurels and have a project running in partnership with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to utilise the latest Fixed Wireless technology to further improve Gigabit broadband connectivity across the West Yorkshire region including 100 additional postcodes in the constituency.

Ultrafast (100Mbps) coverage is now at 68.87% in the Constituency and Gigabit coverage (1,000MBps) is now at 66.34%, both of which are also above the National average. This time last year Gigabit coverage in the constituency was just 11.8% so we have seen a rapid increase of the latest broadband technology in 12 months.

(Source: [https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E14000689](https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/E14000689))

For Constituents in your rural areas we would draw your attention to the UK Government Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, which offers vouchers of up to £1,500 for Residents (as part of a Community Scheme) and up to £3,500 for SME’s. This is to enable them to upgrade to the latest technology.

[https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/](https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/)

**Broadband: Greater London**

Andrew Rosindell:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure a competitive broadband market in outer London.

**Matt Warman:**

The UK broadband market is generally competitive at a retail level, with a wide variety of Internet Service Providers, like Sky and TalkTalk, utilising BT Openreach’s broadband network to provide services across the UK, including in outer London. Much of the UK, including many areas of outer London, will also have access to other broadband networks, including Virgin Media’s network.
The UK has good superfast broadband coverage, with over 96% of premises having access to superfast speeds. As such, the government’s current focus is on delivering faster nationwide gigabit-capable broadband networks as soon as possible. Much progress towards this ambition has already been made, with around 1 in 3 UK premises now able to access gigabit-capable broadband according to the latest figures from Ofcom and ThinkBroadband.

The government believes that the way to deliver gigabit-capable broadband at pace is to encourage greater network competition and commercial investment, and to do so through the following steps:

- Making the cost of deploying gigabit capable networks as low as possible by addressing barriers to deployment, which increase costs and cause delays.
- Supporting market entry and expansion by alternative network operators through easy access to BT Openreach’s ducts and poles, complemented by access to other utility infrastructure.
- Stable and long-term regulation that encourages competitive network investment.
- Supporting the timely switchover to new gigabit capable broadband networks.

As the telecoms regulator, Ofcom has a key role in promoting competition. In addition, the government’s first ever Statement of Strategic Priorities (SSP) for telecoms, which was designated in October 2019, reiterated the importance of network competition and commercial investment to the rapid rollout of gigabit-capable broadband. Ofcom has to have regard to the SSP when exercising its regulatory functions and it is currently consulting on its regulations for the broadband market from April 2021 to March 2026. Its stated aim for this review is to promote competition and investment in new full fibre networks.

Some UK premises, mainly those in rural and/or remote areas, are unlikely to benefit from network competition and may not get gigabit-capable broadband in a reasonable timeframe without public sector investment. This is why we are investing £5 billion in these areas through our UK Gigabit programme.

Chatterley Whitfield Colliery

Jonathan Gullis:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, prior to 30 January 2020, when a Minister of his Department most recently visited Chatterley Whitfield Colliery.

Nigel Huddleston:  
Helen Whately, then Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, visited Chatterley Whitfield Colliery Heritage Centre, with Jonathan Gullis MP on Wednesday 29th January 2020.
Data Protection

Emily Thornberry:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of (a) the likelihood of the EU granting a positive data adequacy decision, (b) the likelihood of a positive data adequacy decision being made within the next six months and (c) the effect on UK industry in the event that a positive adequacy decision is not taken before the end of transitional measures.

Mr John Whittingdale:

(a) The UK has been in formal talks with the European Commission since March 2020 to secure data adequacy decisions under both the General Data Protection Regulation and the Law Enforcement Directive. The EU’s adequacy assessments ascertain whether UK data protection standards are ‘essentially equivalent’ to the EU’s. Given we have an existing data protection framework that is equivalent to the EU’s, we see no reason why the UK should not be awarded adequacy.

(b) The EU left insufficient time to adopt data adequacy decisions before the end of the transition period. We have therefore agreed with the EU a time-limited ‘bridging mechanism’ which will allow personal data to continue to flow as it does now whilst EU adequacy decisions for the UK are adopted. In practice, we do not expect the bridging mechanism to be in place for more than 4 months, which is when the bridge is envisioned to expire, but there is scope to extend it to 6 months if required. As stated above, given the UK has an existing data protection framework that is equivalent to the EU’s, we see no reason why the UK should not be awarded adequacy in this timeframe.

(c) In the event that positive adequacy decisions are not ratified before the end of the bridging mechanism, businesses would be able to use alternative legal mechanisms to continue to transfer personal data from the EU to the UK. Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) are the most common legal safeguard and will be the relevant mitigation for most organisations. As a sensible precaution, before and during the bridging mechanism, businesses should consider putting in place alternative transfer mechanisms to safeguard against any interruption to the free flow of EU to UK personal data.

Chi Onwurah:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 130731 on Data Protection, whether it is his Department's policy that a company which shares anonymised data that is then reidentified has responsibility or liability in the circumstances he sets out.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Section 171 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) criminalises persons who knowingly or recklessly re-identify personal data without the consent of the controller responsible for de-identifying it, unless a relevant defence applies. It is also an offence for a person to knowingly or recklessly process personal data that has been reidentified in this manner.
Criminal liability for these offences would not generally arise if an organisation shared a pseudonymised data set with another organisation and it was subsequently re-identified without their knowledge. However, all organisations are required to comply with data protection legislation, including principles on processing personal data fairly and securely. When sharing pseudonymous data with another organisation, a data controller may be able to guard against accidental or malicious re-identification by ensuring appropriate technical measures, such as effective encryption, are in place.

### Educational Broadcasting: Coronavirus

**Dr Luke Evans:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the (a) take up and (b) engagement of televised learning programmes provided to enable children’s learning to continue during the national lockdown.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The BBC is responsible for assessing the take up and engagement of audiences with its services, including those which provide televised learning programmes. However, in its most recent Annual Report, the BBC said that, over the first week of school closures (23-29 March 2020), there were 37.7m iPlayer requests for CBeebies and CBBC.

Education policy and the impact of the national lockdown on learning in England is the responsibility of the Department for Education.

### Events Industry and Performing Arts: Greater London

**Tulip Siddiq:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the recovery of (a) theatres (b) the exhibitions sector and (c) live industries in London ahead of the summer 2021 season; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

We are aware that COVID-19 and related restrictions have severely impacted these sectors and their supply chains. We continue to engage with stakeholders through the Tourism Industry Council, the Events Industry Senior Leaders Panel and the Venues Steering Group. These groups include representatives from leading sector organisations and other experts to develop action plans for how we can best support the sector’s safe reopening.

Theatre, the exhibitions sector and live music and festivals have been eligible to access Government COVID-19 support. This includes various government-backed loans, business grants, reduction in VAT and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes. The recently announced discretionary Local Restrictions Support Grant and Additional Restrictions Grant provides Local Authorities with funds to support businesses who meet the eligibility criteria in the guidance here, [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-local-](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-local-).
And on 5th January the Chancellor announced one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring. Theatres and live music have also benefited from the Cultural Recovery Fund. As of 11 December, £1 billion worth of funding from the Culture Recovery Fund has been allocated across all four nations of the UK. In England CRF funding has benefited over 3,000 organisations, with over £300m awarded to London through grants and repayable finance awards.

Football: Dementia

Jon Trickett:
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding he has provided to investigate the link between football and the risk of dementia.

Nigel Huddleston:
My department has not provided funding to football for the specific purpose of investigating the link between football and dementia. Sports have a responsibility to understand the potential risks to the health and wellbeing of their participants, and put in place measures to ensure their safety.

Football: Gambling

Carolyn Harris:
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to tackle gambling advertising to children through football (a) cards, (b) stickers, (c) magazines and (d) other football merchandise.

Carolyn Harris:
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on children of gambling advertising to children through football (a) cards, (b) stickers, (c) magazines and (d) other football merchandise.

Nigel Huddleston:
All gambling advertising, wherever it appears, is subject to strict controls on content and placement. Adverts must never be targeted at children, or appear in media created for children. These rules mean that an operator would face sanction by the Advertising Standards Authority or the Gambling Commission if their advertising were to appear on football cards, or stickers, or in magazines targeted at children. The depiction of a team football shirt which features the logo of a gambling operator is not considered advertising. However, the Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible Advertising requires that operators ensure their logo does not appear on commercial merchandise which is designed for children, which includes replica football shirts in children’s sizes.

The government is aware of studies which suggest an association between familiarity with operator logos in childhood, such as those which may feature on football shirts, and intention to bet when of legal age. However, we are not aware of evidence which
indicates an association between exposure to operator logos in childhood and problem gambling in childhood or in later life.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8th December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. As part of the wide scope of that Review, we have called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing operators to advertise and engage in sponsorship arrangements.

Freedom of Expression

Ben Bradley:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Ofcom on its proposals to widen the definition of hate speech to include political opinions.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Ofcom, as the UK’s independent television and radio regulator, is responsible for broadcasting regulation. Decisions on updates to Ofcom’s Broadcasting Code are a matter for Ofcom. On 31 December 2020, following consultation, Ofcom implemented changes to the Broadcasting Code to update its definition of hate speech to reflect requirements in the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

Ofcom remains bound by the Human Rights Act 1998 in carrying out its regulatory functions, including giving effect to freedom of expression (which includes political speech). Ofcom has said that the amended definition does not affect the weight Ofcom places on the importance of freedom of expression when considering cases, including issues concerning political opinions or in the public interest.

Gambling: Children

Colleen Fletcher:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the number of problem gamblers aged 18 and under; and what steps he is taking to provide support for those people.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Gambling Commission conducts an annual survey of gambling activity by 11-16 year olds, which uses screening questions adapted for use with adolescents to measure rates of problem gambling. In 2019 that survey found a problem gambling rate of 1.7%, which equates to around 55,000 individuals. Findings from the 2020 survey estimate a rate of 1.9%. However, the outbreak of Covid 19 halted fieldwork for the 2020 survey before it was finished, which meant that sample sizes were significantly smaller and no fieldwork was conducted in Wales. Results of the 2020 survey are therefore not representative of Great Britain, should not be compared to those of previous years and cannot be used to calculate numbers of individuals who are problem gamblers.

The most robust data on problem gambling rates amongst people aged over 16 is collected by the Health Surveys. In 2016, the combined Health Surveys found a problem gambling rate of 0.7% amongst adults in Britain, which equates to around
340,000 individuals. Amongst people aged 16-24, that rate was 0.6%. In 2018, the Health Survey for England found a problem gambling rate of 0.5% amongst adults in England, which equates to around 246,000 individuals. Amongst people aged 16-24, the problem gambling rate was 1%.

The first NHS specialist young person’s gaming and gambling clinic opened in 2019. In addition to treatment services, prevention work is underway to teach children about the risks of gambling and to educate those who work with children in identifying potential gambling related harm in young people. Since September 2020 teaching about the risks related to online gambling has been included in the Health Education curriculum, which is compulsory for pupils in state-funded schools. This is in addition to initiatives by third-sector bodies, including the PSHE Association’s resources to help teachers educate their pupils about the risks of gambling and how to avoid them, and the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust’s (YGAM) training and tools for teachers, youth workers, mental health specialists and others who work with children and young people.

Gambling: Internet

Carolyn Harris: 
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the level of online gambling losses was in each month from April to October 2020.

Nigel Huddleston: 
In April last year, I wrote to gambling operators and asked them to prioritise sharing regular and up-to-date data with the Gambling Commission to help us understand the impact of Covid restrictions on gambling behaviours. Since then, the Commission has collected, analysed and published this data every month, alongside other insights into the impact of Covid-19 such as consumer surveys. The most recent update, covering March 2020 through to October 2020, can be found here:


Lee Anderson: 
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the relationship is between the Gambling Commission’s consultation on Remote customer interaction and the Government’s recently announced review the Gambling Act 2005.

Lee Anderson: 
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to ensure that the Government’s review of the Gambling Act 2005 makes an assessment of how technology can be used to identify problem gamblers whilst maintaining access to gambling for other gamblers.

Nigel Huddleston: 
The government has announced a review of the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age. As set out in the Call for Evidence which launched on December 8, technology can play a role in helping operators identify customers at risk of harm and
targeting interventions. While many online operators already use technology for this purpose, we are calling for evidence on the effectiveness of existing online protections in preventing gambling harms, and this will include a consideration of whether and how technology can be better used to that end.


The work of the Gambling Commission as industry regulator continues alongside the Review. Its consultation and call for evidence on Remote Customer Interaction covers issues of identifying consumers in vulnerable situations and assessing affordability, and calls for views on how to balance consumer protections and consumer freedom. The consultation and call for evidence responses will inform the Commission’s next steps for setting Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice and may also inform its advice to government on the Review of the Gambling Act 2005.

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**Gambling: Rehabilitation**

Carolyn Harris:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much of the £100m pledged in June 2020 by the Betting and Gaming Council to fund gambling treatment services has been spent; what steps his Department has taken to ensure that money has been spent in a robust and accountable system; and what proportion of the £100m funding will go to specialist NHS clinics that treat gambling addiction.

Lee Anderson:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate the Government has made of the proportion of people who gamble who are deemed to be problem gamblers; what financial contribution the Gambling sector has made to support problem gamblers; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:  
Combined Health Survey data for 2016 estimated the rate of problem gambling amongst adults in Britain who had gambled in the past year to be 1.2%. The 2018 Health Survey for England estimated a problem gambling rate of 1% amongst adult past-year gamblers.

Gambling operators licensed by the Gambling Commission are required to make a contribution to fund research, prevention or treatment of problem gambling. The Gambling Commission publishes a list of approved recipients of these donations, and will soon publish its first set of annual data detailing the value of donations each has received. Most operators choose to give to the charity GambleAware, which received more than £10 million in donations during the 2019/20 financial year.

In July 2019, the government secured a commitment from five large operators for a tenfold increase in their contributions to the research, prevention and treatment of...
problem gambling over four years, rising from 0.1% to 1% of gross gambling yield. This included a commitment to spend £100 million on treatment over this period. In June 2020 it was announced that GambleAware would use these funds to expand existing treatment services. Industry body the Betting and Gaming Council has set out a planned schedule for donations which will see combined contributions from those operators involved in the commitment rise to £5 million in the financial year 2020/21, £10 million in 2021/22, £25 million in 2022/23, and £35 million in 2023/24, with an additional £25 million to be spread across the financial years 2021-23.

GambleAware is an independent charity which commissions a wide network of gambling-specific treatment services including a specialist NHS gambling clinic in London and the NHS Northern Gambling Service. Its forthcoming Strategic Commissioning Plan, due to be published in April 2021, will set out its objectives for commissioning treatment services over the next five years. It will commission additional treatment provision to complement NHS services, which are also being scaled up as part of the NHS Long-Term Plan. Up to 14 new specialist NHS gambling clinics are planned to open by 2024, with three already accepting patients. The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) remains committed to the expansion and alignment of existing treatment provision for gambling-related harms, and continues to work collaboratively with the NHS and GambleAware to ensure effective use of the additional £100 million of industry funding allocated for treatment over the next 4 years.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. As part of the wide scope of that Review, the government has called for evidence on the most effective means of recouping the regulatory and societal costs of gambling from operators.

### Golf: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of lifting the restrictions on solo golf exercise during January 2021 covid-19 lockdown.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity including golf are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus.

On Monday 4 January the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives. The National Restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions.

In order for these measures to have the greatest impact, we will all need to sacrifice doing some things that we would otherwise like to do. We have not introduced further exemptions because when you unpick at one activity the effectiveness of the whole package is compromised.
You can continue to exercise alone, with one other person or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, in a public outdoor place and you should not travel outside your local area. You should maintain social distancing. Indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including gyms, must close.

We plan to open up sports facilities including golf courses as soon as the public health situation allows.

Huawei

Chi Onwurah:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 130736, whether he plans for the planned obsolesce of Huawei equipment in fibre to the cabinet networks; and whether there is existing Huawei equipment in full fibre networks.

Matt Warman:  
There is currently some Huawei equipment in the UK’s full fibre network. The Government is carrying out a technical consultation with full fibre network operators on the use of Huawei equipment which is ongoing and nearing completion. The Secretary of State will announce the outcome in due course.

It is a matter for operators to manage the lifespan of Huawei equipment in their fibre to the cabinet networks, and to manage how and when they should replace Huawei equipment when it becomes obsolete. Telecoms network operators have a responsibility to ensure that equipment within their networks remains safe and resilient.

Loneliness

Stuart Anderson:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to tackle loneliness in winter 2020-21.

Mr John Whittingdale:  
This government is committed to tackling loneliness. We have delivered millions in funding, are encouraging organisations to take action and are aiming to reduce the stigma of loneliness through our campaign ‘Let’s Talk Loneliness’.

We announced a £7.5 million funding package to tackle loneliness in late December, which is in addition to the £24 million we have already provided this financial year to organisations which support people experiencing loneliness or social isolation. We have also launched the £4 million Local Connections Fund, made up of £2 million from government and £2 million from the National Lottery Community Fund, supporting small local organisations tackling loneliness.

We established a Tackling Loneliness Network, bringing together over 70 organisations across public, private and voluntary organisations to share expertise and develop innovative ways to tackle loneliness.
The 'Let’s Talk Loneliness' campaign continues to share practical tips and signpost support. Our winter calendar, which ran throughout December, had over 12 million impressions on social media, with a range of corporate and third sector partners promoting our messages on their channels.

### Members: Correspondence

**John Spellar:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to reply to the letter of 5 October 2020 from the hon. Member for Warley, co-signed with Lord Mann, on behalf of the all-party Parliamentary jazz appreciation group.

Mr John Whittingdale:

A response was sent out on 14 December.

**John Penrose:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to reply to the letters of 16 July 2020 and 17 August 2020 and telephone call of 10 November 2020 from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare on Weston Choral Society, raised on behalf of his constituent Howard Sayer.

Mr John Whittingdale:

A response to the 16 July letter was sent to the Hon Member on 13 August.

### Monuments: Reviews

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of publicly-funded reviews of cultural monuments and institutions in response to the Black Lives Matter campaign by (a) Leeds Council, (b) Wakefield Council and (c) nationally.

Nigel Huddleston:

Government does not hold this information. The vast majority of total funding for councils is not ring fenced, and as such councils are best placed to decide the most efficient way to fund their services in order to meet the needs of their communities.

The Government has set out a clear policy position, and DCMS has written to its arms length bodies to make this clear, that statues and memorials, however contentious, should be retained and their presence explained in order to help educate people about all aspects of Britain’s complex past.

### Musicians: EU Countries

**John Spellar:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to seek EU agreement to add musicians to the list of Independent Professionals allowed to supply services in the EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
John Spellar:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to negotiate a reciprocal arrangement with the EU that allows musicians from the UK to work in the EU.

Kirsten Oswald:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of negotiating a reciprocal touring artist visa waiver programme with the EU to ensure that artists, musicians and performers can tour freely.

John Nicolson:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that musicians and artists resident in (a) UK and (b) EU countries are able to tour and perform in (i) EU countries and (ii) the UK respectively without visa requirements following the end of the transition period.

John Nicolson:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will introduce a reciprocal touring artist visa waiver programme with the EU to ensure (a) artists, (b) musicians and (c) performers can tour freely.

Kevin Brennan:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on negotiating a mutual 90-day work permit exemption with European Union countries for performers.

Kevin Brennan:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the comments of the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for his Department on Twitter on 10 January 2020, if the Government will publish details of (a) the more ambitious agreement with the EU on the temporary movement of business travellers covering musicians and others and (b) all UK proposals on movement of business travellers that were rejected during negotiations on the UK’s Future Relationship with the EU.

Andrew Gwynne:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what visa arrangements for touring musicians were offered by the EU during negotiations on the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Andrew Gwynne:

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure visa-free travel for (a) UK musicians touring in the EU and (b) EU musicians touring in the UK.
Oliver Dowden:
The Government recognises the importance of touring for UK musicians and other creative professionals. We acknowledge that there will be some additional processes for those in creative industries working across the EU now that the transition period has come to an end. However, our agreement with the EU contains Transparency and Procedural Facilitation measures that will help ensure visa processes are as prompt and smooth as possible.

During our negotiations with the EU, the UK proposed measures, reflecting the views of the music industry itself, that would have allowed musicians to travel and perform in the UK and the EU more easily, without needing work-permits. Specifically, we proposed to capture the work done by musicians, artists and entertainers, and their accompanying staff through the list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors.

In practice this would have delivered an outcome that is closer to the UK’s approach to incoming musicians, artists and entertainers from non-visa national countries, such as EU Member States and the US, who can come to perform in the UK without requiring a visa. Unfortunately, these proposals were repeatedly rejected by the EU.

The EU did not propose and wouldn’t accept a tailored deal for musicians, artists and their support staff to tour across the EU and UK.

Going forward, we will continue our close dialogue with the creative and cultural sectors to ensure that they have the support they need to thrive. The Government recognises the importance of touring for UK musicians and other creative professionals, and has engaged extensively with the creative industries and arts sector since the announcement of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement to ensure they are aware of the new requirements.

Photography: Coronavirus
Robert Halfon:
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether private photographers who operate with social distancing measures can continue working during the 2021 covid-19 lockdown.

Caroline Dinenage:
Private photographers are able to continue working, including leaving home for work purposes, where it is unreasonable for them to do their job from home. All relevant Covid-secure guidance developed with the Government should continue to be followed.

Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus
Mr Kevan Jones:
To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support sporting venues that are unable to open solely for the purposes of elite sport as a result of financial inviability.
**Nigel Huddleston:**
The Government’s approach to reopening venues and events has been based on safety and wider public health concerns. We continue to work closely with sport governing bodies and venues across the country to fully assess what support is needed during this challenging time.

As a result of this work, on 19 November 2020 we announced a £300 million Sports Winter Survival Package which aims to protect their immediate futures over the winter period. Decisions on allocations are being undertaken by an Independent Board, whilst Sport England are responsible for administering the fund.

This support is in addition to the multi-billion pound package of business support from government that has enabled many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive, including the furlough scheme and business interruption loan scheme. Sports have accessed many hundreds of millions of pounds of support through this.

The Government remains committed to engaging across the sector to maintain a complete picture of the financial impact of Covid-19 to ensure sports venues survive this difficult period wherever possible.

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**EDUCATION**

**Adult Education: West Midlands**

**Harriett Baldwin:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the demand for further education from adults resident in (a) Worcestershire and (b) Herefordshire.

**Gillian Keegan:**

In 2019/20 there were 14,330 adult (19+) learners participating in further education and skills (including apprenticeships) in Worcestershire and 4,340 in Herefordshire.

It is for providers in local areas, including Worcestershire and Herefordshire, to determine the demand for provision from both learners and employers in their areas and tailor provision to meet those demands.

They do this by working with employers, other providers, and organisations such as Worcestershire and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnerships and their Skills Advisory Panels, which help to better understand, identify, and address skills challenges at a local level across England.

As we address the challenges presented by COVID-19 and prepare to seize the opportunities offered up by leaving the European Union, it is vital that we support adults, including those working in sectors directly affected by COVID-19, to attain the skills that will be needed in the economy of the future.

Starting this year, the government is investing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) in the National Skills Fund. This is a
significant investment and has the potential to deliver new opportunities to
generations of adults who may have been previously left behind.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced £375 million for
the National Skills Fund at the Spending Review in November 2020. This includes
£95 million funding for a new level 3 adult offer and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps.
Investment in skills through the National Skills Fund is vital, ensuring adults have the
opportunity to progress into higher wage employment and to support those who need
to retrain at different points throughout their lives.

From April 2021, we will be supporting any adult aged 24 and over who wants to
achieve their first full level 3 qualification – equivalent to two A levels, or an advanced
technical certificate or diploma – to access nearly 400 fully funded courses.

Complementing the Level 3 adult offer, the Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible
courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific
skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Skills Bootcamps have the
potential to transform the skills landscape for adults and employers.

The government plans to consult on the National Skills Fund in spring 2021 to ensure
that we develop a fund that helps adults learn valuable skills and prepares them for
the economy of the future.

We are also continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the
Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34bn in 2020/21). The AEB fully funds or co-funds
skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to
support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further
learning.

Children in Care: Coronavirus
Steve McCabe:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it remains his Department’s policy
as set out in Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for children’s social care services that no
one has to leave care during this period; what support is being offered to local authorities
to cover any additional costs associated with extended placements for people due to
leave care; and what recent assessment he has made of the effect of that guidance on
placement availability for children in care.

Vicky Ford:
At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, we recognised that care leavers would
need extra support, in particular due to their financial vulnerability and their higher
risk of loneliness and isolation. That is why we published guidance to local
authorities, asking them to review decisions about whether young people who would
have been due to move out of care should continue to do so; and to delay moves if
the young person did not want to leave their current placement, or it was not in their
best interests.

Where young people want to move out of care, the guidance asks local authorities to
ensure that the move is in accordance with the young person’s wishes and that they
are assured that the setting the young person is moving into is safe in relation to risk factors arising from coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance is still in force.

We have provided £4.6 billion additional funding to local authorities to meet the extra demands placed on them due to the COVID-19 outbreak, including the costs of extending placements for young people who would otherwise have left care earlier.

No formal assessment has been undertaken on the impact of the guidance on placement availability for children in care, although the department is in regular contact with local authorities to understand the support care leavers need during the COVID-19 outbreak. Feedback from local authorities indicates that they are taking account of the guidance in their decision-making, and are supporting many young people to stay in care at this time, having judged this as possible within their local placement provision.

Steve McCabe:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of changes in the level of pressure on placement availability for children in care during the covid-19 lockdown period; and what steps his Department plans to take to ensure there are enough safe and suitable places for children in care to live.

Vicky Ford:

The safety and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children remains a top priority. The department collects fortnightly data from local authorities to help understand the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on vulnerable children and children in care. The most recent survey showed that the total number of children looked after was 7% higher than the same time in 2018 and that the total number of referrals was 12% lower than the usual number at that time of year. The vulnerable children and young people survey summary is published at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vulnerable-children-and-young-people-
survey.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient provision for those looked after children, but we recognise that COVID-19 is placing additional burdens across all placement types. This is why the government has provided £4.6 billion of additional funding to local authorities in 2021-22 to address any pressures they are facing during the COVID-19 outbreak, including children’s social care. We are also providing an additional £1.55 billion of grant funding to support local authorities with COVID-19 spending pressures next year. This funding is unringfenced, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide where to allocate resources.

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

In November 2020 we also announced that there would be a second wave of funding for new projects to increase the availability and quality of placements through recruitment of new foster families, improving how places are commissioned and supporting foster parents to build their resilience and skills.

We continue to work closely with local authorities to ensure there is sufficient provision that meets the needs of children in their care.

Children: Autism

Richard Fuller: [132845]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on children with ADHD and autism of being mis-described as having behavioural issues; and what estimate he has made of the number of children with autism spectrum condition who have been (a) excluded and (b) isolated in schools in the last 12 months.

