



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 February 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 11 February 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>CABINET OFFICE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY</b>	<b>5</b>	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	18
■ Broadband	5	<b>DEFENCE</b>	19
■ Buildings: Insulation	5	■ Apache AH-64 Helicopters: Procurement	19
■ Business: EU Countries	6	■ Armed Forces: Pay	19
■ Carbon Emissions	7	■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences	19
■ Consumer Goods: Safety	8	■ Defence: Research	20
■ Cosmetics: Animal Experiments	8	■ European Fighter Aircraft	20
■ Director of Labour Market Enforcement	8	■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement	21
■ Energy: Meters	9	■ Military Aircraft: Procurement	22
■ Energy: Prices	10	■ Military Aircraft: Safety	22
■ Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees	11	■ Military Aircraft: Training	23
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme	11	■ RAF Lossiemouth	23
■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries	14	■ Veterans: Radiation Exposure	24
■ OneWeb	15	<b>DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT</b>	<b>25</b>
■ Renewable Energy: Urban Areas	16	■ Broadband	25
■ Rolls-Royce: Coronavirus	16	■ Broadband: Urban Areas	25
■ UK Emissions Trading Scheme	16	■ Crime	26
■ Weddings: Coronavirus	17	■ Culture Recovery Fund	27
		■ Culture Recovery Fund: Outdoor Education	27

■ Data Protection: EU Law	28	■ EU Countries: Migrant Camps	42
■ Gambling	28	■ Indonesia: Papua	43
EDUCATION	29	■ Iran: Nuclear Fuels	43
■ Apprentices: Assessments	29	■ Myanmar: Journalism	44
■ Assessments: Coronavirus	31	■ Overseas Aid	44
■ CITB: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	31	■ Overseas Aid: Research	44
■ Further Education: Coronavirus	31	■ Palestinians: Coronavirus	45
■ Members: Correspondence	32	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	45
■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus	32	■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	45
■ Primary Education: Sports	33	■ Carers: Government Assistance	45
■ Remote Education: ICT	33	■ Coronavirus: Hospitals	46
■ Remote Working: Training	34	■ Health Professions: Misconduct	46
■ Schools: Coronavirus	35	■ Health Professions: Regulation	47
■ Students: Finance	36	■ Health Professions: Training	48
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	36	■ Health Services and Social Services: Staff	49
■ Cats: Pet Travel Scheme	36	■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements	49
■ Food: Exports	37	■ Home Care Services: Coronavirus	49
■ Horses: Animal Welfare	38	■ NHS: Insurance	50
■ Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements	38	■ Nurses: Training	51
FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	39	■ Social Services: Finance	52
■ Asia: Gambling	39	■ Social Services: Reform	52
■ Aung San Suu Kyi	39	HOME OFFICE	52
■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners	39	■ Alcoholic Drinks: Crime	52
■ China: Human Rights	40	■ Asylum: Penally Camp	53
■ China: Uighurs	40	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	54
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	40	■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes	54
■ Developing Countries: Nutrition	41	■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Protest	54
■ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid	41	■ Immigration: EU Nationals	55

■ Police: Digital Technology	55	■ Business: Coronavirus	69
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	56	■ CITB and CITB Northern Ireland: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	70
■ Community Development: Regeneration	56	■ COP26 Private Finance Hub: Staff	71
■ Housing: Older People	57	■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	71
■ Local Government: Reorganisation	57	■ Future Fund: Applications	71
■ Public Sector: Land Use	57	■ Gaming Machines: Excise Duties	72
■ Troubled Families Programme	58	■ Gift Aid	72
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	58	■ Hospices: Scotland	73
■ Fossil Fuels: Finance	58	■ Hospitality Industry: VAT	73
■ Trade Agreements: Cameroon	59	■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries	74
■ Trade Agreements: Ghana	59	■ Levelling Up Fund	74
JUSTICE	60	■ Levelling Up Fund: Union Connectivity Review	74
■ Advisory Board on Female Offenders	60	■ Members: Correspondence	75
NORTHERN IRELAND	61	■ Mortgages: Coronavirus	75
■ Care Homes: Coronavirus	61	■ Multinational Companies: Tax Avoidance	75
TRANSPORT	62	■ Railways: Season Tickets	76
■ A303: Stonehenge	62	■ Revenue and Customs: Debts	76
■ Aviation: Coronavirus	62	■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus	76
■ Cycling and Walking: Finance	63	■ Soft Drinks: Taxation	77
■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus	64	■ UK Trade with EU: Scotland	78
■ High Speed 2 Railway Line	65	■ Wind Power	78
■ Motorcycles: Training	66	■ Wines: Excise Duties	78
■ Railway Stations: Disability	66	WORK AND PENSIONS	79
■ Railways: Pedestrian Areas	66	■ Child Maintenance Service: Members	79
■ Travel: Quarantine	67	■ Cold Weather Payments	79
■ Travel: Urban Areas	67	■ Funeral Payments	80
TREASURY	67		
■ Arts: Tickets	67		
■ Beer: Small Businesses	68		
■ Build Back Better Council	69		