Vicky Ford:

Diagnosis and the assessment of needs can offer an understanding of why a child or young person is different from their peers and can open doors to support and services in education, health services and social care, and a route into voluntary organisations and contact with other children and families with similar experiences. Diagnosis of conditions, including ADHD and autism, is carried out by clinical assessment. However, the special educational needs system does not rely on a clinical diagnosis in order to access support. Schools have a statutory duty to use their best endeavours to make suitable provision available for children with special educational needs. This forms part of their broader responsibility to support all children who have a whole range of needs.

While we have not made a formal assessment of the effect on children with ADHD and autism of being viewed as having behavioural issues, to support those working in education, the department has funded the Autism Education Trust (AET) since 2011 to deliver autism awareness training to staff in early years settings, schools and colleges. To date [1], the AET has trained more than 277,000 people – not just teachers and teaching assistants, but also receptionists, dining hall staff and caretakers, promoting a whole-school approach to support for pupils with autism.

Regional networks have also been established to promote the use of the training developed by the AET in schools and we would always encourage schools to access this training. The AET has also developed national standards for autism support and a progression framework for those who work with children who have autism. These are available from their website at www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk.

The Department publishes guidance to schools on behaviour, suspension and expulsion to reinforce the benefits of arranging multi-agency assessments for pupils who display continuous disruptive behaviour. The guidance is available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion. A key aspect of these
assessments will be to pick up any unidentified special educational needs or health problems, such as ADHD or autism.

The law does not prevent a pupil with SEN or a disability (which could include ADHD or autism) from being suspended or expelled. However, schools have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against disabled pupils by suspending or expelling them from school because of their disability. Any suspension or expulsion must be lawful, reasonable and fair but schools must balance their responsibilities for children with SEN with their responsibility to ensure that all children are able to experience good quality teaching and learning without disruption in the classroom, and without being exposed to risks to their health or safety. The guidance also sets out that schools should, as far as possible, avoid expelling pupils who have an Education Health and Care plan.

According to our data, 155 children with a SEN primary need of autistic spectrum disorder were expelled and 12,287 received a suspension in 2018/19 (the last year we hold this data for). This is published in the publication ‘Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England’ available at https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england.

The Department does not collect central data on the use of isolation in schools.


Nurseries: Coronavirus

Rosie Cooper: [135871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support being provided to nurseries during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown.

Vicky Ford:

On 17 December 2020, the government announced a return to funding early years settings on the basis of attendance.

We stay in regular contact with the early years sector and have heard from them already on this subject. We will be closely monitoring both parental take-up of places and the capacity and responses of providers and will keep under constant review whether further action is needed.

Furthermore, we have provided additional support to the early years sector during the COVID-19 outbreak, making grants and loans available and ensuring early years providers can access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for their non-government funded income, and childminders the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). We continue to ensure that providers can access the support available.

On 17 December, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that both the CJRS and SEISS will be extended to April 2021. We also updated the CJRS guidance for Early Years so that all providers who have seen a drop in their
overall income are able to furlough any staff (who were on payroll on or before 30 October 2020) and who are not required for delivering the government’s funded entitlements. This guidance is available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care.

Where Early Years providers are struggling financially, they may be eligible to access support from the Additional Restrictions Grant, if not eligible for the Local Restrictions Support Grant schemes. Further information on these grants is available here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-additional-restrictions-grant and https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-the-coronavirus-local-restrictions-support-grant-for-open-businesses. We will keep under constant review what further support businesses may require.

Rosie Cooper: [135872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on covid-19 testing and vaccinations for nursery staff.

Vicky Ford:
Rapid, regular testing for people without symptoms of COVID-19 will be made available across the country from this week, with the eligibility of the community testing programme expanded to cover all 317 local authorities. Local authorities will be encouraged to target testing at critical workers such as early years staff during the national lockdown.

We are rolling out our asymptomatic testing programme to primary schools, who will receive testing kits for staff from week commencing 18 January 2020. This includes schools-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools. The asymptomatic testing programme will offer all primary school, schools-based nursery and maintained nursery school staff home Lateral Flow Device test kits for routine testing.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccine(s) the UK should use and provide advice on who should be offered them.

JCVI advises that the first priorities for the COVID-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems. As the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age.

Regarding the next phase of vaccine rollout, JCVI have asked that the Department of Health and Social Care consider occupational vaccination in collaboration with other government departments. The Department for Education will input into this cross-governmental exercise.
Ian Byrne:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate the Government has made of the rate of covid-19 transmission in nurseries in England; what steps his department is taking to support nurseries in Liverpool West Derby to reduce transmission of covid-19; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including nursery staff in the first phase of the covid-19 vaccination rollout.

Vicky Ford:

Early years settings remain low risk environments for children and staff. Current evidence suggests that pre-school children (0 to less than 5 years) are less susceptible to infection and are unlikely to be playing a driving role in transmission. There is no evidence that the new strain of COVID-19 causes more serious illness in either children or adults, or that it disproportionately affects young children.

Public Health England (PHE) advice remains that the risk of transmission and infection is low if early years settings follow the system of controls, which reduce risks and create inherently safer environments. This report from PHE shows that, at present under 5s have the lowest confirmed case rate of all age groups: [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports).

Early years settings have been open to all children since 1 June 2020, and there is no evidence that the early years sector has contributed to a significant rise in virus cases within the community. Early modelling evidence from SAGE showed that early years provision had a smaller relative impact on transmission rate when modelled with both primary schools and secondary schools. Further information on this evidence is available here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886994/s0257-sage-sub-group-modelling-behavioural-science-relaxing-school-closures-sage30.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886994/s0257-sage-sub-group-modelling-behavioural-science-relaxing-school-closures-sage30.pdf).

We continue to prioritise keeping early years settings open in full because of the clear benefits to children's education and wellbeing and to support working parents. Caring for the youngest age group is not something that can be done remotely.

These plans are being kept under review in the light of emerging scientific evidence. We are working with the scientific community to understand the properties and dynamics of the new variant VUI-202012/01 in relation to children and young people.

The department has been in regular contact with all local authorities, including that of Liverpool West Derby. During these meetings we collect and feedback the concerns and issues raised by providers and the local authority to the relevant policy teams within the department, to ensure that policy is reflective of the needs and experiences of those delivering essential early education.

PHE have endorsed a 'system of controls' which are the set of actions all early years settings must take. These are outlined in more detail here:
These build on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been in use throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. 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.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advises that the first priorities for the COVID-19 vaccination programme should be the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems. As the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age.

Regarding the next phase of vaccine rollout, JCVI have asked that the Department of Health and Social Care consider occupational vaccination in collaboration with other government departments. The Department will input into this cross governmental exercise.

### Private Education: Coronavirus

**Andrew Lewer:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to ensure that children educated in the private sector have access to mass covid-19 testing when it is introduced for secondary school pupils.

**Nick Gibb:**

As part of the asymptomatic testing programme for secondary schools and colleges, independent schools have already started receiving test kits and personal protective equipment to deliver initial mass testing of pupils and students (two tests, three to five days apart), and will receive further equipment to support weekly testing of staff and daily contact testing. Independent schools are also able to access and utilise the guidance provided online and through webinars by the Department.

The Department are not able to extend funding to independent schools and colleges with fee-paying individuals. Non-maintained special schools and independent special schools are eligible for funding.

### School Meals

**Alex Norris:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment the Department has made of the effect of the UK failing to agree a deal on the future relationship with the EU on food pricing on the provision of school meals.

**Alex Norris:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on the school catering workforce.
Vicky Ford:
The UK has agreed a deal with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals, centred on free trade and inspired by our shared history and values.

The UK has a high level of food security built upon a diverse range of sources, including strong domestic production and imports from other countries. This continues to be the case.

The government is working in partnership with food suppliers to ensure that there continues to be a flow of food into the country. Schools are responsible for the provision of school meals and may enter individual contracts with suppliers and caterers to meet this duty. We are confident that schools will continue to be able to provide pupils with nutritious school meals from the 1 January onward.

The government has published advice for the food and drink sector on working with the EU following the agreement of a free trade deal, available here:

A range of guidance for schools, including advice on food supplies, is available here:

Schools: Coronavirus
Wes Streeting:
To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of covid-19 infection rates among staff in schools.

Nick Gibb:
The Department intends to publish school workforce attendance data on 19 January. This data will be included as part of the publication 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (Covid 19) outbreak' and will be available here: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak.

As set out in the Children’s Task and Finish Group report, the Office for National Statistics COVID-19 Infection Survey data from 2 September to 16 October show no evidence of difference in the rates of teachers/education workers testing positive for COVID-19 compared to key workers and other professions. This is seen even when combining different categories of school staff in the analysis. The report is available here:

The Schools Infection Survey (SIS) confirms that, even with testing, there are low levels of infection in schools. As staff included in the SIS study are in school, these figures will reflect the levels of infection without clear symptoms in teachers only, as symptomatic individuals should not be attending. Whilst the SIS data may suggest a
higher rate of infection among secondary school staff included in the survey than in primary schools, the estimates have wide and overlapping confidence intervals, and the difference is not statistically significant. More broadly, caution should be taken when interpreting the SIS findings: the SIS data is unweighted, and so cannot be generalised to the school population as a whole.

Analysis of the Department’s attendance data includes reports of those absent with confirmed COVID-19. The Department’s attendance data indicates that, whilst the percentage of students with confirmed infection is greater in secondary school than primary school students, the percentage of teachers with confirmed infection appears to be similar across primary and secondary schools.

### Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

**Ian Byrne:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate the Government has made of the rate of transmission of covid-19 in SEND schools in England; what steps his department is taking to support SEND schools in Liverpool West Derby to reduce covid-19 transmission; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including SEND school staff in the first phase of the covid-19 vaccination rollout.

**Vicky Ford:**

During national lockdown restrictions, all schools and colleges, including special schools and special post-16 settings, remain open to vulnerable children and young people and the children of critical workers. We recognise that the characteristics of the cohorts in special schools will mean that these settings continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate. This is because we know that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families, can be disproportionately impacted by being out of education. The department has published new guidance on the period during the national lockdown, which can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak#history

It is important that staff in these settings continue to be supported. The rapid asymptomatic testing programme will include testing staff, vulnerable pupils and students, and children of key workers, including those within special schools and special post-16 settings. Further announcements on the roll out of testing to staff in primary schools will follow in due course, to help support the reopening of education settings.

Public Health England have advised that the current guidance on the system of controls should continue to be followed. When implemented in line with a revised risk assessment, this creates an inherently safer environment where the risk of transmission of the infection is substantially reduced.

The personal protective equipment (PPE) portal can be used by residential special settings to access COVID-19 PPE. These providers will have received an email invitation to register with the portal. Depending on local arrangements, special schools and special post-16 settings may be able to access PPE for their COVID-19

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccine/s the UK should use and provide advice on who should be offered them. JCVI advises that the first priorities for the COVID-19 vaccination should be the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems, and as the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age. This prioritisation captures almost all preventable deaths from COVID-19. In the next phase of the vaccine rollout, JCVI have asked that the Department of Health and Social Care consider occupational vaccination in collaboration with other Government departments. The department will input into this cross governmental exercise.

### Special Educational Needs: Work Experience

**Emma Hardy:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what incentives are in place to encourage employers to offer supported internships to young people with Education, Health and Care Plans.

**Vicky Ford:**

It is a priority of the department to improve the outcomes of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The SEND Code of Practice states that all children and young people with SEND should be prepared for adulthood, including employment, and that this preparation should start early.

As structured study programmes based primarily at an employer, supported internships help young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to achieve sustainable paid employment through learning in the workplace. There are no financial employer incentives, but in 2017, the government provided £9.7 million for local authorities to train additional job coaches to support young people with SEND on work placements, and to establish local supported internship forums, to bring together education providers, local authorities, employers and other key figures to identify local opportunities and overcome the local barriers to create a supported internship programme.

The number of young people undertaking a supported internship has been rising annually. The most recent report was in January 2020 and showed that 2,231 young people with EHC plans were undertaking supported internships, an increase from 1,646 from the same time in 2019 and 1,186 in 2018.

Work is currently ongoing as part of the SEND Review to consider how best to continue to boost employment outcomes for young people on EHC Plans. Our ambition is to publish proposals for public consultation in the spring of 2021, as soon
as it is practicable to do so, working with children, young people, their families and experts across education, health and care to deliver our common goal of improving the SEND system.

Students: Finance
Rachael Maskell:
To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking in response to the consultation on a Sharia compliant alternative student finance product.

Michelle Donelan:
The government is committed to ensuring that all students with the potential to benefit from further and higher education are able to access it. The government will provide a further update on the Alternative Student Finance product in due course.

Turing Scheme
Kirsten Oswald:
To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the cost to the public purse is of setting up the Turing scheme; and whether that cost was included in the £100 million of funding recently announced for that scheme.

Kirsten Oswald:
To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what cost-benefit analysis his Department has conducted comparing continued UK participation in Erasmus with the establishment of the Turing Scheme.

Michelle Donelan:
The UK is already a significant net contributor to Erasmus+. Government estimates that the UK’s notional contribution to the current (2014-2020) programme over its seven-year duration will be around €1.8 billion, whilst the UK expected to receive around €1 billion in receipts over the course of the programme.

The budget for the next programme is nearly doubling from €14 billion to €26 billion. In order to participate in Erasmus+, the EU proposed new terms of participation for the UK which included a participation fee in addition to a GDP-based contribution. The only terms on offer to the UK for Erasmus+ participation would mean that we would likely make a gross contribution in the region of £600 million per annum and pay in around £2 billion more than we would get out over the course of the next programme. We obviously respect the right of the EU to set the terms for participation in its programmes but, in this case, we did not believe those terms represented value for money for the UK taxpayer.

Therefore, as an independent and sovereign country, it is also right that we will proceed with the introduction of a new international educational exchange scheme that has a genuinely global reach. The government remains committed to international education exchanges and that is why we have committed to funding the Turing scheme.
The Turing scheme will be backed by over £100 million for the academic year. This includes the costs of administering the scheme and I am pleased to confirm that the new scheme will be administered by the same consortium of British Council and Ecorys which have been delivering Erasmus+ in the UK for a number of years, drawing on their experience of working with education providers across the UK, and ensuring continuity. This will fund similar levels of student outbound mobilities as under Erasmus and provide funding for around 35,000 students in universities, colleges and schools to go on study and work placements overseas, starting in September 2021.

The Turing scheme will also go further than Erasmus+ by including countries across the world, while delivering greater value for money to taxpayers.

Universities: Remote Education

Rosie Cooper:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that university students receive the same quality of education whilst learning from home.

Michelle Donelan:

The government’s clear and stated expectation is that universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the resources to study remotely. This is more important than ever now, with the vast majority of students studying solely online. The Office for Students (OfS), as regulator for higher education (HE) providers in England, has made it clear that HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and academic standards, which set out requirements to ensure that courses are high-quality, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through face-to-face teaching, remote online learning, or a combination of both.

The OfS has published information on quality and standards for providers providing practical guidance on how best to ensure students continue to receive a high quality academic experience in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. This sets out that providers should make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative teaching and support for students that is at least broadly equivalent to the provider’s usual arrangements. The OfS will keep this guidance under review to ensure it remains relevant to the developing circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The OfS is taking very seriously the potential impacts of the outbreak on teaching and learning and is regularly engaging with all registered providers. It is actively monitoring providers to ensure that they maintain the quality of their provision, that it is accessible for all, and that they have been clear in their communications with students about how arrangements for teaching and learning may change throughout the year. The OfS is also following up directly with providers where they receive notifications from students, parents or others raising concerns about the quality of
teaching on offer and requiring providers to report to them when they are not able to deliver a course or award a qualification. If the OfS has concerns, it will investigate further.

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

Students have rights under consumer law that they may be able to rely on if they are dissatisfied with their provider’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak. In the first instance, students should speak to their provider to see if they can resolve their issue. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly, and sympathetically by providers to resolve any concerns. If a student at a provider in England or Wales is not satisfied with their provider’s final response, they should go to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, which has published guidance on this issue.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Fisheries

Luke Pollard: [134120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the (a) EU and (b) Norway about continued access for UK distant water fishing boats to distant waters.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries negotiations as part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement covered access to EU waters for UK vessels. We have agreed with the EU there will be an adjustment period whereby both sides will continue to have reciprocal access to each other’s waters at a level commensurate to their share of fishing opportunities.

Bilateral negotiations between the UK and Norway for access to each other’s waters in 2021 will begin shortly. UK distant waters fishing boats have access to fishing opportunities in the waters around Svalbard as a result of negotiations between the UK and Norway.

Fisheries: Scotland

Deidre Brock: [132982]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what share Scotland will receive of the £100m funding for the UK fishing industry announced by the Prime Minister on 30 December 2020.

Deidre Brock: [132983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what criteria will be applied to determine the allocation of the £100m funding for the UK fishing industry announced by the Prime Minister on 30 December 2020.
Victoria Prentis:
The PM confirmed during his press conference on Christmas Eve that UK fishing communities will be helped with a £100 million programme to modernise their fleets and the fish processing industry. This funding will directly benefit the seafood sector in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom.

We will set out more detail on this programme in due course.

Organic Food: UK Trade with EU

Alan Brown: [133939]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, when the Working Group on Organic Products is due to first meet.

Alan Brown: [133940]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, what the selection process will be for the appointment of UK Government representatives to the Working Group on Organic Products.

Alan Brown: [133941]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU representatives and (b) UK Government representatives will sit on the Working Group on Organic Products.

Victoria Prentis:
As part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, the UK and EU agreed to form a Working Group on Organic Products. We will shortly begin discussions with the European Commission to agree the overall aims of the group, its membership and meeting frequency. We will also consult with the sector and the Devolved Administrations.

UK Internal Trade: Wales

Hywel Williams: [135827]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) the competitiveness on the UK internal market of goods originating in Wales and (b) consumer choice in Wales of Government authorisation for use of a product containing a neonicotinoid to treat sugar beet seed in England.

Hywel Williams: [135828]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the effect on the internal market in Wales of the UK Government decision to grant authorisation for use of a product containing a neonicotinoid to treat sugar beet seed in England.
Victoria Prentis:
The application for emergency authorisation of the neonicotinoid product Cruiser SB was made in respect of use in England only as there is no significant commercial sugar beet production elsewhere in the UK. It is not anticipated that the decision will have any impact on the competitiveness of goods from different parts of the UK or on consumer choice. Defra has not had any discussions with the Welsh Government on internal market effects of the decision.

Officials of the Welsh Government have been sighted on the Cruiser SB application and the decision. They have not flagged to Defra any issues about internal market implications of this application.

UK Trade with EU: Transport
Deidre Brock: [132979]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the additional costs to businesses from the requirement for heat treated wooden packaging materials and pallets when trading with the EU from 1 January 2021.

Victoria Prentis:
Defra has established a strong relationship with the wood packaging material industry, and we have worked closely to develop policies that will ensure our biosecurity is maintained and trade continues to flow with as little disruption as possible. As part of this, some businesses involved in the wood packaging material industry have shared, in confidence, estimates of the costs involved in treatment of wood packaging material. The need for ISPM15-compliant wood packaging material is, however, an international requirement for trade and is in place to protect trading nations, including the UK, from harmful plant pests and diseases.

Wines: Imports
Daisy Cooper: [134180]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of suspending import certification requirements for wine.

Daisy Cooper: [134181]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a new simplified electronic passport for the wine industry.

Daisy Cooper: [134182]
To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the UK joining the World Wine Trade Group.

Victoria Prentis:
The Withdrawal Act 2018 retained the requirement for third country wines to be accompanied by a VI1 certificate as a means of maintaining the level of assurance
they offer on wine standards. We have not conducted an analysis of the potential benefits of suspending VI1s. However, as VI1s already exist for wine imports from locations including Australia, USA and Chile, and these wines remain extremely competitive in our and the EU's marketplaces, we believe the new requirement to be appropriate and affordable.

Nevertheless, we did recognise that the rules underpinning detailed VI1 requirements, which are new to EU wine exporters, are contained in legislation that had to be made late in the transition period. As that did not provide much time for the EU industry to adjust, we have provided an easement to the requirement until 1 July 2021 in the Agricultural Products, Food and Drink (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020. This allows EU wine to continue to be imported to GB using EU commercial documentation, as it did when the UK was subject to EU rules.

Although this easement will apply to all EU wine imports until 1 July 2021, the new UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement has established a system whereby producers can self-certify the certificates used to cover the movement of wine products made in the UK or the EU and moving to the other territory. This will not apply to imports of wine from other origins that are traded between the UK and the EU which will have to continue to meet the basic VI1 requirements or simplified variants of that subsequently agreed in trade deals concluded by the UK.

Provision already exists for all wine certification forms to be transmitted electronically, for which we secured confirmation in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and we will be looking at the feasibility of enabling this option in future.

I am pleased to announce that the UK has now rejoined the International Organisation of Vine and Wine after an absence of approximately 16 years. This will give the UK influence over international decisions on wine practices, processes and maintained credibility in the international trade in wine. We have not made any assessment of the potential benefits of also seeking membership of the World Wine Trade Group, but we are keeping the matter under review.
Nigel Adams:
The FCDO does not require British travellers to register with us when they go overseas. Therefore we do not hold data on the number of citizens who visited these countries. UK nationals visiting these countries who need assistance can call any of our embassies, high commissions or consulates, or the FCO switchboard, 24/7 for advice or help.

British Nationals Abroad: Europe
Nick Fletcher:
To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his Department's advice is to clinically vulnerable British nationals who are shielding in the Schengen Area, who do not have travel visas and cannot remain isolated for longer than 90 days.

Wendy Morton:
The current advice for those across the UK remains that you must stay at home and not travel abroad unless it is for a permitted exempt reason. Our advice to British nationals abroad is that they should follow the public health advice of the country which they are in, including current COVID-19 restrictions and whether they should take additional precautions due to underlying health conditions. As of 1 January 2021, British Citizens will not need a visa when travelling to the EU for visits of up to 90 days in any 180-day period, for tourism and similar activities. Requirements for longer stays are subject to Member States' national procedures. Any queries should be directed to the relevant immigration authorities in that country. UK nationals lawfully resident in the EU before 31 December 2020, and their family members, will be protected by the Withdrawal Agreement. If a British national overseas requires consular assistance, the FCDO can be contacted by phone or email 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. The kind of assistance we offer is tailored to the individual circumstances of each case. More detail on the assistance the FCDO can provide to British nationals abroad is set out in the publication: 'Support for British nationals abroad: A Guide' (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide).

China: Press Freedom
Stephen Kinnock:
To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations has he made to the Chinese Government on the finding of The Committee to Protect Journalists that there were 47 journalists in prison in that country as of 1 December 2020, more than any other country for the second year in a row.

Nigel Adams:
We are deeply concerned about the ongoing efforts by Chinese authorities to curtail media freedom, an essential element of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We continue to urge the Chinese authorities to allow journalists to practice their profession without fear or arrest, harassment or reprisal,
and to end extensive censorship and control over the media and wider freedom of expression.

Developing Countries: Schools

Preet Kaur Gill: [134525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the EdTech Hub and eLearning Africa survey funded by his Department, entitled The Effect of COVID-19 on Education in Africa and Its Implications for the Use of Technology, what assessment he has made of the effect of reductions to the aid budget on ensuring access to technology during school closures due to covid-19.

James Duddridge:

FCDO-funded research has improved our global understanding of how COVID-19 is impacting on the lives and learning outcomes of young people in low and middle income countries. This includes the role and future possibilities of technology use for learning. As set out by the Foreign Secretary, girls’ education will remain a priority for UK aid. With 1.6 billion children out of school at the peak of COVID-19, the EdTech Hub has been supporting policy makers with the evidence they need to make effective decisions on the use of EdTech to help children learn remotely. We have adapted our bilateral education programmes in 18 countries. For example, in Rwanda we are providing online and telephone support to parents and teachers regarding home schooling and in Ethiopia we have provided additional funding for TV and radio programmes for learning.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

Kenny MacAskill: [134595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff have been on (a) secondment and (b) internship to his Department from (i) the Scottish Government and (ii) Crown and Prosecutor Fiscal Service in each year since 2011; how long on average each such position was held for; and what role each such member of staff performed.

Nigel Adams:

[ Holding answer 13 January 2021]: The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office are currently operating on legacy systems, which captures staff data using different criteria. Therefore this information is not held centrally for all staff.

Nigeria: Violence

David Linden:

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on human rights of recent violence in Kaduna State in Nigeria; and what diplomatic steps he is taking to tackle the conflict in that region.
David Linden: [136037]
To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of recent abductions in the Birnin Gwari area of Kaduna state on human rights in that region.

James Duddridge:
GROUPED WITH PQ 136037.
The UK Government condemns all incidents of violence in Kaduna State, including the recently reported abduction of civilians on the Birnin Gwari to Kaduna road. Such incidents constitute human rights abuses and impact on individual's rights to life, liberty and security. Our High Commissioner and her team visited Kaduna State in December 2020 to engage with the state government and police, civil society, faith and community leaders and communities affected by violence. The UK Government maintains a network of regional offices in Nigeria, including in Kaduna State. This network monitors human rights issues. We will continue to make clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting human rights for all.

David Linden: [136038]
To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Nigerian counterpart on recent terrorist violence in the north east of Nigeria.

James Duddridge:
Terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, continue to cause immense suffering to local communities in North East Nigeria. I [the Minister for Africa] have condemned recent attacks, including the attack on civilians in Koshobe on 28 November. We are committed to helping Nigeria tackle the threat posed by these terrorist groups. We are providing a comprehensive package of humanitarian and stabilisation assistance to Nigeria to help tackle the threat and support affected communities.

In November 2020, Nick Dyer, the UK's Special Envoy on Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, met representatives of the Nigerian Government in Abuja and North East Nigeria to discuss the conflict and push for action on deteriorating food insecurity in the North East. In December 2020, the UK Deputy National Security Advisor discussed security in Nigeria, including terrorism, with the President's Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari. The British High Commissioner in Abuja also regularly raises the conflict at senior levels within the Nigerian Government.

Pakistan: Ahmadiyya
Fleur Anderson: [134615]
To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Government of Pakistan on the killing of (a) Dr Tahir Mahmood in November 2020 and (b) other Ahmadi Muslims in that country.
Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 13 January 2021]: The UK Government remains deeply concerned by reports of discrimination and violence against religious communities in Pakistan, including against the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

We are concerned and saddened by the murder of Dr Tahir Mahmood in November 2020 in Punjab province. The Minister of State responsible for South Asia and Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has publicly condemned the killing and called on the perpetrators to be held to account.

We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of all its citizens, regardless of their belief. Lord Ahmad raised our concerns about the recent murder of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 16 November. Lord Ahmad also raised the need to protect religious communities, including the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, with Pakistan's Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for the Interior, Shahzad Akbar, on 7 December.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund
Sarah Owen:  [123723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund granted to local authorities is spent in care homes.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 December 2020]: The Infection Control Fund has provided over £1.1 billion to the care sector to implement infection prevention measures. Under the conditions of the extended fund which came into place in October, local authorities are required to pass funding to care homes and Care Quality Commission regulated community care providers within the local authority’s geographical basis. The conditions also require local authorities to submit returns specifying how the grant has been spent for the Department to consider.

Antimicrobials
Martyn Day:  [114964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has provided to (a) Clinical Commissioning Groups and (b) local NHS providers on the introduction of new antimicrobials; and how this guidance supports the antimicrobial resistance five-year action plan.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 November 2020]: Optimising the use of antimicrobials is central to the United Kingdom’s efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The UK’s
five-year national action plan for AMR sets the ambition to reduce UK antimicrobial use in humans by 15% by 2024.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) supports stewardship of current and new antimicrobials through its Managing Common Infections antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for all care settings.

NICE also produces Evidence Summaries of the best available information on an antimicrobial to guide decision-making, both nationally within NHS England and NHS Improvement and locally, for example within a clinical commissioning group, a National Health Service trust, or across a local health economy.

**Martyn Day:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans are in place to ensure that the devolved nations can benefit from the initiatives in England to incentivise the development of new antimicrobials through innovative models for the evaluation and purchase of antimicrobials; and what the timeframe is for the roll-out of those initiatives.

**Jo Churchill:**

[Holding answer 17 November 2020]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and NHS England and NHS Improvement are undertaking work to develop and test an innovative model for the evaluation and purchase of antimicrobials that will help incentivise investment in these drugs. The model will initially be tested through application to two antimicrobial products to be selected through a competitive procurement exercise currently underway. Successful products will undergo adapted Health Technology Assessments throughout 2021, and contracts between suppliers and the NHS in England are anticipated to start from April 2022.

It will be important to evaluate the model thoroughly before considering changes to routine commissioning policy. The devolved administrations are important stakeholders to the project and we continue to work with them to ensure the model is suitable for contexts in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**Cancer: Surgery**

**Rachael Maskell:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to increase capacity for urgent cancer surgery following the end of the contract with the independent health sector.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have agreed national arrangements to continue partnership working with independent sector healthcare providers. These new arrangements will replace those that originally came into effect on 23 March 2020 and which came to an end on 31 December 2020.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have agreed terms with 14 of those independent sector providers for a new fixed term contract covering the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021 inclusive. The new contract will ensure that referrals
and transfers of National Health Service patients to these independent sector hospital sites will continue, as a minimum at the current volumes, as the NHS transitions to local commissioning of additional elective activity under the new Increasing Capacity Framework, launched on 26 November 2020.

These arrangements will help to meet the aims of the national Cancer Recovery Plan to ensure sufficient capacity is in place to meet demand.

**Care Homes: Autism and Learning Disability**

**Alex Cunningham:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to meet targets to discharge people with (a) learning disabilities and (b) autism from health and care settings.

**Helen Whately:**

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to implement the Building the Right Support national plan to achieve at least a 50% reduction in the number of people with a learning disability and autistic people who are inpatients in mental health hospitals by 2023/24. The Long Term Plan commits to an extra £4.5 billion a year for primary care and community health services by 2023/24 to reduce preventable admissions to inpatient services. This includes developing seven-day specialist multidisciplinary services and crisis care.

We will provide £74 million, £62 million in England, over three years from 2020/21 to support discharge for people with a learning disability and autistic people from hospital into the community. In England, the first year of funding of £20 million has already been paid through the Community Discharge Grant to all nominated lead local authorities.

**Care Homes: Visits**

**Laura Trott:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people who have received a negative covid-19 test in a context other than the care home visitor testing programme will be able to use that test result to prove their covid-19 negative status and visit someone who is resident in a care home.

**Helen Whately:**

In most circumstances, visitors in tiers 1 to 3 wishing to undertake indoor visiting must have returned a negative test prior to the visit. This test must be taken at the care home and processed by a trained care worker.

Lateral flow devices are being provided for this purpose, where the results are available quickly so that and the visitor will take the test on arrival. Meaningful visits can only take place provided there is a negative test result.

We are providing training to all care homes as part of the rollout of lateral flow tests to process swabs, interpret results and support visitors through the testing process. This
is important to reduce the risk of false negatives where a visitor’s test comes back negative when they are actually positive.

Carers
Holly Mumby-Croft:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing key worker status to unpaid carers.

Helen Whately:
We recognise the vital role unpaid carers play, especially during this difficult period. The role of unpaid carers has been considered in the development of policies over the COVID-19 period. They have been prioritised for a range of support and exempted from household mixing rules when providing care.

We will continue to work closely with stakeholders, care organisations and the wider sector and will keep support for unpaid carers under review.

Cervical Cancer: Screening
Justin Madders:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients in England are overdue for their cervical cancer screening appointments.

Jo Churchill:
While we do not hold waiting lists for National Health Service screening programmes, NHS England and NHS Improvement are confident that no one eligible for cervical screening has missed an invitation for an appointment. Invitation and reminder letters for the NHS cervical screening programme in England continued to be issued throughout the pandemic. The intervals at which invitation and reminder letters were issued for the programme was extended on 9 April 2020. This meant that some have received an invitation later than expected. This was a temporary measure put in place to support cervical screening providers as they faced reduced capacity. From June 2020, the normal invitation and reminder parameter was restored with normal service resumed by October 2020.

Justin Madders:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with NHS Trusts to ensure that cervical cancer screening appointments remain available during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:
NHS England and NHS Improvement are committed to the continued operation of cancer services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is recognised as a priority by National Health Service trusts and screening service providers, who have been instructed that invitations and appointments should be maintained for all NHS screening services, including cervical screening and that staff and facilities should not be redeployed.
NHS England and NHS Improvement have liaised with providers of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme to ensure that cervical appointments are available for those eligible and due to be screened. NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed and issued guidance to its regional teams to support providers to continue to deliver services, including Infection Prevention and Control advice and innovations such as providing screening appointments in a greater range of venues.

Alex Davies-Jones:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that trans men are able to access cervical cancer screening tests.

Alex Davies-Jones:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that trans men receive automatic invitations for cervical cancer screening tests.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: In England general practices are responsible for inviting eligible trans men to participate in National Health Service cervical screening at the appropriate intervals and for notifying them of their results in line with NHS Cervical Screening Programme guidance. Invitations are sent out using the current call and recall information technology system.

Health England has developed guidance for trans and non-binary individuals explaining who will be invited to participate in cervical screening as well as breast screening, bowel cancer screening and abdominal aortic aneurysm screening. It includes important information about the four screening programmes and how to access additional support and advice and can be found at the following link:


It is important therefore that individuals ensure that their general practitioner records are up to date, in order to ensure they are offered appropriate screening.

Children: Health

Justin Madders:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will develop a strategy to deal with potential implications on childhood development from (a) previous, (b) existing and (c) potential future national covid-19 lockdowns.

Justin Madders:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the second covid-19 national lockdown on (a) babies and (b) young children.
Jo Churchill:
The indirect impact of COVID-19 has been significant for pregnant women and young families. Therefore, support for families is a priority, as is responding to the increased risk of hidden harms. Chief Nurses together with the Local Government Association have recommended front-line support for children and families is maintained throughout the winter, with health visitors continuing to prioritise vulnerable families.

New support for safeguarding vulnerable babies was introduced during the COVID-19 response. Cross-Government work is underway to build on lessons from early lockdown and establish best practice. In addition, the Early Years Health Adviser (the Rt hon. Member Andrea Leadsom MP) is carrying out a review. Part of the review will be to look at lessons learned from COVID-19, including minimising the risks from the pandemic to very young children.

Cholesterol: Screening

Lee Anderson: [127652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 64346 on Cholesterol: Screening, when cholesterol checks will resume.

Jo Churchill:
In 2020/21 the Quality and Outcomes Framework has continued to incentivise general practice to undertake cholesterol checks on individuals prescribed a statin and those with diabetes. There has not been any recommendation that general practice should not undertake a cholesterol check where it is clinically indicated.

The NHS Health Check prevention programme has resumed in many areas. Between July and September 2020, 41,525 people had a NHS Health Check, which includes a cholesterol test.

Community Health Services and General Practitioners

Zarah Sultana: [113658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) expand the general practice workforce and (b) increase funding for community-based locally led health services.

Jo Churchill:
We are committed to growing the general practice workforce and expanding the number of appointments available to patients, across all areas of the country. This will mean improved access to general practitioner (GP) services and bigger teams of staff providing a wider range of care options for patients outside of hospital.

GP trainee numbers have risen for the third year running, with recruitment up to 15% compared to the same point last year. From 2021, the Government is committed to funding the increase of GP training places to 4,000 a year.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have written to GPs to set out the plans for the COVID-19 vaccination programme and to communicate the availability of £150 million
of support during the winter period to expand capacity and support the delivery of GP services.

As demonstrated by the £4.5 billion of new investment for primary and community health services set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, we are committed to enabling a shift in care from hospitals to the community.

**Contraceptives**

Dame Diana Johnson:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic, published by the all party Parliamentary group on sexual and reproductive health on 10 September 2020, what plans he has to support the provision of Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) services in primary care during and after the covid-19 outbreak.

Dame Diana Johnson:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report Women's Lives, Women's Rights: Strengthening Access to Contraception Beyond the Covid-19 Pandemic, published by the all party Parliamentary group on sexual and reproductive health on 10 September 2020, what recent assessment his Department has made of the accessibility of remote contraceptive services to marginalised groups; and what steps he is planning to take to ensure that face-to-face contraceptive services continue for people who experience obstacles in accessing remote services.

Jo Churchill:  
* [Holding answer 4 November 2020]: Sexual and reproductive health services have remained open during the pandemic though some are temporarily reducing their face-to-face appointments and may only be able to see emergency or urgent cases in person. Services are maintaining access during this time through scaling up of online services including increasing eligibility through current provision or utilising a neighbours’ service for residents of another local authority. The provision of long acting reversible contraception services is particularly challenging due to access not being possible remotely.

Public Health England have recently launched the National Framework for e-Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare. This new national framework will allow local authorities and service providers to purchase an expanded range of on-line services including emergency contraception and the contraceptive pill.

The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare have published clinical advice to support ongoing provision of effective contraception which health professionals should work to, which is available at the following link:


Women need to be able to continue to access contraception during the pandemic and in line with these guidelines, where services should ensure that there is clear, up to
date signposting for patients and partner services as to what local contraceptive services are currently available, how these can be accessed and where available, to national online services.

### Coronavirus: Air Conditioning

**John Redwood:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of using (a) air extraction and (b) air cleaning systems in buildings where the covid-19 virus is present.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department has undertaken no specific assessment.

### Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

**Barbara Keeley:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people who tested positive for covid-19 and were asked to provide details of close contacts by email were contacts obtained for within 24 hours of the case details being loaded onto the contract tracing system in each week from 3 August to 13 September 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: The information requested is not available in the format requested. We publish the number of non-complex contacts who were reached and advised to self-isolate within 24 hours of the case being transferred to the contact tracing system on GOV.UK.

### Coronavirus: Death

**Chris Grayling:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of patients who tested positive for covid-19 on admission to hospital but subsequently died with a primary cause of death other than covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

This information is not collected in the format requested. Public Health England’s series counts deaths in people with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 but does not provide definitive information on the causal role of COVID-19 in relation to individual deaths.

### Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

**Apsana Begum:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Public Health England report, Covid-19: understanding the impact on BAME communities, published on 16 June 2020, what assessment his Department has made of whether (a) BAME people and (b) people of a Bangladeshi background continue to be disproportionately affected by covid-19.
Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 5 November 2020 to Question 108296.

Coronavirus: Extracurricular Activities

Justin Madders:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the scientific evidence supporting the restrictions on overnight educational stays at outdoor educational residential centres during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Evidence from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies supports that the main risk of transmission of COVID-19 is through people having close contacts with others, especially those outside their household. They have stated that the most effective method to tackle this is to maintain social distancing to break the chains of transmission. By closing overnight settings, such as residential camps, we are reducing all settings where people are able to mix and therefore transmit the virus. The new variant, which is up to 70% more transmissible, means that this requirement to limit social interaction is more urgent.

Coronavirus: Greater London

Anne Marie Morris:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Nightingale hospital in London will be open and working at full capacity.

Edward Argar:

NHS England confirmed on the 11 January that the Nightingale hospital in London is now open and will be proving step-down care, freeing up beds in existing hospitals for those who need them.

Janet Daby:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase covid-19 testing capacity in London.

Helen Whately:

We are increasing our testing capacity, both through current swab testing and new, rapid lateral flow tests to cut the spread of COVID-19 nationwide.

The United Kingdom's daily testing capacity passed 500,000 on 31 October. Testing capacity in the UK across all pillars between 29 October and 4 November was at 4,367,049 tests - an increase of 21% compared to the previous week.

Coronavirus: Kidney Diseases

Dan Jarvis:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk to patients that receive in-centre haemodialysis of contracting covid-19 while undergoing their treatment.
Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence’s (NICE) ‘COVID-19 rapid guideline: dialysis service delivery’ which was updated 11 September 2020, sets out guidance for clinicians to maximise the safety of patients on dialysis during the pandemic. It contains guidance on continuing, where safe and necessary, dialysis provision both at home and in dialysis units while making the best use of the National Health Service resources and matching the capacity of dialysis services to patient needs if these become limited, or the schedule is altered, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If changes to the dialysis schedule are needed decisions regarding the needs of individual patients should be made on a case by case basis. The guidance also contains additional recommendations to minimise risk of transmission to patients, including when travelling into the dialysis unit and minimising time spent in waiting rooms. The guidance is can be found at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng160

The care of renal patients during the COVID-19 pandemic is supported by local Renal Clinical Networks and they have access to weekly data on COVID-19 infections to assist in overseeing access to dialysis in all settings.

Coronavirus: Mink

Christian Wakeford: [113279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on human health of mink fur farming since the outbreak of a coronavirus variant linked to Danish mink farms.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has made no assessment of the effect on human health of mink fur farming since the outbreak of a coronavirus variant linked to Danish mink farms.

Fur farming has been banned in the United Kingdom since 2000.

Coronavirus: Non-ionizing Radiation

John Redwood: [133608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of using UV light as a cleaning agent to tackle covid-19 infection.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has made no specific assessment.

Coronavirus: Quarantine

Kim Johnson: [113679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is the Government's policy to provide an equivalent level of support for people shielding during the November
2020 covid-19 lockdown as was provided to those people during the covid-19 lockdown announced in March 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**
During the national November restrictions, the Government has provided advice to those identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. This includes staying at home as much as possible, including not attending a workplace, shops or pharmacies. Alongside this advice, the Government has launched a support package that will run to 2 December, providing over £30 million of funding to local authorities. This includes access to supermarket delivery slots and free medicines delivery. Those unable to work from home may be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay and the Government has also extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough) until March 2021.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people can also continue to access support from local charities, organisations and NHS Volunteer Responders if needed. As well as helping with shopping and medicines delivery, NHS Volunteer Responders can help with a regular, friendly phone call and transport to and from medical appointments.

### Coronavirus: Screening

**Munira Wilson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of credit agency reference checks on the proportion of people eligible to receive a covid-19 home testing kit.

**Helen Whately:**

In order to request a home test, a user must first verify their identity using a service provided by TransUnion. Identity verification is built into the process in order to minimise the risk of fraudulent ordering.

TransUnion does not collect or retain data on individuals that book tests, other than a record of processing in order to meet regulatory obligations. All the data is processed and stored within the United Kingdom in line with their privacy policy.

If an individual is not willing or able to undertake the identity verification provided by TransUnion, they should call 119 for further assistance or seek to book an appointment at a regional test site or mobile testing unit, where a member of staff will confirm their identity in person.

**Caroline Lucas:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance is being provided to Resilience Forums on public communications on what to do in the event that an individual has covid-19 symptoms and laboratories have reached their capacity and Pillar 2 testing in lower risk areas is suspended.

**Helen Whately:**

[Holding answer 21 September 2020]: The United Kingdom’s daily COVID-19 testing capacity passed the 500,000 mark on 31 October. As a result of partnerships with National Health Service and university labs, new cutting-edge testing innovations and
a recruitment drive boosting the UK’s diagnostic network, NHS Test and Trace has rapidly expanded testing capability ahead of winter to 519,770.

We are targeting testing capacity at the areas that need it most, including those where there is an outbreak and prioritising at-risk groups. We continue to review processes and ensure that the right level of resources is available to match demand on the test and trace service.

Sarah Owen:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the viability of moving the supply of covid-19 tests to areas of the UK with unmet demand.

Helen Whately:

[holding answer 21 September 2020]: We are expanding capacity further, having already met our testing capacity target of 500,000 tests a day by the end of October. More laboratories are joining the network and we are investing in new technology to process results faster. We are automating parts of the process, installing new machines and hiring more permanent staff.

We continue to target testing capacity at the areas that need it most, including those where there is an outbreak, and prioritising at-risk groups.

Drew Hendry:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the average cost of a covid-19 test when using (a) commercial partner and (b) NHS-owned laboratories.

Helen Whately:

[holding answer 21 September 2020]: The information requested is commercially sensitive. The cost will also vary depending on the delivery channel used, the logistics involved and the laboratory that processes the test results.

Jim Shannon:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase covid-19 testing capacity.

Helen Whately:

We are increasing our testing capacity, both through current swab testing and new, rapid lateral flow tests to cut the spread of COVID-19 nationwide.

The United Kingdom’s daily testing capacity passed the 500,000 on 31 October. Testing capacity in the UK across all pillars between 29 October and 4 November was at 4,367,049 tests - an increase of 21% compared to the previous week.

Tom Randall:

What steps his Department is taking to increase Covid-19 testing capacity.
Helen Whately:

[Hold answer 5 October 2020] We are increasing our testing capacity, both through current swab testing and new, rapid lateral flow tests to cut the spread of COVID-19 nationwide.

The United Kingdom’s daily testing capacity passed 500,000 on 31 October. Testing capacity in the UK across all pillars between 29 October and 4 November was at 4,367,049 tests - an increase of 21% compared to the previous week.

Coronavirus: Students

Rachael Maskell:  

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the level of compliance of students with advice to use a (a) covid-19 home testing kit and (b) local covid-19 testing centre.

Helen Whately:

Universities should ensure that all staff and students are aware of all their options to access a test if required. Affected universities are providing the kits to students isolating in their households or halls of residence to test themselves with the goal of containing the outbreak within their campuses.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Stella Creasy:  

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation: advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination, published on 2 December 2020, whether the capacity of clinically extremely vulnerable patients to shield has been included in the modelling determining the priority level for that group of people to receive the vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

[Hold answer 10 December 2020] The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) reviewed evidence, including from OpenSAFELY, QCOVID, and mathematical modelling from the University of Warwick, when determining the priority groups for COVID-19 vaccine. Current evidence indicates that the single greatest risk for mortality from COVID-19 is increasing age and that the risk increases rapidly with age. The modelling work by Warwick University is available at the following link: https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.09.22.20194183v2

Many of those who are clinically extremely vulnerable are in the oldest age groups and will be among the first to receive the vaccine. The JCVI recognises that individuals considered extremely clinically vulnerable have been shielding for much of the pandemic and this meant that available data are likely to underestimate the risk in this group. Considering data from the first wave of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom, the overall risk of mortality for clinically extremely vulnerable younger adults was estimated to be roughly the same as the risk to persons aged 70–74 years old. The prioritisation is based on the absolute risk of mortality, which evidence indicates is
higher in those over 75 years of age, than in those considered clinically extremely vulnerable.

The capacity of clinically extremely vulnerable patients to shield and the effect on the families of clinically extremely vulnerable patients were not included in the mathematical modelling considered by the JCVI. This was however considered in the decision to prioritise clinically extremely vulnerable individuals alongside those aged 70-74 years of age. Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are in the third priority group for vaccination, as advised by the JCVI.

Andrew Rosindell:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that staff at covid-19 vaccination centres are equipped with full personal protective equipment.

Jo Churchill:

As the largest vaccination programme in the United Kingdom’s history begins, we have worked closely with the National Health Service to understand the personal protective equipment (PPE) needs of the vaccination programme and are confident we can provide a continuous supply to support the rollout in the coming months.

Since February 2020, we have ordered almost 32 billion items of PPE. The majority of this PPE has either been delivered or is en route. By December 2020, we had built a four-month stockpile of all COVID-19 critical PPE, with a tremendous contribution from UK manufacturers. This enables the Government to provide a continuous supply of PPE to the frontline throughout the winter.

Coronavirus: Vitamins

Jim Shannon:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) the Royal College of Nursing and (b) other bodies on the potential effect of vitamins in protecting against covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Vitamin C is under evaluation as a treatment for COVID-19 in the REMAP-CAP clinical trial. Patients in this trial are hospitalised with proven COVID-19 and have been admitted to intensive care for non-invasive or invasive ventilatory support or for cardiovascular support.

Vitamin D is not currently included in any ongoing clinical trials in the United Kingdom. However, there are ongoing research studies to assess its use in reducing risk of COVID-19 in those who are vitamin D deficient, its use as a prognostic marker in COVID-19 and data on vitamin use is being captured in a COVID-19 registry. There are guidelines use of vitamins, specifically vitamin D use as a nutritional supplement. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence have issued specific guidance and evidence summary relating to vitamin D.

Coronavirus: Wansbeck
Ian Lavery:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) mean and (b) median average distance is that people from Wansbeck constituency have had to travel to access a covid-19 test.

Helen Whately:

The Government does not publish data in the format requested.

Dementia: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to draft explicit guidance for carers of people with dementia to ensure that dementia patients are able to receive the physical and mental support needed from family and friends without risking infringement of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Helen Whately:

We recognise the crucial role that unpaid carers play in supporting people with dementia, especially during the pandemic. Our guidance for unpaid carers published on 8 April is designed to apply across a range of conditions.

In addition, on 2 December the Government updated the local tiering regulations to allow carers in all three tiers to arrange for another family member or friend to provide respite care and give carers a break. The new tiering regulations also allow individuals caring for someone with a disability at home to form a support bubble with another household.

On 1 December, we also published updated guidance to enable more meaningful indoor visits to take place for care home residents across all tiers. This is enabled by providing testing to visitors, which was available before Christmas.

NHS England and NHS Improvement’s guidance ‘Visiting healthcare inpatient settings during the COVID-19 pandemic’ states that there should be reasonable adjustments to allow certain groups of people, including people with dementia, to have a family member or friend visit them if not being present would cause the patient to be distressed. This applies to all inpatient settings.

We commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research on how to manage or mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on people with dementia and their carers living in the community. Concise advice was produced for people with dementia and their carers respectively. This is available at the following link:

http://www.idealproject.org.uk/covid/

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has published advice on COVID-19 and dementia in care homes in collaboration with NHS England and NHS Improvement aimed at supporting residents, carers and homes which is available at the following link:

Dementia: Health Services

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made against each of the commitments set out in the Prime Minister’s Challenge on dementia 2020: Implementation plan.

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisations have received funding to deliver commitments set out in the Prime Minister’s Challenge on dementia 2020; and how much funding each organisation has received.

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether funding provided to organisations to deliver commitments set out in the Prime Minister’s Challenge on dementia 2020 plan was issued for tender.

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what process was applied to awarding funding to organisations that are delivering the commitments set out in the Prime Minister’s Challenge on dementia 2020 plan.

Helen Whately:

In 2018 we undertook a review of the progress made in implementing the Challenge on Dementia 2020. 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:


The Challenge contained the commitment to spend £300 million on dementia research over the five years to March 2020. This commitment was delivered a year early with £341 million spent on dementia research over the four years to 31 March 2019.

Dementia: West Yorkshire

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of hospital beds are currently occupied by people with dementia; and what the average length of stay for patients with dementia is for each NHS Hospital within West Yorkshire.

Helen Whately:

Information on what proportion of hospital beds are currently occupied by people with dementia is not available.

NHS Digital has provided the following table showing the mean and median length of stay for finished discharge episodes (FDEs) with any diagnosis of dementia from
hospitals within Yorkshire and Humber Government Office Region for the year 2019/20. This data is a count of discharge episodes where the patient left hospital after a period of treatment. It is not a count of patients as an individual may have had more than one episode of care which ended in the period covered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NHS Provider</th>
<th>Discharges (FDEs)</th>
<th>Discharges with valid length of stay</th>
<th>Mean length of stay (Days)</th>
<th>Median length of stay (Days)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>4,555</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,145</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airedale NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>1,560</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>2,940</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust</td>
<td>2,275</td>
<td>2,275</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leeds And York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>3,970</td>
<td>3,970</td>
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<td>2,585</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doncaster And Bassetlaw</td>
<td>3,995</td>
<td>3,995</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS PROVIDER</td>
<td>DISCHARGES (FDEs)</td>
<td>DISCHARGES WITH VALID LENGTH OF STAY</td>
<td>MEAN LENGTH OF STAY (DAYS)</td>
<td>MEDIAN LENGTH OF STAY (DAYS)</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>3,505</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Calderdale And Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust</td>
<td>3,155</td>
<td>3,155</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotherham Doncaster And South Humber NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<td>115</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust</td>
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<td>South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital
Dental Services: Children

Peter Gibson:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 lockdown measures on child oral health in the North East; and what steps he is taking to improve levels of child oral health in that area.

Jo Churchill:

No such assessment has been made.

The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to increase levels of service as fast as possible, taking into account the ongoing infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements. Of paramount importance must continue to be the safety of dentists, their teams and patients.

Children living in Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead and North Tyneside continue to benefit from the existing fluoridation of local water supplies. Water fluoridation is known to reduce the prevalence and severity of tooth decay and reduce dental health inequalities.

Dental Services: Coronavirus

Bob Blackman:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that dental practices are allowed to remain open during the remainder of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Dental practices have been able to open for face to face National Health Service care, including routine care, from 8 June. There are over 6,000 dental practices holding an NHS contract in England. Dental practices will be able to remain open by continuing to follow the Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement infection prevention and control guidance.

In addition to the reopening of face to face care in high street dental practices, over 600 urgent dental care centres set up at the height of the pandemic remain open to ensure that dental treatment needed urgently can be accessed.

Dentistry

James Wild:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of dentistry school places that will be required in each of the next five years.

Jo Churchill:

In England, the number of dentistry school places is regulated by the Government and controlled through annual intake targets operated by the Office for Students. For entry in 2019, the target intake was set at 809 places. This year the Government temporarily lifted this cap for students who completed A-Levels in 2020 and who had an offer from a university in England to study dentistry subject to their grades. This ensured a place this year or next for every eligible student.
The Government’s current view is that the cap otherwise should remain unchanged over the next five years. We are committed to ensuring that the number of dental school places are in line with England’s workforce requirements and continue to monitor the effectiveness of current arrangements with Health Education England and other partners.