■ Jobcentres: Scotland	80	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>87</b>
■ Kickstart Scheme	81	<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>87</b>
■ Poverty: Coventry	82	■ Reserve Forces and Cadets Association External Scrutiny Team Report 2020	87
■ Social Security Benefits: Disability	82	<b>PRIME MINISTER</b>	<b>87</b>
■ Universal Credit: Telephone Services	83	■ Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee's Northern Ireland-related Terrorism Report	87
■ Winter Fuel Payments	83	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>	<b>84</b>	■ Light Dues 2021-22	87
<b>FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>TREASURY</b>	<b>88</b>
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	84	■ Normal Minimum Pension Age: consultation	88
■ Jagtar Singh Johal	84		
<b>HOME OFFICE</b>	<b>85</b>		
■ Police: Suicide	85		

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

## BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Broadband****Anne Marie Morris:**[\[150815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress has been made on the construction of the global satellite constellation to provide enhanced broadband.

**Amanda Solloway:**

OneWeb has launched 36 satellites since June 2020, bringing the total number of satellites launched to 110. Further launches are planned throughout 2021 and the company aims to introduce commercial service at the end of the year.

■ **Buildings: Insulation****Anne McLaughlin:**[\[149260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many green deal agreements were issued by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) for the purposes of installing external building insulation in each constituency in (a) England and (b) Wales.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The number of Green Deal plans provided by Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd which included External Wall Insulation in England and Wales by parliamentary constituency are shown in the table below.

In order to manage the risk of revealing personal or commercial data, our approach is not to release non-zero counts of less than five for a small geographic area. Items marked \* are small and have been suppressed to achieve this disclosure control.

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	GREEN DEAL PLANS
Bristol North West	21
Chippenham	*
Coventry North West	*
Coventry South	*
Esher and Walton	*
Gloucester	*
North Herefordshire	*

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	GREEN DEAL PLANS
North Swindon	41
Reading West	*
South Swindon	13
Worcester	*
England total	90
Newport East	7
Newport West	16

### ■ Business: EU Countries

**Layla Moran:**

[\[150920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses in (a) Oxford West and Abingdon constituency, (b) the Thames Valley region, (c) England and (d) the UK have called the EU Business Helpline in each of the last 12 months.

**Paul Scully:**

The Business Support Helpline operates in England and provides a range of support and advice to pre-start, and established businesses. This support includes advice following the UK's exit from the EU. Businesses in the Devolved Administrations can access similar services within their country.

In the last 12 months (Feb 2020 to Jan 2021) the Business Support Helpline has received over 76,000 calls from individuals and businesses.

During the same period, for the Thames Valley area, the service has handled over 800 contacts from individuals and businesses.

Statistics are gathered by each Local Authority, rather than by constituency. However, in the same period the service handled 99 customers from the Oxford City Council area; 93 customers in the Vale of White Horse area; and 87 customers in West Oxfordshire.

The individual data can be seen in the attached tables.

**Attachments:**

1. Question 150920 - data tables [Question 150920 data.xlsx]

## ■ Carbon Emissions

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[148972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to maximise existing (a) energy infrastructure and (b) expertise to help achieve the Government's ambition of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The public and private sectors must work in partnership to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The Department regularly engages with industry and advisors to maximise industry input and feedback to Government policy as we transition towards net zero by 2050.

This dialogue is maintained through a variety of forums: public consultations and calls for evidence, ongoing regular supplier and generator roundtables at both a ministerial and official level; official task forces and advisory bodies; and specific sector engagement to ensure that Government is fully informed of industry developments in key policy areas.

Last month, I led a series of roundtables with key stakeholder groups following the publication of the Energy White Paper. These were in addition to an ongoing dialogue with large, medium and small businesses to understand the unique challenges they face in relation to net zero.

Examples of more specific government-industry collaboration include the Hydrogen Advisory Council, a joint Government-Industry forum established to identify and promote concrete actions required to enable the supply of low carbon hydrogen at scale for use across the energy system. The Council will inform the development of a UK hydrogen strategy which we will bring forward in the first half of this year.

Our strategy will set out a comprehensive approach to building a UK hydrogen economy that is fit for purpose and pave the way towards achieving our ambition of 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 – working with industry partners to achieve this.

Hydrogen offers potential to repurpose the gas network to a low-carbon alternative, and we are working in partnership with industry to assess the feasibility and impacts of converting parts or the whole of the existing gas network to full hydrogen. This will test and evaluate the potential of hydrogen as an option for heating our homes and workplaces. We have set out a vision for a possible 'hydrogen town' before the end of the decade, building on a programme of community trials in the first half of the decade which we will support the gas industry to deliver. In parallel, we will also work with industry with the aim of completing the testing and safety case necessary to enable government and the regulator to amend regulations that could allow for up to 20% blending of hydrogen into the gas distribution grid by 2023.

We have also established the CCUS Council which advises on the deployment of carbon capture and storage, a technology which will be crucial to achieving our net zero targets and where the re use of oil and gas infrastructure can be a key enabler.

In addition, we are working closely with the oil and gas industry to negotiate a North Sea Transition Deal. Not only cutting emissions, but also enabling new industries such as CCUS and Hydrogen to develop, supporting supply chain transformation and capability development in new net zero sectors, and championing the sector's workforce and importance to the net zero skills transition in industrial heartlands.

### ■ **Consumer Goods: Safety**

**Jonathan Edwards:** [\[150753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which stakeholders the Office for Product Safety and Standards plans to consult as its review of the Product Safety framework; and when that consultation will commence.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has commenced its review of the UK Product Safety framework. The aim of our review is to ensure we have a Product Safety framework that is simple, flexible and fit for the future and delivers safety for consumers while supporting businesses to innovate and grow. The review is at an early stage of gathering evidence on current, emerging and anticipated challenges and opportunities for product safety.

In the coming months we will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including groups representing businesses and manufacturers, along with consumer and safety organisations. Engagement will inform if and how the UK Product Safety framework could be improved to work better for everyone.

### ■ **Cosmetics: Animal Experiments**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[150763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of negotiating an agreement with China, similar to that recently agreed between the French Government, and China on allowing for exemptions on animal testing when exporting ordinary cosmetics from the UK to China.

**Paul Scully:**

The UK Government recognises the potential benefits to UK businesses of an agreement with China that allows cosmetic products not tested on animals onto the Chinese market. BEIS is working with the Department for International Trade and UK industry to create a certification system that would allow UK businesses to comply with Chinese regulations and take advantage of this growing market whilst maintaining the UK's clear position and domestic ban on animal testing in cosmetics.

### ■ **Director of Labour Market Enforcement**

**Imran Hussain:** [\[147876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many candidates his Department has shortlisted for the position of Director of Labour Market Enforcement.



**Imran Hussain:** [\[147877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason his Department has reopened the recruitment process for the position of Director of Labour Market Enforcement.

**Imran Hussain:** [\[147878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has spent on recruitment for the position of Director of Labour Market Enforcement to date.

**Imran Hussain:** [\[147879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason his Department decided not to extend Matthew Taylor's contract as the Interim-Director of Labour Market Enforcement until a successor is found.

**Imran Hussain:** [\[147880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to appoint a permanent Director of Labour Market Enforcement.

**Imran Hussain:** [\[147881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has appointed an Interim-Director of Labour Market Enforcement to succeed Matthew Taylor.

**Paul Scully:**

Matthew Taylor was appointed as interim Director of Labour Market Enforcement in July 2019. His appointment was due to end in July 2020 and we extended it until 31 January 2021 to provide continuity during the early stages of the pandemic. In November 2020, we launched a recruitment campaign for a permanent Director of Labour Market Enforcement. However, we received an insufficient number of suitable applications for the role to shortlist, so we have now reopened the recruitment process. So far, we have not spent anything on recruitment beyond resourcing from departmental staff, but some paid-for activity is planned over the coming weeks. The deadline for applications is 28 February. Once the campaign has closed we will work at pace to recruit a new Director as soon as possible. We have not identified a new interim appointment and cannot make any comments on individual circumstances.

While we work to fill the vacancy as soon as possible, the heads of three enforcement bodies will remain responsible for their overall work and enforcement responsibilities. They will continue to work hard to protect workers and bring enforcement action against employers who break the rules.

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Sir Alan Campbell:** [\[149167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the Government has made on the smart meter roll out.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Smart meters are replacing traditional gas and electricity meters in Great Britain as part of an essential infrastructure upgrade to make the energy system more efficient and flexible, enabling the cost-effective delivery of net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

The rollout is making good progress, with 22.2 million smart and advanced meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain, as of the end of September 2020.

The latest data on the rollout of smart meters is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/smart-meters-statistics>.

**■ Energy: Prices****Holly Mumby-Croft:****[147102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on monitoring of the difference in industrial energy prices between the UK and other countries.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular meetings with Cabinet colleagues on a variety of issues.

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses to ensure our economy remains strong and competitive. The ability for our industries to be able to compete across Europe and globally is a priority for this Government.

Our aim is to work with the steel sector and help them to reduce carbon emissions. We will continue to support the steel sector in achieving these aims through the various funds available such as the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund and Clean Steel Fund.