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

**Andy Slaughter:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 103453 tabled on 14 October 2020, Question 123542 tabled on 30 November 2020 and Question 130657 tabled on 15 December 2021 by the Hon. Member for Hammersmith.

**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.

**Diabetes: Health Services**

**Fleur Anderson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the disproportionate effect of diabetes in areas with greater health inequalities.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 2 December 2020]*: We recognise that diabetes is a disease that can affect anyone and there is increased prevalence in deprived areas. The NHS Long Term plan has committed to providing a targeted support offer and access to weight management services in primary care is available for people with a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes and/or hypertension, with a Body Mass Index over 30, which is adjusted appropriately for ethnicity.

NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise that obesity is strongly associated with deprivation and the Weight Management Innovation Platform will target higher levels of tailored support for people from deprived communities to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

**Disinfectants**

**Stephen Hammond:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Health and Safety Executive’s updated guidance for manufacturers and suppliers on surface disinfectant; and whether his Department
plans to include similar recommendations in its healthcare guidance for the 2020 festive period.

**Jo Churchill:**
While there has been no specific assessment, Public Health England has published guidance on how to disinfect and sanitise non-healthcare settings, including offices and public spaces, which is available at the following link:


The Department has published guidance to support the ‘Hands. Face. Space’ public information campaign for winter 2020. This guidance is available at the following link:


**Drugs: UK Trade with EU**

**Alan Brown:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, when the Working Group on Medicinal Products is due to first meet.

**Jo Churchill:**

As the agreement has only just been signed, no decisions have yet been made about the number of members nor the make-up of the working group. We will shortly contact the Commission to discuss and agree the overall aims of the group, its attendees and meeting frequency.

**Alan Brown:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, what the selection process will be for the appointment of UK Government representatives to the Working Group on Medicinal Products.

**Jo Churchill:**

As the agreement has only just been signed, no decisions have yet been made about the number of members nor the make-up of the working group. We will shortly contact the Commission to discuss and agree the overall aims of the group, its attendees and meeting frequency.

**European Food Safety Authority**

**Deidre Brock:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish details on the UK’s regime to replace the role of the European Food Safety Authority.

**Jo Churchill:**

United Kingdom food and feed safety and hygiene law lays down the principles, requirements and procedures that underpin decision-making in matters of food and
Since 1 January 2021 the Food Standards Agency (FSA), alongside Food Standards Scotland, has been responsible for providing many of the risk analysis functions previously undertaken by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and European Commission, with Government ministers making the final decisions, ensuring that the high standard of food safety and consumer protection we enjoy in the UK is maintained. Information on the UK food and feed risk analysis process is provided on the FSA’s website.

**European Food Safety Authority: Northern Ireland**

Deidre Brock: [132981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which body will conduct risk assessments for Northern Ireland after the UK no longer has access to the European Food Safety Authority after 1 January 2020.

Jo Churchill:

Since 1 January 2021 the Food Standards Agency (FSA), alongside Food Standards Scotland, has been responsible for providing many of the risk analysis functions for the United Kingdom, with ministers in the UK is maintained.

Although the FSA is responsible for the safety of food and feed across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, European Union law that applies in Northern Ireland under the NI Protocol (NIP) will generally not be subject to a risk analysis by the FSA in addition to the analysis carried out by the EU’s risk management process.

When we consider an issue through the UK risk analysis process, we will continue to consider the interests of consumers in Northern Ireland, whilst recognising the continued application of the EU’s risk management process in Northern Ireland under the NIP.

**Exercise Cygnus**

Tim Farron: [113044]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Written Statement of 20 October 2020, HCWS526 on Report on Exercise on Pandemic preparedness, if he will publish (a) when and (b) how the Government implemented each of the 22 recommendations of Exercise Cygnus.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 November 2020]: The Government accepted all 22 recommendations of Exercise Cygnus and actions have been taken forward on all them as part of our pandemic preparedness plans, working across Government and with stakeholders. Specifically, these actions included:

- working across the whole of Government and with the devolved administrations to develop draft legislation to support the response to a future influenza pandemic; and
- improving plans within health and care sectors to flex systems and resources to expand beyond normal capacity levels.
Due to the nature of Exercise Cygnus, we have no plans to publish further details of how and when these actions have been taken forward as releasing the information could prejudice the safeguarding of national security.

**Eyesight: Testing**

*Justin Madders:*  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many eye tests are available for NHS patients in (a) England and (b) Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency in comparison to the same time last year.

*Jo Churchill:*  
Data is not available in the format requested.

**Future Social Care Coalition**

*Barbara Keeley:*  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the launch of the Future Social Care Coalition, if he will take steps to (a) improve the (i) career structure and (ii) employment conditions and (b) increase (i) funding for skills training and (ii) pay of social care workers.

*Helen Whately:*  
*Holding answer 1 December 2020:* The Government recognises the importance of training and development for social workers and commissions a range of programmes to support the skills and knowledge of the workforce and opportunities for career progression. This includes over £11 million of funding in 2020/21 for the Workforce Development Fund which supports vocational learning for the care sector. The Government does not determine care workers’ pay or employment conditions. We have given councils access to an additional £1 billion of funding for adult social care. The funding is intended to help councils to meet rising costs of social care, including rising pay. In any event, all care workers over 18 years old should be paid at least the National Living Wage or if over 25 years old, the National Minimum Wage.

**Gender Recognition: Children and Young People**

*Crispin Blunt:*  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) his Department and (b) NHS England undertook an equalities impact assessment of the amendments to NHS England’s service specification for Gender Identity Development Services for children and adolescents published on 1 December 2020; and if he will make a statement.

*Crispin Blunt:*  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) his Department and (b) NHS England undertook an equalities impact assessment of the amendments to NHS England’s service specification for Gender Identity Development Services for children and adolescents published on 1 December 2020; and if he will make a statement.
Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 December 2020]: No equalities impact assessment was undertaken by the Department or NHS England and NHS Improvement.

NHS England and NHS Improvement took immediate action following the High Court Ruling on 1 December. Their amendment to the service specification for gender identity services for children and young people was published on the day of the judgement in order to protect patients and clinicians given the significant safeguarding, clinical and legal issues raised. The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust will be conducting a clinical risk assessment of every young person who is immediately affected by the decision.

Gender Recognition: Clinics

Crispin Blunt:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the oral response of the Minister for Women and Equalities to the Urgent Question from the hon. Member for Reigate of 24 September 2020, Official Report, column 1137, on the Gender Recognition Act Consultation, whether the three clinics announced by the Minister for Women and Equalities in her Written Ministerial Statement of 22 September 2020 were originally identified as pilot clinics by his Department.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 October 2020]: In 2018 a new service specification was developed for gender identity clinics, this new specification concluded that access to specialist interventions by trained healthcare professionals was needed within primary care and other local health settings.

Three new clinics were announced earlier this year. The new services will provide the range of services available from an established gender dysphoria clinic. The clinics are based in London, Manchester, and Cheshire and Merseyside. The first of these services began in July 2020 in London. These services will be evaluated as pilots over a period of up to three years to determine how they could be expanded nationally.

These services were referenced by the Minister for Women and Equalities in her response of 24 September.

Gender Recognition: Surgery

Neil O'Brien:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many gender reassignment and gender affirmation operations were carried out by the NHS in each year since 2000 for which data are available.

Jo Churchill:

The following table shows the number of finished consultant episodes (FCE) where a main or secondary procedure for gender reassignment has been recorded for each year from 2000-01 to 2019-20.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>FCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>342</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,407</td>
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Notes:

1. A FCE is a continuous period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider.

2. Figures so not represent the number of different patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the same stay in hospital or in different stays in the same year.
Gender Recognition: Young People

Caroline Lucas: [133778]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide young people and their families with access to targeted mental health support while their care is under review after the ruling on the prescription of puberty blockers in the Bell v Tavistock case.

Jo Churchill:

The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) is primarily a psycho-social service providing extensive support to children and young people facing issues pertaining to the development of their gender identity. NHS England are working closely with the GIDS to ensure they continue to have the capacity to offer mental health support for those affected by the ruling.

NHS England has reassured the families of children who are currently receiving puberty blockers that there are no plans to immediately withdraw any individual from their current treatment plan. A clinical review will be held for every such individual and, if the clinical recommendation is that the individual remain on puberty blockers, an application of ‘best interest’ will be made to the Court.

General Practitioners: Private Sector

Esther McVey: [134424]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of private GPs working in England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 13 January 2021]: The Department does not hold this information centrally. General practitioner practices are independent contractors who work under contract with NHS England to provide patients with National Health Service primary medical services.

Health Professions: Labour Turnover

Sir John Hayes: [133652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on increasing (a) recruitment and (b) retention of (i) doctors and (ii) nurses.

Helen Whately:

‘We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/2021 – action for us all’ sets out actions to expand and develop our workforce by retaining staff for longer and building on the renewed interest in National Health Service careers. The next phase of the NHS People Plan will focus on workforce growth and ensuring it has the right skills mix in place for a flexible and modern NHS.

Through its ‘looking after our people - retention programme’, which launched in the summer of 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement are supporting employers and managers to value, support and retain their staff, both clinical and non-clinical. This is achieved through a new employer portal of guidance, best practice and direct support
for systems and organisations across each of the domains of the people promise. Flexible working and the health and wellbeing of staff remain a key focus of the retention initiatives.

Over the year to September 2020 the number of nurses has increased by 13,313 and the number of NHS Hospital and Community Health Service doctors by 6,030 NHS Digital published leaver rates and since September 2019 the leaver rate has fallen from 10.9% to 9.6% for nurses and 6.7% to 6.1% for doctors, excluding junior doctors.

Health Services
Anne Marie Morris:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS England plans to release a Highly Specialised Services report for (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[holding answer 7 December 2020]: The NHS England Highly Specialised Services report for services delivered in 2019 is currently in its final stages of sign-off and is expected to be published at the beginning of 2021. Publication of the report has been delayed due to other documents having to be prioritised for publication during the COVID-19 period.

The report for 2020 is in the process of being prepared and is expected to be published by the end of the financial year.

Health: Disadvantaged
Dan Carden:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the creation of a cross-government strategy on reducing health inequalities as part of the Government’s covid-19 recovery strategy.

Jo Churchill:

[holding answer 3 December 2020]: There are no plans for a cross-Government strategy on reducing health inequalities, as a result of COVID-19 or as part of the ongoing approach to tackling the virus. At each stage of its COVID-19 response, the Government has sought to minimise the harm on people’s wellbeing, livelihoods and physical and mental health. We recognise that some groups have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and addressing these impacts is a priority as we continue to respond to the pandemic and develop interventions to support those affected.

Health: North of England
Alexander Stafford:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has for increasing investment in place-based public health in local authorities in order to tackle (a) health inequalities, (b) mental health issues and (c) deprivation in the North of England.
Jo Churchill:
The public health grant to local authorities in England was £3.279 billion in 2020/21. Local authority funding through the public health grant for 2021/22 will be maintained, meaning local authorities can continue to invest in prevention and essential frontline health services including support for public mental health. It is for local authorities to make funding decisions for public health services based on local population priorities, in line with the conditions attached to the grant including having regard to reducing health inequalities.

Horses: Slaughterhouses

Chris Evans:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many soliped and equidae were slaughtered for meat in UK abattoirs in each month of 2020.

Jo Churchill:
The Food Standards Agency holds the following data. For each month of 2020 the following numbers of soliped and equidae were slaughtered for meat in United Kingdom abattoirs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH / YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBERS (THROUGHPUT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2020</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2020</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2020</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers are recorded under one heading of 'soliped'.

No soliped or equidae were slaughtered in Northern Ireland in 2020.

Hospitals: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish (a) civil contingency plans and (b) fire safety strategies for NHS field hospitals.

Edward Argar:
The civil contingency plans for all National Health Service-funded organisation, including NHS field hospitals, are set out in the NHS England Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Framework. This strategic national
framework containing, principles for health emergency preparedness, resilience and response for NHS England at all levels including NHS provider organisations, providers of NHS-funded care, clinical commissioning groups, general practitioners and other primary and community care organisations. The Framework is available at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/eprr/gf/

The fire safety strategies for NHS provider organisations, including NHS field hospitals are not published because of the potential security risk.

### In Vitro Fertilisation

**Munira Wilson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to standardise IVF access criteria across Clinical Commissioning Groups in England.

**Helen Whately:**

[Holding answer 17 November 2020]: Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services including fertility services that meet the needs of their whole population.

In respect of National Health Service fertility services, the Government have been consistently clear that we expect CCGs to commission fertility services in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence’s guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

**Munira Wilson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to reduce discrepancies in access to IVF treatment across CCGs in England.

**Helen Whately:**

[Holding answer 18 November 2020]: Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services including fertility services that meet the needs of their whole population.

In respect of National Health Service fertility services, the Government have been consistently clear that we expect CCGs to commission fertility services in line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence’s guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

### Influenza: Vaccination

**Alex Norris:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 9 October 2020 to Questions 91703 and 91704 on Influenza: Vaccination, how many additional trained workforce personnel are being made available to local providers (a) across England and (b) by provider.
Jo Churchill:

[Holdiing answer 4 November 2020]: 36,390 additional trained workforce personnel are being made available to local providers across England, through regional commissioners. The additional workforce is available through the National Health Service ‘bring back scheme’ with around 34,000 health professionals available nationally; general practitioner returners with 1,490 available nationally; and foundation dentists, with 900 available nationally. These individuals are not made available on a provider by provider basis so data by provider is not available.

Daniel Zeichner:

[113127]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether informal carers are eligible to receive a flu vaccine in winter 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

The Annual Flu Letter 2020/21 Update letter published on 5 August sets out the eligibility criteria for the flu vaccination programme. The letter is available at the following link:


Under the flu vaccination programme individuals who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill are eligible to receive flu vaccination.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[113140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the supply of flu vaccinations for all people eligible for NHS flu vaccinations in Bristol West.

Jo Churchill:

General practitioners (GPs) and community pharmacists are responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults, with deliveries phased through the season. The Department has procured additional doses of seasonal flu vaccine to ensure more flu vaccines are available this winter. GPs, community pharmacists and trusts who have exhausted their own supply are now able to order from this central stock.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to ensure that local providers are supported to meet increased demand for the flu vaccination this winter. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has granted dispensation to allow the movement of vaccines locally between practices and other National Health Service provider organisations this season, to help address local shortages.

Apsana Begum:

[113242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many flu vaccines have been administered as at 1 November 2020; and what comparative assessment he has
made of the level of uptake of that vaccine in (a) 2020-21, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2018-19 as at November 2020 in each of those years.

**Jo Churchill:**
Public Health England (PHE) publishes weekly provisional flu vaccine uptake reports, which give the proportions of those eligible who have been vaccinated and is available at the following link:


Data for week ending 1 November 2020 shows vaccine coverage is the highest it has ever been at this stage of the season for those aged 65 years and over and for two and three year olds. In at risk groups, flu vaccination coverage is higher than this time last year but at comparable levels to previous seasons. For pregnant women it is lower than in previous seasons.

The following table shows vaccine uptake data in September and October in each flu season between 2018/19 and 2020/21, in England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATIENT GROUP</th>
<th>VACCINE UPTAKE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020/21</td>
<td>2019/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged 65 years or older</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged six months to under 65 years in risk groups</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged two years old</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged three years old</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes:

1. Data is provisional and from a sample of 87.6% of all automated general practitioner (GP) practices participating in the 2020/21 sentinel survey.

2. Data for two and three-year olds is from a sample of 97.1% of all automated GP practices participating in the 2020/21 sentinel Childhood flu GP survey.

Monthly flu vaccine uptake data, which includes estimates of the numbers vaccinated, is produced by PHE. The first monthly data will be published on 26 November and will include clinical commissioning group and local authority level
data. Monthly uptake data will also be published for frontline healthcare workers and school-aged children.

Daisy Cooper:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to update the Immunisation against infectious disease guidance to GPs on influenza vaccination for people on immunosuppressants.

Jo Churchill:

There are currently no plans to update guidance on influenza vaccination for people on immunosuppressants. The Green Book chapter on influenza vaccination is reviewed on a regular basis, information on vaccination for people on immunosuppressants can also be found in chapter 6 of the Green Book. This is available at the following link:


Alex Norris:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the take-up of winter flu vaccinations was in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020 to date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 December 2020]: The following tables show the vaccine uptake data for 2018/19 and 2019/20 flu seasons in eligible groups and in children by school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATIENT GROUP</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged 65 years or older</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged six months to under 65 years in risk groups</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged two years old</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients aged three years old</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare workers</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:

### Influenza vaccine uptake (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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### Learning Disability and Autism: Coronavirus

#### Helen Hayes:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that autistic people and people with learning disabilities living in residential care, supported living and hospital settings are able to access advocacy support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

#### Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 November 2020]: The application of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Mental Health Act 1983 remains the same during the pandemic and we have made it clear in our guidance that face-to-face visits by professionals and advocates remain an important part of the legal framework. Professionals and advocates should work closely with hospitals and care homes to decide if visiting in person is appropriate, and how to do this safely.

The duty to provide advocacy services remains in place under the Care Act 2014. We are taking steps to strengthen advocacy and sharpen our oversight of provision, working with principle social workers to ensure the Care Act, the Ethical Framework and its key principles remain at the front of practice. Local authorities are responsible for funding advocacy services. We have provided access to £4.6 billion to local authorities through un-ringfenced grants so they can respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Rosie Cooper:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether GPs or NHS 111 are responsible for issuing covid-19 sick notes to patients; what guidance his Department has issued to the (a) NHS and (b) GPs on that matter; and what assessment he has made of consistency of advice given to patients by the (i) NHS and (ii) GPs on that matter.

Jo Churchill:

A fit note can only be provided by a registered medical practitioner, usually a general practitioner (GP) or hospital doctor. GPs have been advised that they should continue to issue fit notes for health conditions that impact on a person’s ability to work.

The isolation note is a temporary service delivered online by NHS 111 to provide people with evidence for their employer of their need to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19.

The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care have worked collaboratively throughout the pandemic with the British Medical Association (BMA) to provide advice to GPs and to ensure that the isolation note guidance is updated in line with Government advice. The role of both the fit note and the isolation note service has been clarified and is also included in the guidance on the NHS.UK and GOV.UK websites. Specific advice for GPs has been published on the BMA website as part of their response to coronavirus, which was developed with input from the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Work and Pensions continue to work with the BMA, employers and GPs to understand the issues being faced during the pandemic and to offer support that enable people to access the services they require.

Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 13 October, 12 November and 25 November 2020 on his constituent, reference JB29438.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 January 2021]: We are working 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.

Mental Health Services: Children and Young People
Taiwo Owatemi:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase the number of Tier 4 beds available for inpatients within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement commission a range of inpatient beds for children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to reducing the reliance upon and need for these beds by further investing in and developing a range of community services for children and young people with more complex needs.

Additional funding has been made available to support a number of schemes that aim to either reduce the need for admission or reduce the length of stay. NHS England remains committed to considering opportunities to increase and improve their inpatient provision to meet the needs of the local population.

Mental Health Services: Coronavirus

Munira Wilson:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure NHS mental health services remain open during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown in England.

Munira Wilson:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure referrals to (a) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and (b) Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services are maintained during the 2021 covid-19 national lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holdings answer 13 January 2021]: Children and young people’s mental health services will continue to remain open and accept new referrals, ensuring children, adults and parents can access appropriate support whether through face to face appointments where it is safe to do so, over the telephone or via digital means. Talking therapies delivered by Improved Access to Psychological therapies services will continue to be made available remotely so people can access help safely from home.

The option of face-to-face support will be provided to people with severe mental illnesses across all ages, where care can be provided in COVID-19 secure settings. The National Health Service has made all-age urgent mental health helplines available 24 hours a day, seven days a week across the country. We are also raising awareness of the resources and guidance available to adults, children and parents and carers through our Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Plan for COVID-19 and the ‘Every Mind Matters’ platform.

Mental Health Services: Finance
Munira Wilson:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much additional funding the Department has allocated to NHS mental health services in England to manage any additional demands as a result of the covid-19 outbreak in (a) 2021-22, (b) 2022-23 and (c) 2023-24.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[ Holding answer 13 January 2021: ] As part of the Spending Review 2020, we have announced that the National Health Service will receive around an additional £500 million next year, to address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need and invest in the workforce.

Our investment in mental health services in England is set to rise by an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24.

Mental Illness: Drugs

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of the use of antipsychotics in care homes.

Helen Whately:

The information is not available in the format requested. NHS Digital receive information on the prescribing of antipsychotic medication for people with dementia and without a diagnosis of psychosis. However, it does not include the location of those receiving the prescription and, therefore cannot identify those in care homes.

Mount Vernon Hospital Northwood: Cancer

Gareth Thomas:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress has been made in upgrading the cancer facilities at Mount Vernon Hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The cancer service is not clinically sustainable on its present site and a review is underway to relocate the services. Final options are expected to be decided in April 2021 before the public consultation which is expected to start from June 2021 and a decision expected next autumn.

NHS: Holiday Leave

Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS staff in London have had their leave cancelled during (a) December 2020 and (b) January 2021 to date.

Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of cancelling leave for NHS staff on (a) their mental and physical health, (b) their well-being, (c) staff retention and (d) patient safety.
Helen Whately:
The Department does not hold the information requested.

Taking regular annual leave is important to support staff retention, health and wellbeing and patient safety. Employers have a duty of care to staff to ensure staff have reasonable opportunities to take annual leave to rest and recuperate and, whenever possible, leave requests should be approved. However, the National Health Service is continuing to face challenges as it responds to the pandemic, so there is less flexibility as to when leave can be taken. Employers across the NHS are working hard to maximise available workforce capacity, including use of bank staff and returners to maintain quality of care as far as possible and enable staff to take leave. The NHS People Plan published in July 2020 includes a commitment to enhanced occupational and mental health support for NHS staff.

NHS: Protective Clothing
Fleur Anderson:
[134214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason there is a shortage of scrubs in hospitals and vaccination clinics; and who holds the contracts for scrubs provision.

Edward Argar:
NHS Supply Chain are the main provider of consumables and equipment into the National Health Service, which includes scrubs. It contracts with 14 suppliers on a framework contract to supply scrubs to NHS trusts. NHS Supply Chain report that none of their suppliers have received large scale enquiries which they are unable to fulfil and that all orders can be fulfilled within reasonable lead times.

NHS: Recruitment
Anne Marie Morris:
[114896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle workforce shortages in (a) rheumatology and (b) other specialty workforce shortages in the NHS people plan.

Helen Whately:
[Holding answer 17 November 2020]: ‘We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/2021 – action for us all’ sets out a plan to expand capacity and skills in the workforce. This includes additional training support for shortage specialties and measures to improve wellbeing and retention.

NHS Digital statistics, as at July 2020, showed that there were almost 37% more full time equivalent rheumatology consultants and almost 14% more rheumatology trainees in National Health Service trusts and clinical commissioning groups since 2010.

To further increase the supply of doctors we have increased the number of medical school places by 1,500 over the last three years, and this year we have seen more medical students in training than at any other time in NHS history. Health Education England is also investing in an extra 250 foundation year two posts in 2020/21, to
enable the doctors filling them to grow the pipeline into psychiatry, cancer, general practice and other priority areas.

### Opiates

**Ben Lake:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the supplier of Pethidine medication on increasing availability of that medication in the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

There are two suppliers of pethidine 50 milligram tablets and we are aware that both suppliers experienced supply issues during 2020 due to manufacturing difficulties.

One of the suppliers now has stock available and does not anticipate any further issues. Supply should be sufficient to cover entire market demand.

The Department has worked closely with both suppliers during this time to try and expedite resupply and communicated the supply issue to the National Health Service in August 2020. During the time where both suppliers were out of stock, we worked with specialist importer companies to source unlicensed pethidine 50 milligram tablets from abroad to ensure patients could continue to access treatment.

### Pancreatic Cancer: Clinical Trials

**Rachael Maskell:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when clinical trials for pancreatic cancer will resume in England following their suspension as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

In March 2020 the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led the National Health Service to suspend many routine clinical services and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to prepare to support the Government’s research response. Subsequently, decisions were taken by research sponsors, funders, investigators and study sites to pause some non-COVID-19 research, and by the NIHR Clinical Research Network to pause set up of new sites or studies, other than for nationally prioritised COVID-19 studies.

The NIHR published a Restart Framework in May 2020 and has established groups to oversee and coordinate the restart of non-COVID research. Restart of non-COVID-19 trials of life-preserving or life-extending treatments that are not otherwise available to patients remain a priority. The majority of cancer trials are open to recruitment.

### Parents: Coronavirus

**Abena Oppong-Asare:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is making available to medically vulnerable parents whose children have returned to school during the covid-19 outbreak.
Jo Churchill:
The Government has published additional guidance for everyone in England who has been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, to help protect them from COVID-19. People in this group will previously have received a letter from the National Health Service or their general practitioner telling them this and may have been advised to shield in the past.

Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but who are not clinically extremely vulnerable themselves, should still attend school.

Where parents who are clinically vulnerable or extremely vulnerable have concerns about their children attending school during the COVID-19 outbreak, the school should discuss those concerns with them and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

Psilocybin
Crispin Blunt: [R] [114744]
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the letter of 16 October 2020 from the Minister with responsibility for drugs to the hon. Member for Reigate, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of emerging evidence on the use of Psilocybin in the treatment of depression and trauma.

Jo Churchill: [Holding answer 17 November 2020]: The Government has made no recent assessment of the potential merits of rescheduling psilocybin, which remains a Schedule 1 substance under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (the 2001 Regulations).

Ministers continue to take a close interest in any new evidence relating to controlled drugs and they would seek expert advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs before making any amendments to the 2001 Regulations.

Public Health: Finance
Steve Reed: [135951]
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to announce the public health grant allocations for local authorities for 2021-22.

Jo Churchill: We expect to confirm individual local authority public health grant allocations for 2021/22 shortly.

Radiotherapy: Patient Choice Schemes
Stephen McPartland: [133835]
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to allow cancer patients to choose where they access radiotherapy treatment.

Jo Churchill: [Holding answer 11 January 2021]: Generally, patients can decide which National Health Service organisation they would like to receive care from as an outpatient and
choose the clinical team who will be in charge of their care within an organisation at the point of referral. There are some exceptions that may limit a patient’s choice where speed of access to diagnosis and treatment is particularly important, such as cancer services, where they must be seen within the two-week maximum waiting time.

Once diagnosed with cancer, a team of health professionals work together as a multidisciplinary team (MDT) which includes surgeons, clinical and medical oncologists, pathologists and radiologists and other healthcare professionals. The role of the MDT is to ensure the co-ordination of the patients care throughout their cancer treatment. Cancer treatment plans are determined through MDT discussion.