We estimate that reduction in the various renewable costs for eligible energy intensive industries, including steel, will save them around £400m a year in electricity costs. We have also extended the schemes to compensate certain energy intensive industries for indirect emission costs to the end of the next financial year in order to minimise disruption to existing recipients whilst we conduct a review. Between 2013 and 2019, total compensation paid to the steel sector was over £480m.

**Jessica Morden:****[147796]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on monitoring of the gap in industrial energy prices between the UK and other key nations.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular meetings with Cabinet colleagues on a variety of issues.

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses to ensure our economy remains strong and competitive. The ability for our industries to be able to compete across Europe and globally is a priority for this Government.

Our aim is to work with the steel sector and help them to reduce carbon emissions. We will continue to support the steel sector in achieving these aims through the various funds available such as the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund and Clean Steel Fund.

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### ■ **Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees**

**Matthew Pennycook:**

[\[150887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas will be approved by UK Export Finance during the consultation process on aligning UK international support for the clean energy transition.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

As my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister stated in his announcement on 12 December 2020, the Government will continue to apply current policy for all in-scope activities, until the new policy is implemented following the consultation.

### ■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[149152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to review the scope of the Green Homes Grant in response to low take-up rates to date.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

*[Holding answer 9 February 2021]:* The Green Homes Grant scheme is an energy efficiency retrofit scheme, focussing on insulation and low carbon heating. The scope of technologies currently included reflects our assessment of the best balance between economic stimulus and maximising value for householders and taxpayers.

Outside of the voucher scheme the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) element is in place to raise the energy efficiency of low income and low EPC rated homes in order to lift households out of fuel poverty whilst delivering progress towards our commitment to net zero by 2050.

We are listening to feedback on the scheme and are keeping the scope of eligible technologies under review.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[149153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which industries were consulted in the development of the Green Homes Grant.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

*[Holding answer 9 February 2021]:* The Department consulted the construction, insulation, energy and heating industries in the development of the Green Home Grant Voucher Scheme.

We continue to listen to and act upon feedback from stakeholders as we have done since the formation of the scheme.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[150648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason funding allocated to the Green Homes Grant scheme in financial year 2020-21 will not be rolled over to the extended scheme for use in 2021-22 in the event that funding is not used by the original deadline.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The original funding of up to £1.5 billion for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme was announced as a short-term stimulus, for use in the 2020/21 financial year. In the 2020 Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £320 million of funding for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme for 2021/22, as part of funding allocated to make homes and buildings more energy efficient and less carbon intensive.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[150649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether work undertaken under the Green Homes Grant scheme in financial year 2020-21 and completed in financial year 2021-22, will be funded out of the original allocation of £2 billion.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The original funding of up to £1.5 billion for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme was announced as a short-term stimulus, for use in the 2020/21 financial year. In the 2020 Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £320 million of funding for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme for 2021/22, as part of funding allocated to make homes and buildings more energy efficient and less carbon intensive.

**Dr Alan Whitehead:** [\[150650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to improve the roll-out rate of the Green Homes Grant scheme.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We are engaging with and listening to feedback from customers and installers and based on this we have already made changes to the scheme to improve the roll-out rate. These include allowing subcontractors to more easily take part in the scheme,

reducing the cost of accreditation by 50% for Green Homes Grant scheme installers on the cost of purchasing some PAS standards, streamlining certification processes where possible for installers and making the application process easier for customers.

We have numerous channels for dialogue with the supply chain and consumer groups, including roundtables with certification bodies, trade bodies and representatives from the industry. In December the Department held its first installer Webinar, taking questions and walking through the scheme details and processes with over 150 installers in attendance.

We continue to work with Trustmark and the scheme administrator to ensure as many companies as possible can take part in the scheme and increase the roll-out rate. The £6.9m skills competition we launched in September will provide training opportunities for energy efficiency and low carbon heating supply chains to deliver works and scale up to meet additional consumer demand.

**Liam Byrne:**

[\[150692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Green Homes Grant vouchers have been issued per month since the scheme's introduction in (a) England, (b) each of the local authorities in the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

As of 08 February, 71,953 applications have been received for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme, with 22,165 vouchers having been issued to customers.

Official statistics will be published in due course.

**Liam Byrne:**

[\[150693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the value is of Green Homes Grant vouchers that have been issued per month since the scheme's introduction in (a) England and (b) each of the local authorities in the West Midlands Combined Authority area.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

As of 8th February, 71,953 applications have been received for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme, with 22,165 vouchers having been approved and issued to customers.

Official scheme statistics will be published in due course. These will be developed over releases to reflect more scheme information.

**Liam Byrne:**

[\[150694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many registered suppliers have been registered for the Green Homes Grant scheme in (a) England, (b) each English region and (c) each local authority area.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

As of 9th February, there were 927 installers registered and able to undertake work on the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme.

Official scheme statistics will be published in due course.

**Liam Byrne:**[\[150695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many firms have taken on apprentices as a result of the Green Homes Grant scheme.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We understand from our engagement with installers that many companies have taken on additional staff to deliver work under the scheme, which may include apprentices. There will be an independent evaluation of the processes and effectiveness of the scheme, including a comprehensive analysis of scheme outcomes and evidence collected from scheme applicants and other stakeholders.

**■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries****Chris Green:**[\[149255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of Ofgem's proposed reforms under the Targeting Charging Review on costs for steel companies; and what plans Ofgem has to review those proposals.

**Chris Green:**[\[149257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Targeted Charging Review proposals on the UK steel sector.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

Network charging is a matter for Ofgem, as the independent regulator, and decisions on its Targeted Charging Review (TCR) are for it to make. Through the TCR, Ofgem is seeking to ensure all parties connected to the electricity network make a fair contribution to its fixed costs. This is consistent with Government's views on the importance of an energy system that ensures a fair distribution of costs, with solutions rewarded where they contribute to reduced system costs.

Ofgem has published an analysis of the expected impacts of the TCR reforms at: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/electricity/transmission-networks/charging/targeted-charging-review-significant-code-review>. Ofgem is working to implement the reforms by April 2022 through code changes, with the final aspects of those code changes being consulted on shortly.

The Government continues to engage with Ofgem to inform our understanding of the reforms' policy implications, and we will also give careful consideration to the related recommendations of the recent UK Steel report "*Closing the Gap*".

**■ OneWeb****Nick Smith:** [\[150742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the outcome was of his Department's recent assessment of the value of its investment in the OneWeb company.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Investing in OneWeb provides the UK with a range of strategic and commercial opportunities, including the potential to create jobs, expand the UK's supply chain and boost the manufacturing sector.

OneWeb will contribute to the UK's ambition to become a world leader in the Space sector.

**Nick Smith:** [\[150743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish the primary objectives of OneWeb with reference to its provision of (a) internet communications, (b) surveillance and (c) GPS.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government and other shareholders are supporting OneWeb in the development of their long-term strategic plan.

OneWeb's global Low Earth Orbit (LEO) constellation will provide high speed, low-latency global internet coverage.

OneWeb's current generation of satellites does not offer any surveillance applications. However, moving forward, OneWeb's capabilities in potential future-generation satellites, alongside those of the wider sector, will be reviewed in the context of the UK's evolving Space requirements.

**Nick Smith:** [\[150744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish the governance structures for OneWeb with reference to the (a) role of Bharti Global Ltd and (b) arrangements for oversight by Ministers of his Department.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government recognises the importance of transparency in relation to its shareholding in OneWeb. Government involvement is outlined in the terms of the company's articles of association, which are publicly available at Companies House.

**Nick Smith:** [\[150745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many OneWeb satellites his Department estimates will be produced for orbit in the next 12 months.



**Amanda Solloway:**

Details of satellite production and future launches are a commercial matter for the company.

OneWeb plans to complete UK coverage and commence commercial services by the end of 2021, with global coverage planned for 2022.

**Renewable Energy: Urban Areas****Helen Hayes:**[\[147939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support projects which produce renewable energy in densely populated urban centres.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given by my Rt. Hon. Friend the then Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth on 15 December 2020 to Question [128213](#).

The public consultation on the proposed Green Heat Network Fund closed on 29 January 2021. We are currently analysing these responses and will update the House shortly.

**Rolls-Royce: Coronavirus****Margaret Beckett:**[\[150683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the management and unions of Rolls-Royce on (a) the effect on the supply chain and (b) other effects of a shutdown in production; and if he will make a statement.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has regular engagement with Rolls-Royce on a wide range of issues, including to understand the impact of COVID-19 on its business, employees and UK supply chain and how best to help them through the crisis and into recovery.

Temporarily closing facilities is a commercial decision for Rolls-Royce and I understand the company is currently consulting with Union and Employee representatives around these proposals.

**UK Emissions Trading Scheme****Matthew Pennycook:**[\[150884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which sectors he plans to extend the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to; and what criteria he plans to use in deciding those sectors.



**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) replaced the UK's participation in the EU ETS on 1 January 2021. The UK ETS initially applies to energy-intensive industries, electricity generation and aviation.

In the Energy White Paper, we committed to exploring expanding the UK ETS to the two thirds of uncovered emissions, including how the UK ETS could incentivise the deployment of greenhouse gas removal technologies. We will set out our aspirations to continue to lead the world on carbon pricing in the run up to COP26.

**Weddings: Coronavirus****Justin Madders:**[\[147897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with stakeholders on a plan for re-opening the wedding industry after the third national lockdown.

**Paul Scully:**

I recently attended a meeting with the newly formed sector-led Weddings Taskforce where stakeholders presented ideas for the reopening of the wedding sector when the current national lockdown is lifted.