Rare Cancers

Jim Shannon:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases: 2020 update to the Implementation Plan for England, published on 26 February 2020, what progress his Department has made on providing the best quality of evidence based care and treatment for people living with Cutaneous T-cell lymphoma.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement is continuing to work with providers of specialised services to deliver best-quality evidence-based care and treatment for patient living with rare cancers and has continued to work through the objectives set out in the United Kingdom Strategy for Rare Diseases.

NHS England has contributed to the development of the UK Rare Disease Framework, which was published on 9 January and will work with other stakeholders in England to develop an action plan to implement the Framework.

Rare Diseases

Jim Shannon:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to improving the lives of those affected by rare disease and continues to implement the commitments made in the United Kingdom Strategy for Rare Diseases which expired at the end of 2020. Recent developments include progress with Rare Diseases Collaborative Networks and work to strengthen partnerships for the National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service. Details on NHS England progress can be viewed in their November 2020 Implementation Plan Progress Report.

The new UK Rare Diseases Framework was published on 9 January, which provides the high-level direction for rare diseases and replaces the previous strategy. The Department, alongside NHS England, continues to consider the impact of COVID-19 on patients with rare diseases.
Serco: Contact Tracing
Alex Davies-Jones:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how trained and recruited contact tracing staff were notified of the news that Serco was to reduce the number of contact tracers it was employing.

Alex Davies-Jones:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what compassionate support training has been provided for contact tracers recruited through the national system.

Helen Whately:  
[Holding answer 9 November 2020]: We keep staffing levels on the national non-National Health Service tracing service under constant review. As NHS Test and Trace became more locally targeted we reduced the number of non-NHS call handlers working for Serco and Sitel in the national service from 18,000 full time equivalents (FTEs) to 12,000 FTEs and then to 10,000 FTEs - Serco and Sitel providing 5,000 each. However, we have recently increased the numbers again to 7,000 FTEs for each supplier due to the rise in COVID-19 cases.

At each stage the Department has given the suppliers good notice of our intentions and the suppliers have acted in accordance with the terms of contractual arrangements and relevant notice period. All staff working on the service have been provided with training on handling difficult situations they may face during a call and they have also been made aware of wellbeing and support mechanisms available to them.

Smoking
Lee Anderson:  
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the health benefits of ensuring that smokers have (a) information about and (b) access to a wide range of reduced risk smoking-related products; and whether the Government's next Tobacco control Plan plans to take steps to ensure that such (i) information and (b) access is more readily available.

Jo Churchill:
The Government continues to review the evidence of reduced risk products such as e-cigarettes, including their harms and usefulness as an aid to stop smoking. Although not risk free, current evidence suggests e-cigarettes are far less harmful to health than smoking and help people quit. There are already 2.5 million e-cigarettes users in England, which suggests that these products are widely accessible.

Public Health England, through their stop smoking campaigns, provides information, advice and support on using e-cigarettes to help smokers quit. Some local stop smoking services offer vouchers which can be exchanged for e-cigarettes to help smokers to switch.
The Government will consider in its next Tobacco Control Plan for England what further steps are required to provide smokers with more information about and access to reduced risk smoking-related products, including an assessment of how far these diverse products reduce risk.

Social Services: Conditions of Employment and Pay
Gill Furniss:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve pay and working conditions for social care workers.

Helen Whately:
[holding answer 11 January 2021]: The Government does not have direct responsibility for pay or wider terms and conditions in adult social care in England.

The Government nonetheless maintains oversight of the social care system and we are committed to raising the profile of the social care sector. The Government expects local authorities to commission care at the rate that allows providers to employ the staff they need to deliver quality care. We are providing councils with access to an additional £1 billion for social care.

Social Services: Coronavirus
Abena Oppong-Asare:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the circumstances are in which the easements provided for in the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 would be activated under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Helen Whately:
[holding answer 6 October 2020]: Guidance for local authorities on use of the Care Act 2014 easements states that they should only take a decision to begin exercising them when the workforce is significantly depleted, or demand on social care has increased, to an extent that it is no longer reasonably practicable for it to comply with its full Care Act duties (as they stand prior to amendment by the Coronavirus Act 2020) and where to continue to try to do so is likely to result in urgent or acute needs not being met, potentially risking life.

Test and Trace Support Payment
Caroline Lucas:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will extend the eligibility criteria of the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to allow people who self-isolate with symptoms of covid-19 and subsequently receive a negative test result to apply for a proportion of that payment to cover the period from the beginning of their symptoms to the receipt of the negative test result; and what assessment she has made of (a) the categories of people in that position who are not eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), (b) the effect of the difference in daily monetary value between the self-isolation payment and SSP on the level of compliance with guidance to self-isolate when experiencing covid-19 symptoms; and if he will make a statement.
Helen Whately:

If an individual self-isolate because they have COVID-19 symptoms and they subsequently test negative for COVID-19, they will not be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment. There are no plans to extend the scheme to people who do not have COVID-19 or are not a close contact of someone who has COVID-19.

It is essential that people self-isolate if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms. People on low incomes who cannot work from home and are not eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) may be able to claim Universal Credit, with the standard allowance increasing by £20 a week and the rules for the self-employed also being relaxed during the pandemic.

People may also be able to claim for Contributory Employment and Support Allowance, and the rules have changed to allow eligible individuals to claim from the first day of their self-isolation, rather than the eighth.

Seema Malhotra:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's policy is on eligibility for the Test and Trace Support Payment for parents of primary aged children who need to stay at home and are unable to work as a result of their child self-isolating on the instruction of their school.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 December 2020]: The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is for people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. If a child is self-isolating because they have tested positive, other household members will also need to self-isolate and will be able to claim under the scheme, provided they meet the other eligibility criteria.

Test and Trace Support Payment: Supply Teachers

Daisy Cooper:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the eligibility for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to include supply teachers who have been told to self-isolate during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

An individual’s eligibility for the Test and Trace Support Payment is not dependent on their job role. Supply teachers may be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment if they, like other applicants, meet the eligibility criteria.

A supply teacher who is not, like other applicants, may be eligible for a £500 discretionary payment from their local authority.

Tobacco
Lee Anderson:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) processes, (b) public consultation exercises and (c) other procedures his Department plans to undertake in the production of its next Tobacco Control Plan.

Lee Anderson:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals (a) to implement the Government's commitment to make England smokefree by 2030 and (b) as part of the Government's next Tobacco Control Plan; and what the timetable will be for bringing forward any such legislative proposals.

Jo Churchill:
The Government is committed to addressing the harms from smoking. The Department held a public consultation on its Smokefree 2030 ambition as part of the prevention green paper consultation which was published in July 2019. The Department, working with Public Health England and NHS England, will engage key stakeholders about potential proposals to include in the new plan, and this will include consideration of legislative proposals. The new tobacco control plan is expected in July 2021. No timetable has been set for any legislative changes.

Lee Anderson:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to take into account the EU's Tobacco Products Directive when developing the next UK Government's Tobacco Control Plan.

Jo Churchill:
A new Tobacco Control Plan for England will be published later this summer to outline the Government's plans to achieve its ambition to be smokefree by 2030.

The Government has made the necessary legislative amendments to ensure robust tobacco control regulation continues throughout the United Kingdom after the 1 January 2021 and give effect to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Great Britain no longer has to comply with the European Union’s Tobacco Products Directive and, as part of the development of the Tobacco Control Plan for England, there will be opportunity to consider whether any regulatory changes are required to help people quit smoking and address the harms from tobacco. Any changes will be based on robust international evidence and be in the interests of public health.

Vaccination
Munira Wilson:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the national stock level of syringes required to deliver the flu and covid-19 vaccinations during winter 2020-21.
Jo Churchill:
Public Health England has procured combined needles and syringes for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccinations. These levels are commercially sensitive and therefore not available.

The production of the seasonal flu vaccines is the responsibility of manufacturers. All flu vaccines this season have been supplied by manufacturers in pre-filled syringes and the Department is confident there is adequate supply to offer the flu vaccination to over 30 million people.

Dr Matthew Offord:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when will the Department publish the Government’s Vaccine Strategy.

Jo Churchill:
The publication of England’s national vaccine strategy has been delayed as a result of our ongoing focus on responding to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. However, the strategy has been kept under review and we are now in the process of refreshing the strategy to reflect the new models for delivery and vaccine development seen in the COVID-19 vaccine development and roll out as well as in the extended National Health Service flu programme. This work is on-going and the strategy will be published in due course.

Dan Carden:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish the Government’s Vaccine Strategy.

Jo Churchill:
The publication of England’s national vaccine strategy has been delayed as a result of our ongoing focus on responding to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The vaccine strategy has been kept under review and is now in the process of being refreshed to reflect the new models for delivery and the vaccine development seen in the COVID-19 vaccine development and roll out.

Vaccination: Children
Dr Matthew Offord:
To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on progress on meeting childhood immunisation targets.

Jo Churchill:
For pre-school vaccinations preliminary data suggests that, whilst there was an initial decrease in the number of vaccinations delivered during the early weeks of the pandemic compared with the same period in 2019, the situation rapidly stabilised and recovered. For school-aged immunisation programmes were impacted due to school closures, though providers offered immunisations through a range of school and community settings. All vaccinations missed will be delivered as soon as possible and no later than August 2021.
The latest verified data for this period will be published in September 2021.

Dan Carden:  
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 progress on meeting childhood immunisation targets.

Jo Churchill:  
For pre-school vaccinations preliminary data suggests that, whilst there was an initial decrease in the number of vaccinations delivered during the early weeks of the pandemic compared with the same period in 2019, the situation rapidly stabilised and recovered. For school-aged immunisation programmes were impacted due to school closures, though providers offered immunisations through a range of school and community settings. All vaccinations missed will be delivered as soon as possible, and no later than August 2021.

The latest verified data for this period will be published in September 2021.

HOME OFFICE

Asylum: Housing

Owen Thompson:  
To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of (a) the spread of communicable diseases, (b) mental health problems, (c) physical health problems, (d) hate crime and (e) assault in (i) barracks housing asylum seekers and (ii) other Government housing for asylum seekers in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:  
Accommodation Providers are implementing advice and guidance to meet Public Health England & Wales guidance. Our accommodation has been configured where possible to meet local and national health guidance and allow for social distancing and self isolation when required. People accommodated in hostel-based accommodation receive translated guidance in relation to social distancing, potential symptoms, self-isolating and hygiene requirements, for example, hand washing. Onsite assistance and guidance are provided by support staff.

All asylum seekers in initial and temporary accommodation, including Ministry of Defence sites have access to health care through in house health care teams and/or provider welfare staff who will arrange health care and signpost asylum seekers to appropriate services.

Additionally, all asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can escalate any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support including legal advice where appropriate. AIRE asylum services provide free independent advice, guidance and
information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK.

All sites have security staff and our accommodation providers work with local police forces to ensure the safety and security of asylum seeker accommodation.

With regards to hate crime we are monitoring the situation and working closely with the police, as well as our providers, to ensure the safeguarding of the supported population, particularly those currently accommodated in hotels and MoD sites. The welfare of our service users is of the upmost importance.

We hold daily calls with our service providers to monitor and resolve issues during the current pandemic.

**Owen Thompson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to stop housing asylum seekers in (a) barracks and (b) other forms of institutional housing and use community-based housing for asylum seekers.

**Chris Philp:**

Increased asylum intake, alongside measures taken to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, has meant that the Home Office has had to deal with growing demand for asylum support and accommodation services. In recent months we have faced additional challenges which have required us in some instances to use contingency accommodation, including hotels, to fulfil or statutory obligations to house destitute asylum seekers whilst their claims are examined.

In order to reduce the use of such contingency accommodation we have been working closely with local authorities and devolved administrations to identify opportunities to increase the amount of dispersal accommodation available and to assist those that are no longer eligible for asylum support to ‘move-on’ from asylum accommodation. This has been handled through a calm, considered and phased approach and in line with current health guidance.

Should any Local Authority agree to become an asylum dispersal area we are committed to work with them immediately to source community based accommodation in their areas, increasing the number of properties available to our providers and our ability to move people from contingency accommodation.

It remains our intention to move all individuals in contingency accommodation into suitable dispersed accommodation as soon as reasonably practical, however our immediate priority is to ensure that we continue to meet our legal duty to house destitute asylum seekers and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

**Owen Thompson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria her Department uses to assess the suitability of (a) existing and (b) potential accommodation for asylum seekers in relation to (i) physical health, (ii) mental health and (iii) safety from harm.
Chris Philp:
All asylum seekers in initial and temporary accommodation have access to an initial health screening and health care through in house health care teams and/or provider welfare staff who will arrange health care and signpost to the appropriate health services.

Additionally, all asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can escalate any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support including legal advice where appropriate. AIRE asylum services provide free independent advice, guidance and information on the asylum process, accommodation, financial support, finding legal representation and any other asylum related matters. AIRE run a national helpline that is free and accessible to all asylum seekers in the UK.

All sites have security staff and our accommodation providers work with local police forces to ensure the safety and security of asylum seeker accommodation.

We expect the highest standards from our providers and monitor performance and the effectiveness of the contracts, including the safeguarding of our service users through the monthly Contract Management Groups and quarterly Strategic Review Management Boards. We also hold daily calls with our service providers to monitor and resolve issues during the current pandemic.

Those accommodated in longer term, dispersed accommodation have the same access to health care as the rest of the general population.

Brook House Immigration Removal Centre: Coronavirus
Stuart C McDonald: [135965]
To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the recent covid-19 outbreak at Brook House, how many and what proportion of detainees were subsequently transferred to Colnbrook; how many of the people transferred had been tested for covid-19; how many of the detainees transferred had been tested for covid; and who was consulted in advance about the (a) safety and (b) public health implications of that transfer.

Chris Philp:
Immigration Enforcement is responding to the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak and following the latest guidance from Public Health England (PHE). The safety of those detained, our staff and our suppliers' staff are our utmost priority.

In agreement with Public Health England, we have temporarily closed Brook House for a short period due to a number of positive COVID-19 cases among staff. A very small number of detained individuals remaining at Brook House were moved to another immigration removal centre as a result.

We have robust contingency measures are in place across the immigration removal estate. Measures such as protective shielding are considered on a case-by-case basis and further measures, including enhanced hygiene, ‘reverse cohorting’ and
single occupancy rooms have been introduced to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading in the immigration removal estate. This has been supported by the High Court, which last year ruled that our approach to detention and COVID-19 was sensible, with the appropriate precautionary measures in place.

To supplement the preventative measures already in place, on 26 October 2020 the Home Office introduced a voluntary programme of COVID-19 testing on induction for all individuals arriving at an IRC. This testing programme began with the Heathrow and Gatwick IRCs and now includes those arriving at Yarl's Wood. Accordingly, all individuals that were detained at Brook House had been offered a COVID-19 test.

Migrant Workers: Wind Power
Karl Turner: [135914]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she received from (a) employers and (b) employers’ organisations prior to her Department's extension to the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:
The Government is committed to making the UK a global leader in green energy and supporting the offshore windfarm sector is a key part of this commitment.


Karl Turner: [135915]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department’s December 2020 update to the Offshore wind workers Immigration Rules concession 2017, how many non-EEA workers to date have been given leave to enter the UK under the terms of that concession.

Kevin Foster:
The Home Office does not collect and store this data.

Missing Persons: Children
Peter Kyle: [136015]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding her Department has spent on (a) identifying and (b) supporting missing children since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

Peter Kyle: [136016]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate his Department has made of how many and what proportion of missing children have previously been victims of (a) crime and (b) modern slavery.
Peter Kyle:  
To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of missing children have a record of being (a) in care and (b) subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Peter Kyle:  
To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 12 September 2017 to Question 7781, if she will provide an updated timeline for the publication of her Department’s Missing Children and Adults Strategy.

Priti Patel:  
People that go missing include some of the most vulnerable in our society. The Government is determined that missing people and their families receive the best possible protection and support; from Government, statutory agencies and the voluntary sector.

While the majority of incidents of children going missing result in no harm, missing incidents can be associated with a number of criminal harms. The Home Office does not hold missing persons data centrally, but the NCA compiles missing persons statistics from police forces in the Missing Persons Unit Data report, published annually at

https://missingpersons.police.uk/cy-gb/resources/downloads/missing-persons-statistical-bulletins

Police: Coronavirus

Andrew Gwynne:  
To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on prioritising police officers in the rollout of the covid-19 vaccine.

Kit Malthouse:  
The Government recognise that police officers are playing a vital role helping to control the spread of coronavirus while continuing to keep criminals off our streets. In protecting the public, they put themselves at risk to keep us all safe, and we have seen that courage and professionalism continue throughout the pandemic.

The current priority list, produced by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), targets those assessed to be at the greatest risk of dying from coronavirus. In line with this advice those being vaccinated first are people in care homes, the elderly, those with underlying health conditions and frontline health workers. Under phase 2 of the Vaccine Delivery Plan the JCVI may include key public services and occupations with a high-risk exposure to the virus like police officers who have frequent close contact with members of the public. Conversations are continuing in line with developments.
Those over 50, and all adults in an exposure risk group, will then also be eligible for vaccination in the early phase of the programme. This already includes members of the police.

**Visas: Musicians**

**Stuart C McDonald:**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on visa-free 90-day tours by musicians between the EU and UK; and whether she plans to take steps to secure an improved agreement on visa-free travel for musicians.

**Kevin Foster:**

The UK Government already makes a range of generous provision for musicians and other cultural performers to help support the vibrant cultural life of our Union.

Musicians visiting the UK may perform at events, make personal appearances, take part in competitions, promotional activities and auditions, for up to 6 months without the need for formal sponsorship or, for non-visa nationals, without a visa if they are not being paid beyond expenses or prize money. They can also receive payment for appearances at permit free festivals for up to 6 months, or for up to one month for a specific engagements, under the Visitor route.

Musicians and support staff who are being paid in the UK may also qualify for entry under the Tier 5 Creative Worker route, if they are sponsored by a UK entity licensed with UK Visas and Immigration for this purpose. Entry is for up to 12 months and the relevant rules also provide for accompanying dependants.

Entry under the Tier 5 Creative Worker route is visa-free for non-visa nationals, which includes EU Nationals, where entry is for no more than three months.

We set our provisions based on the assessment of the needs of our United Kingdom’s cultural sector, rather than tying them to decisions made by foreign jurisdictions and Governments. As I recently outlined to Members of the Scottish Parliament’s Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, we are specifically reviewing the provisions on Permit Free Festivals and Permitted Paid Engagement for other cultural events in response to the points raised by those in the sector, particularly the Edinburgh International Festival.

**Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre**

**Mohammad Yasin:**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that there is no cross-over between the residents of Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre and the asylum seekers to be homed in temporary accommodation on the same site.

**Chris Philp:**

To ensure we have sufficient accommodation available to meet our statutory obligations we are planning to use a vacant site adjacent to the existing Immigration Removal Centre to accommodate single, adult male asylum seekers.
Asylum seekers on this adjacent site are separate from the Immigration Removal Centre and are free to come and go as they please.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Coronavirus: Liverpool
Ian Byrne: [136088]
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on setting up a mass vaccination hub in Liverpool, in light of that city council's experience in mass community testing for covid-19.

Luke Hall:
The UK COVID-19 Vaccines Delivery Plan sets out how the Government will work with the NHS, devolved administrations, local councils and the Armed Forces to deliver the largest vaccination programme in British history.

The Delivery Plan can be found here:

Devolution: England
Dan Jarvis: [R] [133860]
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 12269 on Devolution: England, when he plans to publish the White Paper on English devolution.

Luke Hall:
The pandemic has rightly focused attention on tackling Covid-19. However, levelling up remains at the centre of Government's agenda. We want to give more power to local communities, providing an opportunity for all places to level up.

The Government intends to bring forward the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in due course. This will set out how the UK Government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery and set out our plans for future devolution arrangements.

Evictions: Coronavirus
Mr Kevan Jones: [135836]
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to introduce an embargo on housing evictions of (a) tenants, (b) tenants in caravans and (c) tenants on caravan pitches on residential caravan sites during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown.

Christopher Pincher:
The Government has extended existing legislation to ensure bailiffs in England do not serve eviction notices or carry out evictions except in the most serious
circumstances, such as anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse perpetrators in the social sector. This legislation will be in place for at least six weeks before being reviewed, with consideration taken to the latest public health data. This will mean in practical terms that no evictions will be enforced until March.

The legislation applies in relation to tenants on residential caravan sites as well as in relation to tenants of bricks and mortar properties.

Future High Streets Fund: Leigh

James Grundy:

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

Kelly Tolhurst:

I was pleased to announce on 26 December that Wigan was successful in securing a provisional offer of £16.6 million from the Future High Streets Fund. This will support Wigan Council deliver a much-needed boost to Wigan Town Centre at this challenging time and has the potential to benefit the wider Wigan area, including in Leigh.

Homelessness: Coronavirus

Jon Trickett:

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many local authorities have continued the Everyone In scheme.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Everyone in scheme is ongoing

This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping and we have taken huge steps working with local authorities and their partners to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic. This work has not stopped, and through Everyone In, by November we had supported around 33,000 people with nearly 10,000 in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.

Given the new variant of COVID-19 that is rapidly driving infection rates, and the new national lockdown, we are redoubling our efforts to ensure that people who sleep rough are kept as safe as possible and that we do everything we can to protect the NHS.

We have asked all local authorities to ensure that even more rough sleepers are safely accommodated, and will be asking that this opportunity is actively used to make sure that all rough sleepers are registered with a GP where they are not already and are factored into local area vaccination plans, in line with JCVI prioritisation for COVID-19 vaccinations. This will help ensure that the wider health needs of people who sleep rough are addressed, supporting them now and for the future.

We are providing an additional £10 million funding to support this further work.
Mike Hill:
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to help homeless people and rough sleepers into suitable accommodation during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown.

Kelly Tolhurst:
This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping and we have taken huge steps working with local authorities and their partners to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic. This work has not stopped, and through Everyone In, by November we had supported around 33,000 people with nearly 10,000 in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.

Given the new variant of COVID-19 and the new national lockdown, we are redoubling our efforts to ensure that people who sleep rough are kept as safe as possible and that we do everything we can to protect the NHS. This is backed by £10 million to protect rough sleepers and ensure their wider health needs are addressed.

We have asked all local authorities to ensure that even more rough sleepers are safely accommodated, and will be asking that this opportunity is actively used to make sure that all rough sleepers are registered with a GP where they are not already and are factored into local area vaccination plans, in line with JCVI prioritisation for Covid vaccinations. This will help ensure that the wider health needs of people who sleep rough are addressed, supporting them now and for the future.

This additional support builds on the package of winter support announced last year. This includes a £10 million Cold Weather Fund for all local authorities to bring forward COVID-secure accommodation this winter and to keep vulnerable people safe from the cold. This is accompanied by a £2 million Transformation Fund for the voluntary sector, as well as comprehensive guidance on reopening night shelters more safely, where not doing so would endanger lives.

We have also been in close contact with councils to develop plans for the coming months, supported by the £266 million Next Steps Accommodation Programme which aims to ensure that as few people as possible return to the streets. This includes bringing forward 3,300 new homes this year for rough sleepers, leaving a national legacy of this Government’s support for these individuals.

In total, we are spending over £700 million this year and will be spending over £750 million next year to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, further demonstrating the Government’s commitment to end rough sleeping.

Local Government Finance

Nick Fletcher:
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's unsuccessful application for funding from the £830 million Future High Street Fund, what support is available to help local authorities formulate innovative bids to help them to secure Government funding for projects.
Kelly Tolhurst:
My officials are providing bespoke feedback to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council on their unsuccessful Future High Streets Fund application to help with future funding.

The Government is also providing support to local leadership through our High Streets Task Force, giving high streets and town centres expert advice to adapt and thrive. The Task Force is providing hands-on support to local areas to develop data-driven innovative strategies and connect local areas to relevant experts. The Task Force will be rolling out experts, training and data offers across the country in due course and has launched a range of online support.

I am also pleased to see that both Doncaster and Stainforth Town Deal Boards will be submitting their Town Investment Plan proposals at the end of January 2021. These Town Deals have the potential to benefit the wider Doncaster area and I look forward to receiving these very soon.

Beyond this, our new £4 billion Levelling Up Fund will be open to all local areas across the country, including £600 million available later this year.

Local Government Finance: Staffordshire

Jonathan Gullis:
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to increase council budgets for (a) Stoke-on-Trent City Council, (b) Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and (c) Staffordshire County Council.

Luke Hall:
The provisional local government finance settlement for 2021-22 proposes making an extra £2.2 billion available to fund the provision of critical public services including adult and children’s social care. On average, across England councils will see a 4.5 per cent cash terms increase in Core Spending Power, an increase in real terms.

In addition to this, this Government has provided in excess of £10 billion to local councils in support of Covid-19 pressures, this year and next, including over £7.2 billion of additional expenditure funding in 2020-21.

As part of this:
Stoke-on-Trent City Council will receive £8.7 million in non-ringfenced Covid-19 funding next year, on top of over £25 million this year. This is in addition to a proposed increase in their Core Spending Power of over £10 million in 2021-22.
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will receive nearly £700,000 in non-ringfenced Covid-19 funding next year, on top of almost £2 million this year. This is in addition to a proposed increase in their Core Spending Power of over £200,000 in 2021-22.
Staffordshire County Council will receive over £16 million in non-ringfenced Covid-19 funding next year, on top of over £47.5 million this year. This is in addition to a proposed increase in their Core Spending Power of over £29 million in 2021-22.
Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus
Jon Trickett:  [133691]
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many rough sleepers were housed in hotels during the covid-19 national lockdowns announced on (a) 23 March 2020 and (b) 31 October 2020.

Kelly Tolhurst:
MHCLG and councils have been collecting management information about the support for people sleeping rough and those at risk of sleeping rough, in England, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Relevant data for May 2020 can be found here:

Relevant data for November 2020 can be found here:

UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Wales
Jessica Morden:  [135877]
To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to outline how much of the £220 million to help local areas transition to the Shared Prosperity Fund in 2021/22 will be allocated to Wales.

Luke Hall:
To help local areas prepare over 2021-22 for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we will provide £220 million additional funding to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. Further details will be provided soon.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE
Arms Trade: Sri Lanka
Taiwo Owatemi:  [133221]
To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason her Department approved an export license to Sri Lanka for military helicopters on 4 March 2020 with a value of £149,724; and what assessment was made of the risk of those items being used in violations of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:
Whatever the destination, HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria'), including if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.
HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK and these reports contain detailed information, including the overall value, the type (e.g. Military, Other), and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

This information is available at: gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data (opens in a new tab) and the related quarterly publication was on 14th July 2020, covering the period 1st January to 31st March 2020.