**Justin Madders:**[\[147898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of sector specific support for the wedding industry when the national covid-19 lockdown restrictions announced in January 2021 are eased.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to businesses, including those in the wedding sector. This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, government-backed loans, Local Restrictions Support Grants and additional funding provided to Local Authorities to support businesses. On 5 January, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a one-off top up grant worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses up to the Spring.

**Judith Cummins:**[\[150829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with women working in the wedding industry on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on their businesses.

**Paul Scully:**

I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce, established to represent all parts of the UK Weddings sector, to understand the impact of COVID-19 on wedding businesses.

**Judith Cummins:**

[\[150830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the level of financial support required by the wedding industry to support its reopening.

**Paul Scully:**

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has provided an unprecedented package of support to businesses, including those in the wedding sector, which it keeps under regular review.

I meet regularly with representatives of the wedding sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 on wedding businesses.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[912200\]](#)

What discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for manufacturers that are subject to non-tariff barriers to trade with the EU.

**Julia Lopez:**

As has been the case under successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not usually disclosed.

**Gareth Davies:**

[\[912201\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential opportunities for the UK of leaving the EU.

**Julia Lopez:**

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

The Government is clear however that leaving the EU presents the UK with many opportunities. The Government has already established a new points-based immigration system to attract the brightest and best, new trade agreements, and a replacement of the bureaucratic Common Agricultural Policy. This Government will continue to maximise opportunities to support long-term economic growth and strengthen the UK's global position.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[912214\]](#)

If he will take steps to help ensure that Ministers make themselves available for select committee evidence sessions.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Government is absolutely committed to Parliamentary scrutiny, and recognises the important role played by Select Committees.

**DEFENCE****■ Apache AH-64 Helicopters: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[150702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where depth maintenance for the E-Model Apache will be supported.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Depth support for the Apache AH-64E is planned to be delivered through the Long Term Training and Support Service, the contract for which is currently under negotiation with Boeing Defence UK. A decision is expected in due course.

**■ Armed Forces: Pay**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[150701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) recommendations of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body and (b) Government's pay increases were for the main remit group, in each year since 2010.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) is an independent advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Copies of the AFPRB's reports, containing their recommendations, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/armed-forces-pay-review-body>

The AFPRB's recommendations have always been accepted by the MOD. The reports contain the final settlements for the Armed Forces.

Copies of the AFPRB's reports are also available in the Vote Office.

**■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[150700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Government plans to require his Department to publish statistics on sexual assault and rape, including the number of cases (a) referred to the service police, (b) prosecuted and (c) resulting in conviction.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Ministry of Defence has made it absolutely clear there is no place for unacceptable behaviour in the Armed Forces. We recognise the great courage it takes to come forward and report a sexual offence and Commanding Officers must always refer any allegation of rape and sexual assault, or any other offence which may have a sexual element, to the Service Police. All allegations are thoroughly investigated, and support provided to victims. Anyone found to fall short of the Services' high standards or to have committed an offence is dealt with appropriately, which may include imprisonment and dismissal from service.

Defence publishes annual official statistics on sexual offending in the Service Justice System, available from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sexual-offences-in-the-service-justice-system>

Defence also publishes the Court martial results from the military court centres, which includes sexual offences, available from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-martial-results-from-the-military-court-centres>

## ■ Defence: Research

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[150703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of his Department's UK research and development spend for (a) 2020-21, (b) 2021-22, (c) 2022-23, (d) 2023-24 and (e) 2024-25.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As announced in last year's Spending Review, the Defence Budget included a ringfence for research and development (R&D) spend totalling a minimum of £6.6 billion over four years from 2021-22. Detailed investment plans are currently being agreed as part of this year's annual budget cycle. This process seeks to allocate the Spending Review Settlement to the different Top-Level Budgets in the Department in advance of next financial year. The Ministry of Defence's total R&D spend is reported annually in the Annual Report and Accounts.

## ■ European Fighter Aircraft

**Dave Doogan:** [\[150935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what RAF bases operate the Typhoon aircraft aside from RAF Lossiemouth.

**James Heappey:**

RAF Typhoon aircraft are based at RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Coningsby in the UK with a detachment permanently deployed to the Falkland Islands at British Forces South Atlantic Islands, Mount Pleasant.

Additionally, a detachment of Typhoons are currently operationally deployed to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus. Detachments also routinely deploy in support of NATO Air Policing in the Baltic and Black Sea regions.

**Dave Doogan:** [\[150936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) service and (b) civilian personnel operate and support the Typhoon aircraft platform.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The current strength of service personnel who operate and provide support to Typhoon aircraft across a range of roles and functions is approximately 1,670 and the number of Civil Servants is approximately 215.

**Dave Doogan:**[\[150937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual cost to the RAF is of operating the Typhoon aircraft.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[148725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK jobs have been created by the procurement of the fan lift system for the F-35 aircraft; and whether all work on that system is based in the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Rolls Royce have estimated that over 900 UK jobs have been created or are supported throughout the supply chain for the F-35 Lightning Lift System, approximately 40% of which is manufactured in the UK.

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[150678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for UK industrial workshare of the continuation of the F-35 programme; and if he will make a statement.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK remains a committed partner within the F-35 programme providing approximately 15% by value of every F-35 aircraft. Suppliers to the F-35 programme are determined by competition, for which the UK industry is well placed.

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[150679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the economic effect on the UK of the (a) F-35 Programme including the UK's Programme of Record and (b) Tempest initiative; and if he will make a statement.

**Jeremy Quin:**

UK industry provides approximately 15% by value of every F-35 aircraft built, generating significant revenue for the country, creating and sustaining high-skilled jobs in the aerospace sector.

The UK has already invested some £2 billion in the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative. The Prime Minister's Comprehensive Spending Review

announcement highlighted Future Combat Air Strategy (FCAS) and our aerospace sector as a particular area for investment.

**Mr Laurence Robertson:** [\[150680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of (a) knowledge and technology transfer, (b) infrastructure investment, (c) skills initiatives and (d) other aspects of the F-35 Programme of Record on the viability of the UK's combat air sector.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Participation in the F-35 Programme has brought significant revenue to the UK, creating and sustaining high-skilled jobs in the combat air sector which will benefit the sector in the long-term. Whilst knowledge and technology transfer is bounded by US International Traffic in Arms Regulations, significant investment has been made in the infrastructure to support the RAF F-35 Lightning fleet at RAF Marham and will continue to benefit the wider Combat Air sector through the retention of skills and facilities.

#### ■ **Military Aircraft: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[148727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2021 to Question 142813 on Military Aircraft: Procurement, what the actual dollar figure is for that percentage in cash terms.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The figure of 66% provided is based on forecast spending of 11.6 billion US dollars over 10- years for the procurement costs of projects in the Air Support, Combat Air and Helicopters sectors. This forecast is for the 10 years from 2020-21 and is consistent with data used in the April 2020 Equipment Plan report.

#### ■ **Military Aircraft: Safety**

**Hywel Williams:** [\[150697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147752, what the estimated cost is of retrofitting the safety equipment of the RAF's fleet of Texan trainer aircraft to allow training over water.

**Hywel Williams:** [\[150698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147752, which Department or contractor will pay for the cost of retrofitting safety equipment to the RAF's fleet of Texan trainer aircraft to allow training over water.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The over-water safety equipment for the RAF Texan fleet comprises three main elements, a modified harness, the Life Preserver, and the life raft.

The cost of the development, certification and embodiment of the harness modification is £1.858m (ex VAT), which is being funded by the Ministry of Defence.

At present there is no activity to replace the current Life Preserver. Ascent, the Training System Partner, is integrating a water activated light on the Life Preserver to enable night flying over water from RAF Valley.

Consideration is underway within the Department regarding the funding for a replacement Life Raft, and I am withholding the cost information on the basis that it would prejudice value for money.

## ■ **Military Aircraft: Training**

**Hywel Williams:**

[\[150699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the area of operations is for Texan T1 trainer aircraft operating out of RAF Valley.

**James Heapey:**

The airspace around Wales is crowded and has developed over many years to deconflict safely the competing requirements of both civil and military users. The areas immediately to the north of RAF Valley over the Irish Sea contain some of the busiest civil airways, with stringent civil air traffic control procedures. The Texan Course is split between two primary requirements; roughly half of the course is training in general aircraft handling and military tactics; while the other half of the course concentrates on air traffic control procedures, instrument flying and navigation.

The primary areas of operation for the general aircraft handling phase include the RAF Valley and RAF Mona Military Aerodrome Traffic Zones, the Valley Aerial Tactics Area and the North Wales Military Training Area as these areas offer the best training advantage in this phase and safe deconfliction from the civil airways. The Texan fleet looks to distribute training as much as is practicable within those airspace constraints and will also occasionally use the Aberporth Danger Area complex D201 in Cardigan Bay/Bae Ceredigion when it is available.

In the navigation phase of the course, training is routinely distributed farther afield to other areas of the United Kingdom, often using civil airways and landing at another aerodrome to refuel. The airways of the Holyhead Control Area (CTA) in the Irish Sea immediately north of RAF Valley can also be used during this phase by Texan aircraft to enable these transits.

## ■ **RAF Lossiemouth**

**Dave Doogan:**

[\[150933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) civilian and (b) service personnel are based at RAF Lossiemouth.

**James Heappey:**

The current number of Civil Servants based at RAF Lossiemouth is 255 and the number of Service personnel is 2,115.

\*In accordance with the Data Protection Act and our obligations in relation to the protection of confidentiality when handling personal data, the data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

**Dave Doogan:**[\[150934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Typhoon aircraft operate out of RAF Lossiemouth.