As the above report shows, no licences for military helicopters were issued for Sri Lanka in this period. A licence authorising the export of 'components for NBC protective/defensive equipment' (control entry ML7) with a value of £149,725 was issued for Sri Lanka, on 4th March 2020. On the same day, we also issued a licence authorising the export of 'components for military helicopters' (control entry ML10) with a value of £161,477 for Sri Lanka. In both cases, these licences were for goods for incorporation in other products and the items were ultimately destined for third countries.

Business: North East

Catherine McKinnell:

What assessment she has made of the effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on businesses in North East England that trade internationally.

Greg Hands:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement is the first free trade agreement the EU has reached based on zero tariffs and quotas and is fantastic news for the North East. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement includes Rules of Origin that frequently exceed what the EU has previously agreed. For example, innovative rules to support trade in electric vehicles will benefit our world-leading car manufacturers including in the North East.

Customs

Emily Thornberry:

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of border delays resulting from additional customs formalities on (a) the profitability of UK exporters and (b) the uninterrupted supply of goods to UK markets.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Through the gradual implementation of our sovereign import controls in lieu of the EU's import controls, as set out in the Border Operating Model, HM Revenue and Customs (an agency of HM Treasury) is taking a pragmatic and flexible approach that will give industry extra time to prepare for the new procedures and reduces the likelihood of border controls leading to border disruption.

We recognise the trading environment has changed for British exporters. To meet this new world head-on, capitalise on the opportunities today, and maintain our prosperity in the global marketplace of tomorrow, we are focusing on developing the capabilities needed by businesses to boost exports around the world.
Exports
Daniel Kawczynski: [910763]

What recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of UK exports.

Graham Stuart:

Before the pandemic hit, global trade was already in trouble. Nine out of the top ten exporting countries – including China, Japan, Germany, and the USA – all saw their exports fall in 2019 (according to UNCTAD data). The one exception to this was the United Kingdom, which overtook France to become the world’s fifth largest exporter. Our exports increased by 4.2% to £689.3bn in 2019. Latest figures show that UK exports in the 12 months to September 2020 were £624.8bn, down 7.7% on same period last year.

Sources: ‘UNCTAD Goods and Services (BPM6): Exports and imports of goods and services, annual’ and ‘ONS Balance of Payments UK, July to September 2020’.

Nuclear Reactors: Exports
Alun Cairns: [910765]

What steps her Department has taken to promote the export of British manufactured small modular nuclear reactors.

Graham Stuart:

DIT recognises the export potential of UK manufactured small modular reactors and we are providing support to industry in several countries to facilitate market entry and position them for success ahead of first production. We are also in discussions with industry about developing a more strategic “Whole of Government” approach to support overseas sales.

Trade Agreements
Helen Hayes: [910758]

What recent steps she has taken to ensure continuity of trading relationships for UK businesses after the end of the transition period.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In under two years, HM Government has secured trade deals with 63 countries, which covered £217 billion of trade in 2019. Taken alongside our recent deal with the European Union, trade with countries worth £897 billion in 2019 is now covered. No country, anywhere in the world, at any point in history, has conducted trade negotiations concurrently on this scale nor with our ambition.

Alex Cunningham: [910766]

What recent steps she has taken to ensure continuity of trading relationships for UK businesses after the end of the transition period.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In under two years, HM Government has secured trade deals with 63 countries, which covered £217 billion of trade in 2019. Taken alongside our recent deal with the European Union, trade with countries worth £897 billion in 2019 is now covered. No
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Jeff Smith:

What recent steps she has taken to ensure continuity of trading relationships for UK businesses after the end of the transition period.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In under two years, HM Government has secured trade deals with 63 countries, which covered £217 billion of trade in 2019. Taken alongside our recent deal with the European Union, trade with countries worth £897 billion in 2019 is now covered. No country, anywhere in the world, at any point in history, has conducted trade negotiations concurrently on this scale nor with our ambition.

Trade Agreements: USA

Owen Thompson:

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will ensure that (a) general standards and (b) rules on geographic indicators will not be lowered in exchange for any reduction of tariffs in a UK-US mini trade deal.

Greg Hands:

Both the UK and the US have made clear their shared ambition for a comprehensive trade agreement. Getting the right deal is more important than meeting any particular deadline.

The UK’s reputation for quality, safety and performance drives demand for UK goods and is key to our long-term prosperity. In negotiations, we will uphold the UK’s high environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety standards.

We will also maintain effective protection of food and drink names in a way that reflects their geographical origins, getting the balance right for consumers to ensure they are not confused or misled about the origins of goods, and have access to a competitive range of products.

Kevin Hollinrake:

What steps her Department is taking to agree a free trade agreement with the US.

Elizabeth Truss:

We have made great progress in negotiations and are in an excellent position to strengthen the economic partnership between our two countries through a Free Trade Agreement. We congratulate Katherine Tai on her nomination to be appointed United States Trade Representative by the incoming administration and look forward to working with her.
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made on the effect on (a) public safety, (b) victim welfare and (c) witness safety of the unavailability of court dates.

Chris Philp:
We take the delays caused by Covid-19 in the courts extremely seriously. We are aware of the impact of delayed justice and we are doing everything in our power to address this, while taking the measures needed to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and protect those involved in the justice system.

We acknowledge the impact that delays have on victims and witnesses. We have established strong partnerships working with the Home Office, Police, APCC, CPS and HMCTS to ensure we are supporting the needs of victims and witnesses. We are providing an additional £25m in 2021/22 for victims and support services. This recognises the negative impact that Covid-19 has had on vulnerable victims of crime and builds on the £20 million we provided in 2020/21 to help domestic abuse and sexual violence community-based services meet Covid-driven demand.

Section 28 for vulnerable victims and witnesses in Crown Courts was also rolled out to all court sites on 23 November. It provides the option to pre-record evidence in advance of a trial for vulnerable complainants of a crime, as well as witnesses, including children. This is helping support these individuals to give evidence in court closer to the time of the offence.

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has provided support to HM Courts and Tribunals Service to facilitate upgrades to the digital systems of the court network to allow remote hearings.

Chris Philp:
The Ministry of Justice Digital and Technology team has provided a range of support to HM Courts and Tribunals Service to ensure its continuity of service with an increased rate of remote working.

We have scaled up and re-configured existing infrastructure and systems to ensure stability with increased demand, or to create Covid-19 secure environments. We have supported the increased use of CVP (cloud video platform) from an existing pilot, to enable remote hearings, managing the associated network infrastructure changes. We have also onboarded CVP into live service under a robust support model (for all MoJ users) and supporting additional functionality required by HMCTS.

MoJ Digital and Technology have led on the deployment of technology to set-up Nightingale courts. Our teams have managed the delivery of infrastructure, providing
network connectivity, video services, end user compute, print and digital recording solutions. This deployment was devised to mirror provision at permanent sites.

The department has increased the deployment of the magistrates bench solution to provide better facilities or magistrates in the courtroom environment and also deployed the Panel solution to enable non-salaried judiciary to access digital case files.

We have also ensured that staff working remotely have the right device and access to systems to continue working and have deployed collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams and scaled up the number of audio conferencing lines.

**Catherine West:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the efficacy of measures introduced during the covid-19 outbreak in supporting Court administration.

**Chris Philp:**

Maintaining access to justice while keeping people safe is HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) top priority. As an essential public service, the courts and tribunals have remained open throughout the pandemic.

A national risk assessment was carried out at the start of the pandemic, and all buildings are required to complete and regularly review local risk assessments. We have invested an additional £110m so all of our buildings are Covid-secure and can continue to operate safely. For example, we have introduced installed plexiglass screens in over 400 court rooms, provided additional touchpoint cleaning, mandated the use of face coverings in all communal areas, introduced one-way systems and taken steps to reduce footfall and remodelled office areas to ensure social distancing.

We rapidly expanded audio and video technology capability. Video and audio links were distributed to all courts and tribunals. The judiciary prioritised the most important cases at the start of the pandemic. When the judiciary decide a case is suitable for a remote hearing, HMCTS has the trained staff and required equipment in place to allow a remote hearing to take place. By utilising technology more hearings have been conducted by video or audio link and this has further reduced footfall in our buildings. HMCTS is undergoing an ambitious reform program and earlier digital reforms to divorce and probate services allow these systems to continue to operate while some tribunals managed to operate exclusively through audio and video hearings. Cases that are not suitable for a remote hearing are heard in a Covid-secure environment.

To support working from home we have rolled-out over 9,000 laptops and reviewed our administrative processes to support flexible working.

Public health experts agree that our policies on mitigations are sufficient for dealing with the challenges provided by the new variant of the virus. Current available evidence on the new variant shows it is spreading faster than other SARS-CoV-2 strains currently circulating in the UK. Therefore the existing mitigation measures
(social distancing, hand hygiene, ventilation and face covering usage) must be rigorously adhered to and everyone must unfailingly follow the hands-face-space-guidance. We continue to act on the standards, advice and guidance available for workplaces, and where those change we will update our policies to meet any new guidelines.

All suspected incidents and / or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within our court and tribunal buildings in England and Wales, and tribunals in Scotland, are reported to HMCTS. Where there are two or more confirmed cases or an increase in suspected incidents within 14 days linked to a single site, a national team provides additional support and guidance to local court and tribunals in managing the response, and early identification of close contacts so they can be informed to self-isolate in support of NHS Test and Trace. In line with public health guidance, where there are five or more confirmed cases (for England) or two or more confirmed cases (for Wales and Scotland) within a 14 day period we will, in accordance with public health guidance, refer to local health protection teams who will assess the individual circumstances and provide any further advice and guidance.

Catherine West:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the time required to clear the backlog of Court cases.

Chris Philp:

Data relating to receipts, disposals, outstanding caseload and the timeliness of cases across a number of jurisdictions can be found in our latest published statistics at weekly management information page. You can also view our recovery plans for the criminal, civil and family courts as well as the tribunals at Court and Tribunal recovery update and our Crime recovery update for further details on how we are working to clear the backlog.

Despite the changing nature of the pandemic, we are working hard to ensure that courts and tribunals remain ‘COVID safe’ so that both face to face and remote hearings can proceed as expected. Despite ongoing restrictions, we’re continuing to safely increase court and tribunal capacity through measures such as Nightingale Courts, installing plexiglass screens to enable and increase jury trial capacity and using the Cloud Video Platform (CVP) for remote hearings.

Alex Cunningham:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of covid-19 have been confirmed among the (a) staff, (b) judiciary and (c) users of each court between 24 November and the present day.

Alex Cunningham:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of covid-19 have been confirmed among jurors since 24 November 2020, by court.
Chris Philp:
The table below sets out the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases among (a) staff, (b) judiciary, (c) users and (d) jurors at courts between 24 November 2020 and 11 January 2021.

We take swift and robust action for each positive case. There should be no assumption that a positive case indicates that there has transmission within a court or tribunal building. The positive incidence rate for HMCTS staff has generally tracked the English national average during the pandemic. With the exception of a very small number of locations, our current assessment is that transmission within the estate is limited.

Where there are two or more confirmed cases or an increase in suspected incidents within 14 days linked to a single site, a national team provides additional support and guidance to local court and tribunals in managing the response, and early identification of close contacts so they can be informed to self-isolate in support of NHS Test and Trace. In line with public health guidance, where there are five or more confirmed cases (for England) or two or more confirmed cases (for Wales and Scotland) within a 14-day period we will, in accordance with public health guidance, refer to local health protection teams who will assess the individual circumstances and provide any further advice and guidance.

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### Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015

**Owen Thompson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish an update on the progress of the review of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015.
Chris Philp:
I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 9th October 2020 to PQ 97451 asked by the Rt. Hon. member for Tottenham.

Crowdfunding: Prosecutions
Alex Sobel:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prosecutions have taken place for fraudulent peer to peer lending in 2019.

Chris Philp:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) developed the Peer-to-Peer Lending Instrument 2019 in the exercise of the powers and related provisions in the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

In the data tool linked above, use the ‘Offence code’ filter in order to isolate the following offences under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, using their individual Home Office (HO) offence codes:

• 09508 - Provide false information to the Financial Services Authority
• 09976 - Triable either way offences (except those under classification 95/08) under Financial Services and Markets Act 2000
• 11401 - Summary offences under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000

We are unable to disaggregate cases specifically referring to fraudulent peer-to-peer lending from other offences under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Security Guards
Rachel Hopkins:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his Department’s policy is on the eligibility of bids to provide HMCTS security guarding services from companies that pay wages below the Living Wage Foundation certified living wage.

Chris Philp:
The Ministry of Justice requires all of its suppliers to comply with the legal minimum standards of pay as set out in the Government’s National Living Wage legislation. Bids to provide HMCTS security guarding services were required to meet this minimum standard.
Legal profession: Qualifications
Stuart C McDonald:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the loss of mutual recognition of qualifications within the EU on the UK legal services industry.

Alex Chalk:
Under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), the UK and the EU have agreed a framework under which both parties may agree arrangements on the recognition of professional qualifications, such as mutual recognition agreements. While frameworks like this are conventional practice in free trade agreements, the Government successfully negotiated improvements to those agreements, which are designed to make the system more flexible and easier for regulatory authorities, including those within the legal services sector, to use, should they wish.

It is possible that some UK legal services regulatory authorities, professional bodies or associations might also seek to conclude other agreements with EU counterparts outside of this framework.

The Government will continue to provide help and guidance to UK regulatory authorities and professional bodies on issues of mutual recognition of professional qualifications. As of 1 January 2021, UK-qualified professionals in the legal services sector who wish to supply services in the EU should seek recognition of their qualifications according to the local laws and regulations of individual Member States.

Members: Correspondence
Ms Lyn Brown:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 October 2020 to Questions 96824, 96825, and 96829 on Convictions and Police Cautions: Young People, when he plans to write to the hon. Member for West Ham with the information requested.

Chris Philp:
Obtaining the necessary information to answer the questions asked on 7th October 2020, involves accessing the Police National Computer (PNC). This system can only be accessed via a fixed location in our offices. Although PNC access re-started after the first lockdown in March, work to catch up the data loading needs to be completed before these questions can be answered. Currently there is reduced capacity to do this due to the current national lockdown. I will write to the Hon Member with the information requested when this data is available and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Offences against Children
Alex Norris:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of the number of adjournments related to child sexual abuse cases in 2020.
Alex Chalk:
HMCTS do not hold data relating to child sexual abuse adjournments. Cases with serious safeguarding implications continue to be prioritised for listing by the independent judiciary.

Adjournments are not specifically covered in the Criminal Court Statistics. However, data on vacated trials in the first and second quarters of 2020 have been published as part of the National Statistics on criminal courts in June and September 2020 respectively.


Sarah Champion:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the (a) Lord Chief Justice and (b) Crown Prosecution Service on the sentencing of UK offenders involved in the livestreaming of child sex abuse.

Chris Philp:
Child sexual abuse is a horrific crime and this government is determined to bring perpetrators to justice and support victims.

Ministers meet the Lord Chief Justice and other senior judges, as well as the Director of Public Prosecutions, regularly to discuss a range of issues related to the administration of justice.

Wendy Chamberlain:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to his oral answer of 8 December 2020, Official Report, column 710, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on giving priority to (a) prison staff and (b) prisoners for the covid-19 vaccine.

Lucy Frazer:
The decision about who will be eligible for the vaccine and the priority in which it is given is being decided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, but detailed planning is underway between HMPPS, NHS and public health bodies to prepare for the delivery of vaccinations in prisons.

Healthcare teams are also prioritising influenza vaccination clinics in prisons and have been encouraged to complete these as early as possible, to minimise any impact on the Covid-19 vaccine programme.

Peter Kyle:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of local authority accommodation for children on remand.
Lucy Frazer:
Local authorities are responsible for ensuring there is sufficient accommodation for children in their local area who need it, including those remanded by a court to local authority accommodation. The Youth Justice Board is supporting a three-year project to enable local authorities in London to create bespoke accommodation for children on remand. The aim of the project is to demonstrate both improved outcomes for the children and value for money.

Sexual Offences Act 2003
Sarah Champion:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to expand the definition of position of trust to include any adult regularly involved in caring for, training, supervising and being in sole charge of a child and not limited to professions outlined in Section 21 of the Act.

Alex Chalk:
The Government recognises that there are concerns about those who might abuse their position of power over a 16 or 17-year-old to pressure them into engaging in a sexual relationship. Such behaviour is likely to be caught by the robust laws we already have in place.

We remain committed to protecting children and young people from sexual abuse and we want to ensure that existing offences are being used effectively to tackle this behaviour, and that those working with young people understand their responsibilities and act appropriately.

To that effect, my department, working closely with colleagues across government, has taken forward a review of the existing law, to check that that it is working effectively and to ensure young people are protected.

This is an incredibly complex area and we are now considering the findings of the review.

It is important that in any consideration for reform in this area we achieve the sensitive balance between the protection of young people and ensuring we do not infringe upon the sexual rights and freedoms of those over the age of 16 granted to them by Parliament.

Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders
Peter Kyle:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and (b) Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders have been issued each year up to December 2020.

Peter Kyle:
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much compensation has been paid to victims of modern slavery in each financial year up to December 2020.
Alex Chalk:
Crown Court: Modern Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR YEAR</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>JAN 20 TO SEPT 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count of Defendants</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
1. The data source is the Crown Court system Xhibit, which is a live system and as such data is liable to change.
2. The data comprises of defendants who have received one or more of the above listed court orders.
3. If the same order type is received on different occasions during the same year then it has been counted only once.
4. If a defendant receives the same order type in different years, then it has been counted in each year.

~ If a request is made for information and the total figure amounts to five people or fewer, the MoJ must consider whether this could lead to the identification of individuals and whether disclosure of this information would be in breach of our statutory obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and/or the Data Protection Act 2018.

Magistrates’ Courts: Slavery & Trafficking Prevention and Risk Order Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR YEAR</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>JAN 20 TO SEPT 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slavery &amp; Trafficking Prevention Order</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavery &amp; Trafficking Prevention Order on Application</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
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<td>Slavery &amp; Trafficking Risk Order</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes:

1. Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that the data has been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts. Data are taken from a live management information system and can change over time.

2. Figures quoted for the Magistrates' Courts are for each Case where a 'full' Order was made/granted in the year specified, rather than a count of defendants. Hence, where a defendant has more than one case for which the relevant result code has been applied, each case will be counted separately.

~ If a request is made for information and the total figure amounts to five people or fewer, the MoJ must consider whether this could lead to the identification of individuals and whether disclosure of this information would be in breach of our statutory obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and/or the Data Protection Act 2018.

There are several ways for victims of modern slavery to seek or be awarded compensation.

This could be through civil claims and actions brought under statutory law (such as the Human Rights Act 1998) or the common law. However, records of compensation paid out in the civil courts for claims of this nature are not held centrally as data is not broken down into this level of detail.

Where a person is convicted of an offence, including offences under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, criminal courts in England and Wales may make a compensation order in cases involving personal injury, loss or damage. We do not hold data on the compensation paid to victims of modern slavery as a result of compensation orders imposed by the criminal courts, as the HMCTS system does not report at that level of detail.

The GB-wide Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme provides state-funded compensation to victims of violent crime who cannot pursue compensation or redress from other routes. Payments are available for physical or psychological injuries resulting directly from a crime of violence, as defined under Annex B of the Scheme. Victims of modern slavery who have been conclusively identified as such (through the National Referral Mechanism) may be eligible for compensation under the Scheme regardless of residence status or nationality, subject to wider eligibility criteria.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority does not hold data on the amount of compensation awarded to victims of modern slavery. Modern slavery is not defined for the purposes of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. Victims are compensated for the injuries they have sustained rather than the nature of the incident (with the exception of sexual assault or abuse).
**Slavery: Convictions**

Dr Matthew Offord:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been convicted of offences in each year since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act.

Dr Matthew Offord:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) criminal prosecutions and (b) punitive actions have been taken against eligible companies that fail to publish a statement of compliance in the Transparency in Supply Chains as sought by the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information for prosecutions and convictions for ‘Modern Slavery offences’ up to 2019, found in the ‘Outcomes by offence tool’ here:


Information on eligible companies that fail to publish a statement of compliance in the Transparency in Supply Chains as sought by the Modern Slavery Act 2015 that were subsequently prosecuted/convicted/sentenced is not held in the court proceedings database so these cases cannot be separately identified.

**Trials**

Alex Norris:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many outstanding trials are currently awaiting a court date to be assigned in (a) Magistrates and (b) Crown courts in (i) the UK and (ii) each region of the UK.

Chris Philp:

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice only has responsibility for England and Wales. Trials have been interpreted to mean cases which have received a not guilty plea to one or more offence/s, and we have interpreted the question as seeking to ask whether there is a trial court date set for such a case.

Crown Court

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Awaiting date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South West 190
Wales 41
Grand Total 3180

Notes
Data has been taken from the Crown Court system Xhibit. Xhibit is a live system and as such data is liable to change.
The data is based on a defendant entering a not guilty plea to one or more counts and no verdict code has been recorded against the count or a guilty plea having been entered against any other count.
The next trial date is the earliest date recorded in a warned, firm or fixed list.
The data represents the outstanding trial cases position as at w/e 20-DEC-2020.
If a trial involves more than one case number, these have been counted separately.

Magistrates’ Court
The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Alex Norris: [R] [131430]
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to increase sitting days for Judges in Crown Courts in regions with high numbers of outstanding trials.

Chris Philp:
We are continuing to work to maximise capacity across the entire Courts and Tribunals system. Recorders are integral to these plans, particularly in the Crown Court, playing a key role in ensuring that we deliver as many sitting days as possible in order to provide access to justice.

Data relating to sitting days, including recorders will be published in the first half of 2021 as part of the regular Official Statistics relating to Civil Justice.

Young Offenders

Rachael Maskell: [133047]
To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress he has made in ensuring that people who are charged with an offence under the age of 18 years are tried in the youth justice system.

Lucy Frazer:
The age of the young person at their first appearance in court determines whether they are tried in the youth or adult court. The youth court does not have jurisdiction where the defendant has turned 18 before making their first court appearance. However, if the child has made their first court appearance and turns 18 during the
proceedings it is possible for their case to continue to be heard in a Youth Court. Throughout court proceedings, consideration is given to the age - both chronological and developmental - of the defendant, and measures exist to ensure that those who turn 18 before trial are supported.

Where a child turns 18 after an offence is committed but before conviction, they will be tried in adult court. Youth and maturity will continue to inform sentencing decisions even after the offender turns 18 however, and the Sentencing Council’s definitive guideline, Sentencing Children and Young People, states that in these cases courts should use the sentence that would have been given at the time the offence was committed as a starting point.

Younger children have very different needs to young adults, and the special measures that exist in youth courts - such as the right to anonymity - are intended to protect vulnerable children. That is why they are not automatically available to defendants over the age of 18, regardless of when the offence was committed. However, assistance (including the Registered Intermediaries scheme) does exist to support adult defendants who are determined to be vulnerable.

We are also working to clear the courts backlogs and reduce the number of children awaiting trial. Significant work is being undertaken within HMCTS to carefully consider the impact that Covid-19 has had on the youth court and to develop measures which reduce the backlog while prioritising time-sensitive cases. The judiciary has also re-published a note of listing in magistrates’ courts the during Covid-19 outbreak, where it highlights the impact on the remand status of youth defendants (for example where delay might mean a relevant age-threshold is crossed).

Youth courts are now running at near to normal sitting patterns, and it is forecast that the outstanding caseload will soon return to pre-Covid levels. Since 20 July 2020 courts have disposed of more youth cases than they have received, reducing the number of outstanding youth cases week on week.

Young Offenders: Solitary Confinement

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children were in solitary confinement in (a) young offender institutions and (b) secure residential homes in England over the Christmas 2020 period.

Lucy Frazer:

Youth Custody Service (YCS) is committed to ensuring that every child in its care receives meaningful contact with staff and partner agencies throughout the course of every day.

YCS does not centrally collect individual child level data on the number of hours children have been in their rooms per day. YCS does collect management information on the average time out of room (TOOR) from the under 18 Young Offender Institutions (YOIs).
Youth Custody: Coronavirus

Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December to Question 125977 on Youth Custody, what sanctions are available to his Department for private providers contracted to provide youth custody that fail to implement covid-19 guidance appropriately.

Lucy Frazer:

The MoJ has a range of contractual levers that result in providers being paid less if performance is below the agreed levels. These levers were put in place at the point the contracts were let and pre-date the COVID pandemic, so are not specifically designed to relate to non-delivery of COVID safety measures.

There are, however, a range of steps that the MoJ can take in all circumstances with providers who are failing to meet their core obligations to keep children in their care safe. Warning notices are issued should serious or persistent failings occur. These notices compel providers to produce and deliver plans to improve or experience escalating activity that can ultimately end in the termination of their contract.

Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December to Question 125977 on Youth Custody, when the programme of research to evaluate and learn lessons from the impact and response to covid-19 was commissioned by the Youth Custody Service.

Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December to Question 125977 on Youth Custody, which (a) academics and (b) others have been commissioned by the Youth Custody Service to carry out the programme of research to evaluate and learn lessons from the impact and response to covid-19.

Ms Lyn Brown:

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 December to Question 125977 on Youth Custody, what the timescale is for the programme of research to evaluate and learn lessons from the impact and response to covid-19 commissioned by the Youth Custody Service.

Lucy Frazer:

The Youth Custody Service commissioned the Covid-19 Research and Evaluation Programme in May 2020 in order to enable learning from the experiences of dealing with Covid-19 to improve youth custody in the long-term. It is being undertaken by HMPPS YCS Psychology Services with independent direction by Professor Neal Hazel. It is envisaged that the final reports will be available in the summer.
LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Westminster Hall: Debates
Rachael Maskell:
To ask the Leader of the House, what discussions he has had with the House authorities on enabling full virtual participation in Westminster Hall debates.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:
On 13 January, the House agreed a motion to suspend sittings in Westminster Hall. I refer the Hon. lady to my words during the debate on the question of virtual participation in Westminster Hall.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cosmetics: Northern Ireland
Colum Eastwood:
To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether retailers in Northern Ireland importing cosmetic goods from suppliers in Great Britain can be classified as responsible persons under the new import arrangements; and if he will provide financial assistance to offset any additional costs resulting from new or increased indemnities from acting as a responsible person.

Mr Robin Walker:
Northern Ireland businesses that bring cosmetic products from Great Britain into Northern Ireland will automatically become the Responsible Person unless they designate this role in writing to another person established within the EEA or Northern Ireland who must in turn formally accept the role in writing. The Government has provided comprehensive guidance to businesses placing goods on the Northern Ireland market at:


Stormont House Agreement
Stephen Farry:
To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether any elements of the (a) Stormont House and (b) Fresh Start Agreement that still require legislation to implement.

Mr Robin Walker:
Since the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements in 2014 and 2015 respectively, much good work has been achieved and multiple legislative commitments have been fulfilled.

The main outstanding legislative commitments in the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements concern parading and legacy. The UK Government has been consistently clear that responsibility for parades and related protests should, in principle, be devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly, and that should alternative,
workable, locally agreed arrangements be forthcoming, it would look to bring forward legislation to devolve this matter.

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. We are committed to making progress on this as quickly as possible.

**TRANSPORT**

- **Bridges: East Renfrewshire**
  
  **Kirsten Oswald:**
  
  To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons Highways England is responsible for determining the future development of the bridges between Neilston and Uplawmoor on a former rail line in East Renfrewshire.

  **Rachel Maclean:**
  
  In addition to its primary role as highway authority for the strategic road network in England, Highways England manages the Historical Railways Estate on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport across England, Scotland and Wales. It is planning to infill up to twenty-three bridge structures in Scotland over the next five years for the purpose of maintaining the safety of nearby communities and the drivers who use the roads which cross them.

  East Renfrewshire Council has indicated that there are future plans for the former Lanarkshire and Ayrshire railway. There will be further discussions between Highways England and the local authority about plans for the three bridges.

  Highways England enjoys a strong working relationship with local councils, allowing for an open dialogue about local authority responsibilities and the potential future use or transfer of ownership of bridges.

- **Business Travel: Coronavirus**
  
  **Jim McMahon:**
  
  To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Government last reviewed the merits of its decision to exempt high value business travellers from existing covid-19 quarantine restrictions for international arrivals in England.

  **Robert Courts:**
  
  The Secretary of State must review the need for the requirements imposed by the “Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”) at least every 28 days. This means determining whether each of the requirements remain necessary to achieving the public health aims of the Regulations. The statutory review includes consideration of both the requirement for international arrivals to complete a Passenger Locator Form and the requirement to self-isolate for 10 days, as well as consideration of the package of the measures as a whole including exemptions. Each restriction is judged by reference to its continuing
necessity as the pandemic develops; and based on the available information at each stage about the effectiveness and impact of the measures in reducing the domestic transmission from imported cases of COVID-19.

The last review of the Regulations was completed on 11th January 2021. The next review of the Regulations must be completed by 8th February 2021.

### Driving Tests: Coronavirus

**Patricia Gibson:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to extend Driving Theory Test certificates, in view of the fact that many learner drivers find their certificates will expire before the current period of lockdown is likely to end.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The maximum duration of two years between passing the theory test and a subsequent practical test is in place for road safety reasons; to ensure that a candidate’s knowledge is current. This validity period is set in legislation and the Government has no current plans to lay further legislation to extend it.

It is important that road safety knowledge and hazard perception skills are up to date at the critical point that they drive unsupervised for the first time. Those with theory test certificates expiring may have taken their test in early 2019. Since then, their lessons and practice sessions will have been significantly curtailed during recent lockdowns and it is likely that their knowledge base will have diminished. Research suggests that this would be particularly harmful for hazard perception skills, a key factor in road safety.

Ensuring new drivers have current relevant knowledge and skills is a vital part of the training of new drivers, who are disproportionality represented in casualty statistics. Taking all this into consideration, the decision has been made not to extend theory test certificates and learners will need to pass another theory test if their certificate expires.

### Railways: Construction

**Sarah Olney:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average cost of reinstating one mile of rail track on a disused line where the track bed remains available.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department has made no such estimate. The Government is progressing work on a number of rail reinstatement schemes through its Restoring Your Railway programme. Each scheme will have unique characteristics in terms of the works required to deliver the desired train service outputs.

### Road Signs and Markings: Cultural Heritage
Andrew Gwynne:
To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 11 January 2020 to Question 131200 on Road Signs and Markings: Cultural Heritage, what steps his Department is taking to implement the Government's guidance on Celebrating the historic counties of England dated 16 July 2019, on the motorway and trunk road network through Highways England.

Rachel Maclean:
Pursuant to the answer to Questions 127499, 127500 and 127501, the Department has no plans to ask Highways England to implement historic county boundary signs on the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention
Karl Turner:
To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on ratifying ILO Convention 185 on Seafarers' Identity Documents.

Robert Courts:
The UK currently recognises and accepts all seafarer identity documents that are compliant with ILO Convention 108, and will also accept documents compliant with ILO Convention 185 where the issuing State has previously ratified ILO 108. The UK was a major contributor to the drafting and subsequent amendments of ILO 185. The pandemic has delayed progress but officials continue to work with Home Office on the significant technical, security and operational requirements that would need to be in place to allow ratification.

TREASURY

Advanced Research Projects Agency: Finance
Grahame Morris:
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the 2020 Spending Review and the £800 million allocated to the high-risk, high-reward programme, when the remaining £750 million will become available, and whether this will be in phases or in one instalment.

Grahame Morris:
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the 2020 Spending Review and the £800 million allocated to the high-risk, high-reward programme, which body will be responsible for allocating those funds.

Kemi Badenoch:
In the Spending Review the Government announced an annual profile for high-risk, high-reward research rounded to the nearest £0.1bn. This profile is £0.1bn in 2021-22, £0.3bn in 2022-23, £0.3bn in 2023-24 and £0.3bn in 2024-2025.

BaFin
Richard Fuller:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations his Department (a) has made and (b) plans to make to the Government of Germany on the oversight of BaFin.

John Glen:

HM Treasury Ministers and Officials regularly speak with their counterparts in Germany. The UK and Germany share high standards of prudential regulation and work together to promote these internationally through fora such as the Financial Stability Board and the Basel Committee for Banking Supervision. Oversight of BaFin is the responsibility of the Government of Germany.

Buildings: Insulation

Alison Thewliss:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to exempt people affected by dangerous cladding from Insurance Premium Tax.

John Glen:

Insurance Premium Tax is a tax paid by insurers on all general insurance premiums. Insurance pricing is a decision which is affected by a wide range of factors, and the taxes that insurers pay are just one part of this. It is hard to predict the impact of an exemption on insurance pricing for those affected by unsafe cladding, as this largely depends on how the insurers would react. In addition, any loss in tax revenue would have to be balanced by a reduction in public spending, increased borrowing or increased taxation elsewhere.

While there is no current plan to introduce an exemption on insurance pricing for those affected by unsafe cladding, all taxes are kept under review and the views expressed to us are carefully considered as part of the annual Budget process.

Business: Coronavirus

Anneliese Dodds:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what date prior to his announcement in the House of Commons on 9 October 2020 he first became aware of the problems faced by businesses forced to close as result of covid-19 restrictions that he referred to in that announcement.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises that this an extremely challenging time for businesses across the UK, particularly those required to close due to necessary restrictions to protect public health.

During the pandemic, the Government has regularly engaged with businesses and trade groups to understand the needs of businesses and has also continually monitored the impact of restrictions and Covid-19 support. This has informed our efforts to evolve the support available for businesses when necessary, including those changes announced in the Chancellor’s statement in the House of Commons on 9 October 2020.
Mr Laurence Robertson:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide financial support for businesses which are not required to close under covid-19 restrictions but are experiencing a loss of trade as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

Since March the Government’s priority has been to save lives and protect jobs, businesses, and livelihoods. The Government has supported people and businesses via an unprecedented package of financial support worth more than £280 billion.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has supported businesses by helping to pay the wages of people in 9.9 million jobs across the UK. It is open until the end of April 2021.

Businesses can continue to apply for loans under a number of business loan schemes, including the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, until the end of March 2021. Over 1.4 million small and medium sized companies have received government-backed loans, worth over £68 billion.

Businesses forced to close as a result of the current England-wide restrictions are eligible for one-off grants of up to £9,000 on top of existing monthly grants under the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed). In addition, however, England’s local authorities have received a top-up worth £500m to their allocation from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), which has already provided local authorities with £1.1 billion.

This funding ensures that local authorities can make discretionary grants to businesses which are not eligible for the LRSG (Closed) but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to the national lockdown. Local authorities will run application schemes for the ARG, including for the £500m top-up, and will have significant discretion when it comes to deciding which businesses receive payments. Business grant policy is a fully devolved area, but the Devolved Administrations will receive their share of this funding through the Barnett formula in the usual way.

This support comes on top of billions of pounds’ worth of Rate Reliefs, tax deferrals, and other labour market schemes.

The Chancellor made a Statement on the economy and comprehensive economic plan on 11 January and will set out the next phase of the plan to protect jobs in the Budget on 3 March 2021.

Dan Jarvis:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to provide guidance to local authorities on the eligibility criteria for discretionary funding, announced on 6 January 2021.
Kemi Badenoch:
On 5 January we announced that local authorities in England would receive an additional £500 million of funding for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) to support their local businesses. This builds on the £1.1 billion of ARG funding which they have already received to support their local economies and help businesses impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The guidance for the ARG was published in December 2020 – this guidance covers the additional £500m top up to the ARG as well as the initial allocation. We encourage local authorities to use this funding to make payments to businesses in need as quickly as possible.

Business: Government Assistance

Emily Thornberry:
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support the Government plans to make available to help businesses facing (a) new administrative processes and (b) tariff barriers at the end of the transition period.

Jesse Norman:
In order to help businesses facing new administrative processes, the Government has provided extensive guidance to traders to support them, including publishing the detailed Border Operating Model to help traders take the necessary steps.

Over £80 million of support has been made available to help the customs intermediaries sector to scale up. This includes grant funding for customs IT, training, and recruitment of new staff. The Government has also established the Trader Support Service (TSS), which has been set up to guide all affected businesses through any changes to moving goods due to the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The service is free to use and can complete declarations on traders’ behalf without traders needing to engage directly with new digital customs systems or processes. The TSS can support traders to understand the information they need to collect about their goods for the service to complete declarations on their behalf.

In addition, the UK and EU have agreed an administrative simplification. Until 31 December 2021, for both goods imported from the EU to the UK and for goods imported from the UK to the EU, traders do not need supplier declarations from business suppliers to be in place at the time the goods are exported. It effectively allows an exporter to declare the origin of their goods without needing underlying documentation in place to prove it.

As regards tariff barriers, the UK has agreed a zero tariffs and zero quotas deal with the EU. Prior to the UK leaving the EU, the UK applied the EU’s Common External Tariff to imports from non-preferential trading partners. This trade is now subject to the UK Global Tariff which is a simple, easier to use and lower tariff regime than the EU’s Common External Tariff.
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Jon Trickett:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to make provision for employees who began their employment between 30 October 2020 and 4 January 2021 to receive assistance from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme furlough scheme.

Alex Sobel:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be updated to include people employed between 30 October 2020 and the national lockdown announced in January 2021.

Jesse Norman:  
The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was extended on 31 October, ahead of the national lockdown on 1 November. The 30 October cut-off date allows as many people as possible to be included by going right up to the day before the announcement, balancing the risk of fraud that existed as soon as the scheme became public.

The Government understands that the new restrictions are challenging for some businesses, and the Chancellor has announced further support measures. These are carefully designed to complement the existing ones so as to ensure jobs and livelihoods are protected. This support includes a new one-off grant of up to £9,000 to support businesses in England which are legally required to close. This comes in addition to the existing monthly grants for closed businesses of up to £3,000 per month. Local authorities will also receive an additional £500m, to a total of £1.6bn, of discretionary funding to allow them to support their local businesses.

The CJRS is not the only support available for employees. The Government has boosted the generosity of the welfare system by £7.4bn in 2020-21 including through a temporary £20 a week increase in Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element. This means that for a single Universal Credit claimant (25 or over), the standard allowance has increased from £317.82 to £409.89 per month. The £20 per week uplift is one part of a package of temporary welfare measures, which also includes the suspension of the Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor to support self-employed people on low incomes.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Bridget Phillipson:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has put forward the names of (a) economists or (b) scientists to Cabinet colleagues as persons from whom a presentation on the (i) covid-19 pandemic or (ii) economic effects of the Government’s response to the covid-19 pandemic should be received.

John Glen:  
The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) provides scientific and technical advice to support government decision makers during emergencies, but we will also continue to work closely with other government departments, local authorities, Public Health England, and with intergovernmental organisations and our G7 and G20 partners overseas in efforts to respond to Covid-19. This work and collaboration takes into account the views of a range of experts, including scientists and economists, and this is the case in the normal course of policy making.

The Chancellor has put on record his thanks to the Trades Union Congress, the CBI and other business groups, for their constructive conversations around support schemes the Government has provided for workers and businesses, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) was also designed after extensive engagement with stakeholders including the TUC, the Federation of Small Businesses and IPSE - The Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed.

Crowdfunding: Fraud
Alex Sobel:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to make an assessment of the potential level of fraud in (a) peer to peer lending and (b) crowdfunding.

John Glen:  
The Government takes matters of fraud extremely seriously. We continue to work closely with industry to close down the vulnerabilities that fraudsters exploit and ensure members of the public have the information they need to spot a scam and stand up to fraudsters.

We set up the Joint Fraud Taskforce to help build a collaborative law enforcement, government and industry response to tackling fraud. The Taskforce have already delivered on initiatives such as Take Five (the fraud awareness campaign). The Financial Conduct Authority’s (FCA) 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.

The FCA has a broad range of powers to oversee the peer to peer (P2P) and parts of the crowdfunding sectors. Moreover, P2P lending and investment-based crowdfunding are regulated activities under Financial Services Markets Act (FSMA 2000).

HM Treasury works closely with the FCA on an ongoing basis to understand what risks it has identified in the sectors it regulates, including the potential for an increase in fraud.
Customs: UK Trade with EU
Gavin Newlands: [132993]
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the number of businesses that are prepared for the completion of customs paperwork for export to the EU.

Jesse Norman:
The Government has been working for over a year to help businesses to understand and prepare for their new obligations, including customs paperwork for export to the EU.

The Government undertook significant readiness activity prior to 1 January, identifying key customer groups and delivering a high volume of targeted communications and engagement, including sending over 11 million letters and emails and hosting 50 webinars with over 30,000 attendees to date, preparing businesses for the new rules.

Through the cross-Government campaign since August the Government has reached 41m adults (15+) and 16m business decision makers through radio, and 18m adults (15+) and 3.5m business decision makers through print and digital articles, promoting key readiness messaging for importers and exporters.

The Government will continue to assess carefully how traders are adapting to the new customs arrangements over the next few weeks and months.

Debts
John McDonnell: [133625]
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent meetings Ministers of his Department has had with the (a) Financial Conduct Authority and (b) Bank of England on recent trends in the level of personal debt.

John Glen:
The Government engages regularly with the Bank of England, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) to monitor personal finances, including levels of consumer debt. MaPS monitor financial difficulty through an annual survey of 22,000 people. The FCA conduct a biennial Financial Lives Survey, which provides a comprehensive insight into the finances of 16,000 adults. Both surveys will be published in early 2021. The Bank of England publish monthly statistics on money and credit and the FCA is undertaking further research to understand how the impacts of COVID-19 are evolving.

Debts: Developing Countries
Preet Kaur Gill: [133105]
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of how much UK Government funding given through the International Monetary Fund’s (a) Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust and (b) Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust has been used by donor countries to pay (i) interest or (ii) principal on debt to private creditors.
John Glen:
In 2020, the UK contributed £150m to the IMF’s Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) and lent an additional £2.2bn (doubling our existing loan) to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) to support the poorest countries in their response to the Covid-19 crisis. These funds are not ringfenced to specific purposes, allowing flexibility for each country’s individual circumstances. The IMF conducts assurances on all its financial assistance to ensure that the funds are spent responsibly. All beneficiary countries have published letters of intent committing to spending these funds responsibly, including increasing health and social spending, and committing to safeguards on the use of the funds. The Fund will follow up on these commitments as part of its scrutiny and surveillance of government expenditure.

Preet Kaur Gill:
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of how much of the UK’s contribution to the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative has been used by donor countries to pay interest or principal on debt to private creditors.

John Glen:
The G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) enables any country that is IDA-eligible or on the UN’s list of Least Developed Countries to suspend debt service payments to its official bilateral creditors.

Beneficiary countries must commit the proceeds of the initiative to social, health or economic spending in response to the Covid-19 crisis. This will be monitored by the IMF and World Bank. [1]


Debts: Yorkshire and the Humber

Jon Trickett:
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what information his Department holds on the average level of household debt in households in (a) Hemsworth Parliamentary constituency and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber region in the most recent period for which figures are available.

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

But the Government recognises that some people may be struggling with their finances at this difficult time. To help people in problem debt get their finances back on track, an extra £37.8 million support package is being made available to debt advice providers this financial year, bringing this year's budget for free debt advice in England to over £100 million.
Data on levels of over-indebtedness in Hemsworth and in Yorkshire and the Humber was last published in 2018 by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), who continue to fund the local delivery of free debt advice. MaPS will be publishing updated figures in 2021.

**Directors: Coronavirus**

**Owen Thompson:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing a director’s income support scheme, in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has recognised taxpayers have faced immense challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has prioritised delivering support to as many people as possible, as quickly as possible while guarding against the risk of fraud or abuse.

The Government always welcomes constructive proposals from stakeholders to improve the design of its COVID-19 business support schemes, including the suggestion for a Directors Income Support Scheme (DISS). This proposal aims to provide a new system for company directors, based on reported profits. The Government has consulted key stakeholders and is currently scrutinising the proposal in detail.

In the meantime, let me highlight that company owner managers could be eligible for existing support schemes including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the income taken by company owner managers via PAYE, Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays and other business support grants. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at: www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/.

**Kim Johnson:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he will implement the Directors Income Support Scheme proposal from FSB, Forgotten Ltd and ACCA UK, which would provide a taxable grant calculated at 80 per cent of 3 months average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment and capped at £7,500 in total, to be paid into the company and form part of its taxable profits and mirror the existing framework offered by the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has recognised that taxpayers have faced immense challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has prioritised delivering support to as many people as possible as quickly as possible, while guarding against the risk of fraud or abuse.

The Government always welcomes constructive proposals from stakeholders to improve the design of its COVID-19 business support schemes, including the suggestion for a Directors Income Support Scheme (DISS). This proposal aims to
provide a new system to provide support for company directors, based on reported profits. The Government is currently scrutinising the proposal.

In addition, company owner managers could be eligible for existing support schemes including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the income taken by company owner managers via PAYE, Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays and other business support grants. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at: www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support

Employment: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [133090]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support people who are ineligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme as a result of entering employment after 30 October 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to supporting all groups in society with the challenges caused by COVID-19. That is why the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is only one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals.

The Government has implemented a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element; a relaxation of the Universal Credit minimum income floor; and measures to make Statutory Sick Pay and new style Employment and Support Allowance easier to access. The Government has also invested over £900 million in increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, which means more than 1.5 million households who rent privately will gain an average of £600 per year. In addition, the Government has given local authorities a further £500 million to support the most vulnerable people in our society, who may struggle to meet their council tax payments this year.

Stephen Farry: [133291]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing bridging finance for employers to cover ongoing payment of national insurance contributions and pension costs for employees on furlough during the covid-19 outbreak in order to safeguard jobs during periods of business closure.

Jesse Norman:

Under the extension from November, employer contributions for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) have returned to the level they were in August, which is lower than the previous level in September and October. Employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs) and pension contributions are the only required contributions under the extension to the CJRS. For an average claim, this accounts for just 5 per cent of total employment costs or £70 per employee per month. Many small employers can benefit from the Employment Allowance for support with their
NICs bill, allowing eligible employers to reduce their annual National Insurance liability by up to £4,000.

The CJRS is only one element of a comprehensive package of support for businesses. This includes access to affordable, Government backed finance through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBLS) for large firms, along with the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises. As of 13 December, these schemes have already provided over £68bn in guaranteed loans and provide vital support across all sectors of the UK economy for businesses who have been impacted by coronavirus.

We have guaranteed the devolved administrations an additional £16.8 billion of resource funding this year to help them respond to coronavirus. This means at least £3bn of additional funding for the Northern Ireland Executive.

**Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**

Marco Longhi:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to reassess the calculation of the compensation payments made to people affected by the Equitable Life scheme.

John Glen:  
The Equitable Life Payment Scheme has been wound down and further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after closure is available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme. There are no plans to reopen any previous decisions relating to the Payment Scheme or review the £1.5 billion funding allocation previously made to it.

**Financial Conduct Authority**

Martyn Day:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the findings of Dame Elizabeth Gloster's report, The LCF Review and Raj Parker's report, The Connaught Review, if he will commission an independent inquiry into the FCA; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will launch an independent inquiry into the effectiveness of the Financial Conduct Authority; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:  
As set out in my Written Ministerial Statement on 17 December 2020 the Government welcomes the Financial Conduct Authority’s (FCA) commitment to implement all of Dame Elizabeth’s and Mr Parker’s recommendations, and to address the issues and concerns identified in full. The FCA’s responses to both reports detail the changes they have made over several years and commits to accelerate this ongoing programme of reform through their Transformation Programme.
The FCA will report publicly on the progress of its Transformation Programme until such time as the recommendations from both reviews have been substantially implemented, as set out in the FCA CEO’s letter to me on 17 December 2020 which is available on gov.uk.

The Treasury will be engaging closely with the FCA to monitor implementation of the recommendations.

Financial Services: Regulation

Richard Fuller: [132851]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing additional provisions on (a) the due diligence required of financial intermediaries prior to making recommendations to investors and (b) public disclosure of the fees paid to intermediaries.

John Glen:

The Treasury works closely with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to ensure that the financial advice market works well, competitively and fairly for firms and consumers. As the regulator, the FCA expect financial advisers to understand their client’s knowledge and experience of the transaction being considered, to be fully aware of their clients' financial situation, and to fully appreciate what the client is trying to achieve.

Financial advisers must disclose their charges to customers prior to any transaction, using a price list or tariff, confirming the specific amounts they will be charged, so customers understand what service they are paying for at what price. In the area of defined benefit (DB) pensions transfer advice, new rules came into effect on 1 October 2020 to ensure that costs and charges are clearly disclosed, and that charges are not contingent on a positive recommendation to transfer. This removes any incentives for an advice firm to act in their own interests, rather than their client’s, and places a value on professional advice, regardless of whether it results in a transaction.

In December 2020, HM Treasury and the FCA published an evaluation of the Retail Distribution Review and the Financial Advice Market Review to understand how the market has evolved since these reviews were undertaken, and to establish what the key remaining policy challenges are. The FCA also launched a “Call for Input: Consumer Investments” last year which looks across the whole investment market and considers systemic issues which may need to be fixed. The FCA are now considering responses.

German Property Group: Insolvency

Richard Fuller: [132848]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps UK regulatory agencies are taking in response to (a) the bankruptcy of German Property Group (formerly Dolphin Capital and Dolphin Trust) and (b) its effect on UK-based investors.
**Richard Fuller:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to ask regulatory agencies to make an assessment of the implications for his policies of UK-regulated financial advisors promoting, recommending and offering investment in German Property Group (formerly Dolphin Capital and Dolphin Trust).

**John Glen:**

The UK regulatory agencies are aware of the bankruptcy of German Property Group (GPG), formerly known as Dolphin Trust, and the effect on UK-based investors.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has published a joint statement with the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) 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 Self Invested Personal Pensions (SIPPs) operator – and they believe they were mis-sold. This includes how to complain to the Ombudsman service or submit a claim to the FSCS. The statement can be accessed on the FCA’s website (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 is working closely with all relevant external stakeholders on this matter and will share any further updates as and when possible.

**Jayne-Anne Gadhia**

**Bridget Phillipson:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the quarterly publication of data by the Electoral Commission on political donations, whether he was aware at the time of appointment of Jayne-Anne Gadhia as Chair of HMRC that she had given more than £20,000 to the Conservative Party since the 2019 General Election.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on how many occasions he met Jayne-Anne Gadhia from 14 February 2020 to 20 November 2020; and what the subject of each of those meetings was.

**Jesse Norman:**

Political donations made by Jayne-Anne Gadhia were fully disclosed in the course of a fair and open recruitment process conducted by HM Revenue and Customs. The department was not required to disclose to ministers political donations made by the successful applicant and, therefore, did not do so.

The Chancellor has not met Jayne-Anne Gadhia.
**Location: Tax Allowances**

**Sir Robert Syms:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by how much has the relocation allowance been updated in line with inflation since its introduction in 1994.

**Jesse Norman:**

The tax exempt relocation allowance has remained at £8,000 since it was introduced in 1994. The Government keeps all reliefs and allowances under review to ensure that they continue to meet policy objectives.

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**Mortgages: Coronavirus**

**Alex Sobel:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to reinstate the mortgage payment holiday scheme for homeowners that are in financial difficulties as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Glen:**

We have extended the period that borrowers can apply for a mortgage holiday to support homeowners in financial distress. Mortgage borrowers who have not yet taken a payment holiday are able to take a payment holiday for up to six months. Borrowers who have taken an initial payment holiday can top this up to six months. The Financial Conduct Authority’s (FCA’s) guidance released on 17 November sets out that mortgage holidays (up to a maximum of 6 months) will remain an option for borrowers until 31 March 2021. However, the FCA guidance also notes that all payment holidays will need to end by 31 July 2021.

For borrowers that have already taken a full six months payment holiday, the FCA’s guidance sets out that firms should continue to provide support through tailored forbearance options for those borrowers that are facing ongoing financial difficulties. This could include granting new mortgage payment holidays.

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**Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus**

**Dan Jarvis:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to reallocate returned business rates relief to (a) people and (b) businesses that have been excluded from Government financial support during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of ministerial discussions are not normally disclosed. The Government welcomes any decision to repay support where it is no longer needed, and any funds returned will support the Government’s public expenditure plans and continuing efforts to protect people’s jobs and incomes.
Occupational Pensions: Tax Allowances

Neil Gray:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made on responding to its consultation on pensions tax relief administration; and what the timeframe is for publishing a response to that consultation.

Neil Gray:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the administration of pensions tax relief on low-income workers; and if he will make a statement.

Neil Gray:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to amend net pay pension schemes to ensure that people earning below the personal tax threshold can access their full tax relief entitlement.

Neil Gray:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking with Chancellor of the Exchequer to resolve net pay tax issues for low-income workers; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government recognises the different impacts of the two systems of paying pension tax relief on pension contributions for workers earning below the personal allowance. At Budget 2020, the Government announced it would launch a Call for Evidence on pensions tax relief administration, in line with its manifesto commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of this issue.

This Call for Evidence set out the Government’s views on proposals already put forward by stakeholders, invited further proposals, and sought views on the operation of the RAS method.

The Call for Evidence is now closed. The Government is analysing the responses and will respond in due course.

Neil Gray:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the number of low-income workers with reduced take-home pay following application of pensions tax relief by pension scheme operators.

John Glen:

HMRC has estimated the number of individuals earning below the personal allowance and making workplace pension contributions via Real Time Information (RTI) using net pay arrangements.

For 2017-18, when the personal allowance was £11,500, HMRC estimate the number of individuals to be 1.5 million.
HMRC’s Survey of Personal Income (SPI) and administrative data was used to produce the estimates. The 2017-18 SPI data (published in March 2020) is the latest year available.

**Offences against Children: Northern Ireland**

Simon Hoare:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent correspondence his Department has received from the Northern Ireland Office on implementing a disregard for compensation payments made under the Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019.

Steve Barclay:  
My department is aware of the situation regarding Northern Ireland Historic Abuse Payments and how they are treated within the benefit system.

**Overseas Investment: Fraud**

Stephen Farry:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on allegations of fraud connected to overseas investments; and what steps he is taking to safeguard the interests of UK investors involved in investment scams (a) overseas and (b) in unregulated areas.

John Glen:  
The Government takes matters of fraud extremely seriously. We continue to work closely with industry to close down the vulnerabilities that fraudsters exploit and ensure members of the public have the information they need to spot a scam and stand up to fraudsters.

The FCA 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/.

Individuals who invest in unregulated products should be aware that they are unlikely to be eligible for FSCS compensation (unless a regulated activity (i.e. financial advice) has been undertaken). Whether an activity is regulated is set out in legislation, and is rightly a matter for government and Parliament. The costs and benefits of bringing activities into the regulatory perimeter can be finely balanced which is why Government is committed to regulating only where there is a clear case for doing so.

Where a member of the public suspects that they have been a victim of a scam they should report the case to Action Fraud, the national reporting point for fraud and cyber crime.
Pensions: Age

Jonathan Edwards: [135892]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on the minimum age for withdrawing a private pension; and what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce legislation on that minimum age.

John Glen:

In 2014 the government announced it would increase the minimum pension age from age 55 to age 57 from 2028, reflecting trends in longevity and encouraging individuals to remain in work, while also helping to ensure pension savings provide for later life.

That announcement set out the timetable for this change well in advance to enable people to make financial plans and will be legislated for in due course.

Price Controls

Sarah Olney: [133103]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring the UK’s system of economic regulation to consider the long-term effects of price control determinations to quantify regulatory decisions into long-term policy objectives beyond that period of specific settlement.

John Glen:

As stated in response to the National Infrastructure Commission’s (NIC) economic regulation study on strategic investment and public confidence, the Government supports effective mechanisms for setting long-term objectives.

For example, the Government is supportive of moves to consider whether strategic investments can be removed from economic regulation price control processes to increase the scope for new investors to enter the market and provide a wider range of opportunities for potential investors. However, this remains for regulators to decide.

The Government will also publish an overarching economic regulation policy paper in 2021 which will consider regulator duties, injecting more competition into strategic investments, and the benefits of a cross-sectoral Strategic Policy Statement. This should provide a clear and consistent long-term and strategic direction for regulators.

Retail Trade: Non-domestic Rates

Sir Desmond Swayne: [135788]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of giving the retail sector an early indication of the future business rates for which they will be liable.

Jesse Norman:

This year the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties due to the direct adverse effects of
COVID-19, worth about £10 billion, and has frozen the business rates multiplier for all businesses for 2021-22.

The Government is also considering options for further COVID-19 related support through business rates reliefs. In order to ensure that any decisions best meet the evolving challenges presented by COVID-19, the Government will outline plans for 2021-22 reliefs in due course.

### Retail Trade: Taxation

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the average tax paid by (a) high street and (b) internet-based retailers; and what steps his Department is taking to establish a more level tax playing field for the retail industry.

**Jesse Norman:**

This year the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, worth around £10 billion, and has frozen the business rates multiplier for 2021-22.

The Chancellor keeps the impacts of tax policy on different types of businesses, including high street and internet based retailers, under consideration. The fundamental review of business rates will consider all parts of the business rates system, as well as alternative taxes such as an Online Sales Tax.

### Revenue and Customs: Internet

**Bridget Phillipson:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2020 to Question 130042 on Revenue and Customs: Internet, that HMRC do not usually publish data protection impact assessments, if he will nonetheless place in the Library copies of the data protection impact assessment on the webchat facilities available on HMRC’s website; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC does not routinely publish DPIAs and there is no legal requirement to do so. The DPIA for webchat contains details of HMRC’s security controls which it would not be appropriate to put in the public domain.

### Revenue and Customs: Labour Turnover and Vacancies

**Bridget Phillipson:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2020 to Question 130034 on Revenue and Customs: Vacancies, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of vacancies and staff turnover within HMRC in the last five years.

**Jesse Norman:**

It is not possible to provide the data requested covering the last five years because the data is not readily available.
Revenue and Customs: Racial Discrimination

Bridget Phillipson:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2020 to Question 130037 on Revenue and Customs: Racial Discrimination, what steps he is taking to ensure the workplace is supportive, fair and welcoming for all HMRC staff.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC believe that greater inclusivity is not merely good in itself, but leads to better decision-making and improved outcomes. ‘Being a great place to work’ is one of the organisation’s five strategic objectives and why they have a change programme ‘Respect at Work’, that sets out how they will achieve that objective. Examples include:

- ‘Our Commitments’, a set of principles developed with about 17,000 colleagues that guide how colleagues should treat one another.
- An overhaul of HMRC grievance, discipline, whistleblowing and conduct policies and processes to ensure they are fair.
- Local action plans within HMRC teams designed to create a more supportive environment.
- A suite of learning products to support respectful behaviour in the workplace from the point of induction for new starters at HMRC.

Revenue and Customs: Staff

Bridget Phillipson:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2020 to Question 130035 on Revenue and Customs: Termination of Employment, if he will supply the same data for each year from April 2005 onwards; and what the total headcount was in HMRC in April of each year from 2005 to 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The following table details the total headcount in HMRC in April of the last six years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>HMRC HEADCOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>64,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>67,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>69,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>65,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>64,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>64,554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the time available, it has not been possible to provide the information requested for earlier years. I will write to the Honourable Member with the further information requested in due course, and I will place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Bridget Phillipson:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the evidential basis was for the level of direct support through the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme to be set at (a) 20 per cent of prior taxable profits on 24 September 2020, (b) 40 per cent of prior taxable profits on 22 October 2020, (c) 55 per cent of prior taxable profits on 2 November 2020 and (d) 80 per cent of prior taxable profits on 5 November 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided, and will continue to provide, generous support to the self-employed during the COVID-19 pandemic through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). The third grant, combined with up to £14,070 worth of support for each individual from the first and second grants, makes the SEISS one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The Government has adapted the generosity of the SEISS in line with the evolution of the virus. The Government’s policy responses are carefully designed to provide certainty and support to people and businesses across the UK to respond to the current public health restrictions.

At the Winter Economy Plan, the government announced that the SEISS would be extended, with a third and fourth grant. The third grant was set at 20% of average monthly trading profits to support businesses through a period of reduced demand. As the health context changed, this was increased to 40% and provided broadly equivalent support to the Job Support Scheme.

Following the Prime Minister’s announcement to extend the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the month of November, the third SEISS grant was increased to 55% to provide broadly equivalent support to self-employed individuals. Following the Chancellor’s announcement to extend the CJRS until January 2021, the third SEISS grant was increased to 80% of average monthly trading profits. This is broadly equivalent to the government contribution in the CJRS.

We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

Anneliese Dodds:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what date prior to his announcement in the House of Commons on 22 October 2020 he first became aware of the problems faced by self-employed people that resulted in the amending of the Job Support Scheme to provide support at the level of 40 per cent of prior trading profits.
**Jesse Norman:**
The Government has provided, and will continue to provide, generous support to the self-employed during the COVID-19 pandemic through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) The third grant, combined with up to £14,070 worth of support for each individual from the first and second grants, makes the SEISS one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

The Government has adapted the generosity of the SEISS in line with the evolution of the virus. Following the announcement on 22 October that the third grant would cover 40 per cent of average monthly trading profits, the Government further increased the value of support to 55 per cent, and later – to 80 per cent of average trading profits for the period covering November to January, capped at £7,500 in total.

The Government’s policy responses are carefully designed to provide certainty and support to people and businesses across the UK to respond to the current public health restrictions. We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

**Kim Johnson:**
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will open the Self Employed Income Support scheme to people in self-employment who were not eligible in the initial March 2020 launch of that scheme and now have two years’ trading but are still not eligible for the latest round of support.

**Jesse Norman:**
In designing and delivering the SEISS, the Government prioritised delivering support to as many people as possible as quickly as possible while guarding against the risk of fraud or abuse. The Government recognises that the rules needed to ensure that the SEISS works for the vast majority may mean that some people are not eligible for the grant. However, as the NAO acknowledges, the SEISS has been successful in supporting millions of people and protecting from large scale job losses.

The Government has taken a flexible and responsive approach and will continue to consider the matter carefully and work closely with stakeholders to explore how it can best support different groups.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of the package of support available to self-employed individuals, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

**Grahame Morris:**
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to announce (a) the value of and (b) the eligibility criteria for Grant 4 of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**
I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 11 January to UIN 130691.
Grahame Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of self-employed workers not currently eligible for support under the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman: By 31 October 2020, 1,648,000 individuals have been assessed as ineligible for the second SEISS grant.

This figure was taken from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme statistics published on 25 November 2020.

Social Services: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to waive income tax and national insurance for care workers who have received bonuses for their service during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman: Care workers have demonstrated remarkable commitment in the continuing fight against COVID-19. The Government hugely values and appreciates these vital contributions to the COVID-19 response, both in the private and public sector.

Under the longstanding rules of income tax, any payments made in connection with an employment, such as bonus payments, are chargeable to income tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs).

The Government’s approach during COVID-19 has been consistent with these rules which have applied to support payments made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme as well as COVID-19 related bonus payments made to care workers in Wales and Scotland.

Stamp Duty Land Tax: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when purchasing a property that is under construction whether the stamp duty holiday applies at the point of purchase of the property or at the point of completion of the construction.

Jesse Norman: When a property is under construction, Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) applies at the point of purchase of the property. This means that SDLT would apply either at the completion of the contract or when it is substantially performed. A contract is substantially performed when the purchaser has taken possession of the property or when the purchaser has paid 90 percent of the price due under the contract.

Taxation: Self-assessment
Luke Pollard:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what flexibility is provided in his plans to allow an additional 12 months for self-assessment taxpayers to pay their liabilities.

Jesse Norman:  
The Chancellor understands that many Self-Assessment taxpayers may find it difficult paying their Self-Assessment liabilities that become due on 31 January 2021, due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Therefore, on 1 October 2020, the Chancellor announced that from that date HMRC’s online payment service had been upgraded to enable more taxpayers to set up a Time To Pay instalment payment plan without the need to contact HMRC beforehand. The threshold for using this service was increased from £10,000 to £30,000. HMRC estimate that the increase in this threshold will enable 95% of the Self-Assessment liabilities becoming due on 31 January 2021 to be paid this way.

Those taxpayers with Self-Assessment liabilities in excess of £30,000 can still contact HMRC to set up a bespoke Time To Pay arrangement appropriate to their personal circumstances.

HMRC can be flexible with the duration of payment instalments. If a taxpayer needs longer than 12 months to settle their tax liabilities they are encouraged to contact HMRC in the usual way to agree a longer payment plan.

David Mundell:  
To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend the tax return deadline to support (a) SMEs and (b) small accountancy practices during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown period.

Jesse Norman:  
The Government has carefully considered the arguments for extending the Self-Assessment filing date from 31 January but presently has no plans to extend that deadline.

The Government encourages as many people as possible to file on time even if they cannot pay their tax straight away. Only by filing a Self-Assessment return will taxpayers and their agents be able to determine the tax due for 2019/20 and the amount of any payments on account for 2020/21.

The Government recognises that some taxpayers will have difficulty submitting their Self-Assessment return due to the impact that COVID-19 has had on their personal or business circumstances.

HMRC do not charge penalties for failure to submit a return on time where taxpayers have a reasonable excuse. HMRC’s guidance explains that they will accept the impact of COVID-19 as a reasonable excuse for submitting a return late, provided that taxpayers explain how they were affected and submit the return as soon as they can. More information is available in the HMRC online guidance covering the reasonable excuse provisions.
Alex Sobel:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support he has made available for businesses that have not been registered for self assessment before 2018.

Jesse Norman:

Throughout this crisis, the Government has spent over £280 billion to make available a package of support for businesses which has included billions in wage support, loans, tax deferrals, business rate reliefs, and general and sector-specific grants.

These schemes were designed with two principles in mind; the need to target support at those who most need it, and the need to protect the exchequer against error, fraud, and abuse. The Government needs to balance its commitment to support people through the pandemic, with its duty to protect the taxpayer and ensure that public funds are managed responsibly.

The Government has acknowledged that it has not been possible to support everyone as they might want. The practical issues that have prevented the Government from being able to include businesses that did not register for self-assessment before 2018 for the previous SEISS grants, namely that HMRC will not have access to their self-assessment returns in time to verify their eligibility, still remain. However, those businesses may still be eligible for other aspects of the generous support package.

UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland
Colum Eastwood:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress the UK-EU Joint Committee has made on the VAT Margin scheme for goods moving between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Jesse Norman:

The Northern Ireland Protocol frames the approach to VAT on goods, including the second-hand margin scheme, in Northern Ireland. As set out in the Command Paper on the Northern Ireland Protocol in December, the Government is aware of concerns raised about the changes to the second-hand margin scheme on certain specific sectors moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

The Government is aiming to minimise disruption for Northern Ireland traders to the extent possible, including through discussions with the European Commission as appropriate.

WORK AND PENSIONS
Carer’s Allowance: North West
Mick Whitley:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of people who are in receipt of carers’ allowance and also living in poverty in (a) the North West and (b) Birkenhead.
Justin Tomlinson:
No assessment has been made.

Carers have access to the full range of social security benefits according to their circumstances. Income replacement benefits help people and households on lower incomes, and can include a carer premium, currently £37.50 a week. An equivalent additional amount applies in Pension Credit. Universal Credit also includes a carer element at the rate of £162.92 per monthly assessment period. These amounts recognise the additional contribution and responsibilities associated with caring and mean that lower-income carers can receive more money than others who receive these benefits. Between the existing carer-specific support, and the temporary Covid-19 uplift, 270,000 carer households receiving Universal Credit have benefitted from up to an extra £2,990 this financial year.

Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Neil Gray: [135959]
To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will reintroduce the suspension of work-related conditionality and sanctions for the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown period.

Mims Davies:  
There are no plans to reintroduce the suspension of conditionality and related sanctions for the January 2021 lockdown. Work Coaches will continue to work with claimants to ensure claimant commitments are reasonable for claimants' circumstances, and allows them to continue to adhere to Covid-19 public health advice.
Support in the workplace for domestic abuse victims
Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [HCWS711]

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members, to bring to their attention the Government’s report into support in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse.

This report, which I am publishing today, sets out the key findings from the review conducted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy this year, as well as the areas of work which Government will take forward as a result of this review.

This review is part of the Government’s agenda to raise awareness and build understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families. The landmark Domestic Abuse Bill, led by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, aims to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experiences, safe in the knowledge that the state will do everything it can, both to support them and their children and to pursue the abuser. The Bill includes a wide range of measures to better protect and support victims of domestic abuse and their children for the long term.

Alongside the measures in the Bill, we know that accessing and remaining in work is vital for victims of domestic abuse. Work provides not only an income, and the security that brings, but also opportunities to make social connections, and maintain health and wellbeing. For individuals experiencing domestic abuse, the workplace itself can also be a place of safety and respite from the abuser, and a place where they can make the arrangements they need and contact specialist services.

To inform this report, BEIS launched a call for evidence in June seeking evidence of how workplaces can most effectively support victims of domestic abuse. This received 126 written responses from individuals, representatives of victims, employers and their representatives, trade unions and others with interest. We also held a series of roundtables and meetings to discuss the issues in more depth with the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, the Victims Commissioner, trade unions, specialist charities and service providers, employers and their representatives across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

With the right support and encouragement, employers can play a key role in helping to lift the lid on this often hidden and always hideous crime. The report considers what pragmatic, effective new measures could be put in place in the workplace by Government and employers. It is structured around three main themes:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the impacts that domestic abuse can have on individuals and employers.
• Building and sharing best practice among employers.
• The role that employment rights play in addressing the needs of victims of domestic abuse.

The work does not end with this report. We will work together with employers, representatives of victims and trade unions to continue to build awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and drive good practice across the board. The evidence provided showed that flexibility can help victims in situations where they need to access services. We will take forward the Manifesto commitment to consult on ways to ensure that flexible working becomes the default for everyone, which we know will benefit individuals experiencing domestic abuse. We will also prepare a consultation on further steps to help victims of domestic abuse in the workplace, for example on how to support them to access existing employment rights such as flexible working more effectively.

I shall place copies of the Report in the Libraries of the House.

CABINET OFFICE

Indemnity for Police Area Returning Officers and Local Returning Officers at the 2021 Police and Crime Commissioner elections

Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith): [HCWS706]

It is necessary for the Cabinet Office to indemnify Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs) and Local Returning Officers (LROs) in England and Wales against uninsured claims that arise out of the conduct of their duties in Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections. This is because for the purposes of PCC elections, PAROs and LROs are statutorily independent officers and are separate from both central and local government. As such, they are personally liable for the conduct of the PCC elections. They are therefore potentially exposed to a variety of legal risks and challenges. Existing insurance that covers PAROs and LROs in discharging their statutory duties as returning officers at local elections will not, in most cases, cover them at the PCC election.

In light of this, the Cabinet Office proposes to continue to indemnify PAROs and LROs at the forthcoming PCC elections on 6 May 2021, and any subsequent by-elections taking place before the next scheduled elections on 1 May 2024, against claims that arise out of the conduct of their duties where existing insurance cover does not apply. Where a PARO or LRO already holds insurance which covers liabilities incurred at the PCC election, they will be required to claim under that insurance (or to seek to claim under it) before making a claim against this indemnity. Insurance for specific elections has historically provided extremely poor value for money, with claims made under such cover being smaller than the cost of the insurance premium. An indemnity therefore provides better value for money and this approach has been taken for elections since 2009.

On this basis, I have today laid a Minute setting out the Cabinet Office’s intention to extend the current arrangements which indemnify PAROs and LROs against claims that arise out of the conduct of their duties in relation to the PCC elections.
In Wales, PAROs and LROs will be conducting Welsh Parliamentary elections in combination with PCC elections on 6 May 2021. The Welsh Government will provide its own indemnity to returning officers working on the Welsh Parliamentary polls. Where a claim is made against the actions or conduct of a returning officer in relation to both Welsh Parliamentary and PCC elections, any losses, liability, damages, costs, claims, proceedings or expenses incurred in relation to the combined polls will be apportioned equally, so far as that is reasonable.

The indemnity will provide PAROs and LROs with cover for:

- Amounts that exceed the upper limits on any existing insurance policies held by them, or local authorities on their behalf, that will provide coverage;
- Any reasonable costs resulting from their liabilities to the public, as an employer or in their professional role.

The indemnity will only apply so far as any charges are not otherwise recoverable under the charges provisions contained in section 55 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, and is subject to exclusions set out in the departmental Minute. The indemnity is otherwise unlimited in terms of the maximum amount covered per claim.

We will also provide a certificate confirming that we will bear any employee liabilities of the PARO or LRO which would otherwise be covered by insurance procured under the Employers’ Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

It is normal practice, when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Minister concerned to present a departmental Minute to Parliament giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from incurring the liability until 14 Parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in cases of special urgency. The Treasury has approved the proposal in principle.

### Indemnity for Returning Officers and Acting Returning Officers at UK Parliamentary elections (including by-elections)

**Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith):**

[HCWS707]

It is necessary for the Cabinet Office to indemnify Returning Officers in England, Scotland and Wales against uninsured claims that arise out of the conduct of their duties in the course of a UK parliamentary election or by-election. This is because for purposes of UK Parliamentary elections, Returning Officers and Acting Returning Officers throughout Great Britain (referred to below as “ROs” and “AROs”) are statutorily independent officers. They are separate from both central and local government. As a result, they are exposed to a variety of legal risks varying from minor claims for injury, to significant election petitions and associated legal costs.

ROs and AROs make their own arrangements to insure themselves against any risks they face in taking forward their statutory duties at local and UK Parliamentary elections. The cover obtained usually forms part of the local authority’s own insurance arrangements. While this insurance will cover certain risks to which ROs and AROs may
be exposed at UK Parliamentary elections, they could ultimately be liable for claims of a type not covered by insurance policies. They could also be liable for claims that exceed the insurance limits in existing cover.

In light of this, the Cabinet Office proposes to continue to provide ROs and AROs with a specific indemnity for UK Parliamentary elections to supplement the insurance policies that have been arranged locally. On this basis, I have today laid a Minute setting out the Cabinet Office’s intention to extend the current arrangements which indemnify ROs and AROs against claims that arise out of the conduct of their duties in relation to UK Parliamentary elections.

The indemnity will cover ROs’ and AROs’ costs (including reasonable legal costs and reasonable expenses) incurred in connection with a UK Parliamentary election, which arise in relation to their discharge of responsibilities as RO or ARO but fall outside of the scope of the insurance cover which they have arranged locally, and where all other forms of recourse have been exhausted. The indemnity will be limited to the extent set out in the departmental Minute.

The indemnity will cover costs arising in relation to UK Parliamentary elections, including by-elections, where the date of the poll is on or before 1 May 2024. The indemnity is subject to exceptions identified in the Minute, but is unlimited in terms of the maximum amount it covers per claim. If the liability is called, provision for any payment is to be met from the Consolidated Fund.

It is normal practice, when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Minister concerned to present a departmental Minute to Parliament giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from incurring the liability until fourteen Parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in cases of special urgency. The Treasury has approved the proposal in principle.

HOME OFFICE

Reforming pre-charge bail

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [HCWS708]

In February of last year, this Government launched a consultation seeking views on reforming pre-charge bail. A number of cases had highlighted that the existing system was not working for victims, law enforcement, or suspects. It is of great importance to this Government that the public has confidence in the criminal justice system, and I am clear that the welfare of victims should be at its heart.

The consultation sought views on a number of aspects of the pre-charge bail process – in particular addressing the reduced reliance on pre-charge bail, and the growing number of suspects being released under investigation (RUI). Under RUI, conditions and restrictions, which could be used to protect the victim, cannot be imposed on a suspect, and this has meant that in a number of cases victims have not had the right safeguards in place.
We received feedback from a range of stakeholders – from charities and victim services to lawyers and the judiciary and police - which we have used to inform our response. The Government has listened, and now we are taking action.

We will be bringing forward the following reforms, legislating where necessary at the earliest opportunity, to ensure victims can feel better protected and suspects will not be placed under endless suspicion:

- We will remove the current presumption against use of pre-charge bail to ensure that law enforcement can take a balanced decision depending on the circumstances of the case. This will help reduce the numbers of those released under investigation (RUI).
- We will adjust the timescales and authorisation levels for pre-charge bail to better reflect the operational realities faced by investigating officers, whilst maintaining rigorous oversight of decisions to extend bail timelines.
- We will ensure that victims play a key role in the pre-charge bail process, that they are fully informed as the case progresses and are able to ask questions and provide views. This is so officers can take into account any safeguarding concerns to ensure appropriate measures are in place.

We are determined to give the police the right tools to keep the public safe. These changes are designed to make the pre-charge bail regime more effective and to provide more confidence for all involved.

Further detail of the changes we are making can be found in the consultation response. The consultation response will be available at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/police-powers-pre-charge-bail A copy will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Contingencies Fund Advance

Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government (Luke Hall):

[HCWS712]

I give notice that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government intends to seek an advance from the Contingencies Fund to fund previously announced Covid-19 expenditure on Local Government DEL that is above the level of the Net Cash Requirement approved at the Main Estimate. The Department requires an advance of its cash requirement pending parliamentary approval of the Supplementary Estimate 2020-21.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £3,559,984,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £3,559,984,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.
Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):

Following the accelerated package of measures amending the Criminal Legal Aid Fee Schemes announced in August, I announced that the next phase of the Criminal Legal Aid Review would involve an independently led review. On 21st December 2020 I published the Terms of Reference for that review, and announced via press notice that it would be chaired by Sir Christopher Bellamy QC. I am today following up that announcement.

The first phase of the Criminal Legal Aid Review has delivered up to £51m to practitioners, and the independently-led review will build on the data and insights collected so far. It will be far-reaching in scope, assessing the Criminal Legal Aid market in its entirety; the service being provided, how it is procured and how it is administered. It will develop and continue the original aims of the first phase of the Criminal Legal Aid Review.

Over the last few years, concerns have been raised about the long-term sustainability of Criminal Legal Aid. Against this backdrop, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important that we do what is necessary to ensure the Criminal Legal Aid System is efficient, effective, and sustainable.

The ultimate objective for the Criminal Legal Aid System is to provide legal advice and representation to those who need it, in line with my statutory duty to ensure legal aid is made available in order to ensure and uphold access to justice. This objective will provide the foundation for the review’s analysis and recommendations. The review will aim to ensure that defendants receive high quality advice and representation from a diverse set of practitioners, both now and in the future, whilst also making sure that the Criminal Legal Aid System is sustainable and provides value for money to the taxpayer and contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System. The themes and objectives of the review are outlined in detail in the Terms of Reference, which I have placed in the Library of the House.

The review will be chaired by Sir Christopher Bellamy QC. Sir Christopher is a former judge with a wealth of legal experience. He has recently stepped down as Chairman of Linklaters global competition practice and joined Monckton Chambers to focus on mediation and arbitration. Sir Christopher will lead a dedicated review team within Government which will support him as he delivers the review’s recommendations.

I am working to establish an Expert Advisory Panel as soon as possible who will provide support to the review by testing and challenging the review’s analysis and recommendations. The Panel will be composed of individuals with a range of backgrounds, skills and experience that will aid the review in its analysis of the Criminal Legal Aid System.
The review will report this year and the Ministry of Justice will aim to publish the report, alongside the Government’s response, by the end of 2021.

TREASURY

Application of the second-hand margin scheme in Northern Ireland in respect of motor vehicles sourced from Great Britain

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman):

My noble friend the Minister of State (Lord Agnew of Oulton) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Under the Northern Ireland Protocol (‘the Protocol’), EU VAT rules in respect of goods will continue to apply in Northern Ireland. However, Northern Ireland is, and will remain, part of the UK’s VAT system.

As set out in the 10 December 2020 Command Paper [CP 346], the Government is aware of concerns regarding the use of the second-hand margin scheme in Northern Ireland, with respect to motor vehicles sourced in Great Britain. The Government understands the impact this may have on Northern Ireland traders and consumers, and is therefore exploring options to minimise this.

As an interim measure, the Government will be issuing guidance to traders on how they can continue to apply the margin scheme in relation to motor vehicles sold since the end of the transition period.

Following initial engagement this week, the Government will also seek to agree a long-term derogation with the European Commission from EU VAT rules to allow the margin scheme in Northern Ireland to apply in respect of motor vehicles sourced in Great Britain.

In line with this approach, the Government will bring forward legislation at the earliest opportunity on the use of the margin scheme in Northern Ireland with respect to motor vehicles sourced in Great Britain. Consistent with the Government’s intentions to apply for a derogation, this legislation will be retrospective and apply from 11pm on 31 December 2020.