**James Heappey:**

As at 1 February 2021 RAF Lossiemouth had 41 aircraft in the forward fleet. This comprised serviceable and short-term unserviceable aircraft.

Typically, short-term unserviceable aircraft are undergoing minor works, forward maintenance or any other unforeseen rectification or technical inspection that can arise on a day to day basis.

**■ Veterans: Radiation Exposure****Robert Halfon:**[\[151678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support nuclear test veterans who have suffered with medical complications from radiation exposure.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Government continues to recognise and be grateful to all Service personnel who participated in the British nuclear testing programme. They contributed to keeping our nation secure during the Cold War and since, by ensuring that the UK was equipped with an appropriate nuclear capability. Any veteran who believes their health has been adversely affected by their Service is entitled to apply for compensation under the War Pension Scheme, which covers any injury, illness, or death caused by Service before 6 April 2005. In 2020, after listening to the concerns of Nuclear Test Veterans about applying for compensation, we created a supplementary evidence form specifically for Nuclear Test Veterans who wish to make a claim to help process their claim more quickly. This is available on the Veterans UK webpage. The healthcare of nuclear test veterans, as with all veterans, is the responsibility of the National Health Service (NHS) in England and the Devolved Administrations, and veterans who believe they are suffering from ill health should speak to their NHS GP.



**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Broadband****Chi Onwurah:****[150799]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made in rolling out superfast broadband.

**Matt Warman:**

According to Thinkbroadband (<http://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/uk>), currently 96.98% of premises in the UK have access to Superfast broadband, this is up from 58% in 2012.

A breakdown of each area of the UK can be found below:

England - 97.49% - up from 61% in 2012

Wales - 95.63% - up from 36.6% in 2012

Scotland - 95% - up from 49% in 2012

Northern Ireland - 90.22% - up from 70.4% in 2012

Since its inception in 2012, the Superfast Programme has delivered superfast broadband to 5.3 million premises, which constitutes 17% of all households in the UK. In 2019, the majority of delivery on the Superfast Programme moved from Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) to Fibre to the Premise (FTTP). For example, for the financial quarter April-June 2020, ~90% (27k premises out of 30k) of delivery through the programme was FTTP. The Superfast Programme, therefore, is now a significant contributor to the government's gigabit ambitions, as well as satisfying its commitment to Superfast coverage.

**■ Broadband: Urban Areas****Darren Jones:****[R] [150907]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to ensure that the rollout of high speed broadband includes areas of low speed broadband in urban areas as well as non-urban areas.

**Matt Warman:**

The government is committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible and more than one in three UK premises already have it. We are targeting a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025 but will seek to accelerate rollout further to get as close to 100% as possible.

Our analysis suggests that the overwhelming majority of urban premises are within the most commercial 80% of the UK. In these areas, we expect that the private sector will deploy gigabit capable connectivity commercially, and address any remaining premises that have slow speeds. To support industry's efforts, we continue to work quickly to incentivise investment and remove barriers to rollout, for example through the Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill, which will make it

easier for the industry to connect blocks of flats to high speed fixed and mobile technology.

In addition, we are proposing to invest £5 billion through our UK Gigabit programme to deliver gigabit connectivity to less commercial premises, including those with lower speeds currently. This programme will use a variety of interventions, including procurements, connecting public sector hubs and gigabit vouchers.

## ■ Crime

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[149796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the efficacy of oversight arrangements for white label licensing arrangements in tackling (a) money laundering and (b) wider criminal activity.

**Carolyn Harris:** [\[149797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of East Asian gambling sponsorship of football clubs on the marketing of gambling products to China.

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[149825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his policy is on overseas gambling operators using white label licensing arrangements to market gambling products to overseas jurisdictions where such activity is illegal.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

All gambling companies providing gambling facilities to consumers in Great Britain, wherever they are based, must be licensed by the Gambling Commission and comply with the conditions and codes of practice of their operating licences. Operators who provide services marketed under a different brand as part of a 'white label' agreement are held accountable for the actions of their commercial partners, and are expected to carry out all necessary due diligence to satisfy themselves that the relationship will not compromise their own regulatory compliance. Further detail about the Gambling Commission's compliance and enforcement work in this area can be found in the relevant section of its Compliance and Enforcement Report for 2019 to 2020 and its Reminder to licensees regarding white label gambling websites. These can be accessed at: <https://beta.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/strategy/raising-standards-for-consumers-compliance-and-enforcement-report-2019-20/white-label-partnerships>

Licensed gambling operators and their white label partners are entitled to enter into commercial arrangements with sporting bodies, as long as any sponsorship activities are carried out in a socially responsible way. The Commission expects licensees to ensure that all parties are aware of, and compliant with, the relevant advertising and sponsorship rules and regulations. The government and the Gambling Commission do not hold information on exposure to gambling advertising and marketing in other jurisdictions.

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, we have called for evidence on whether white label agreements pose a risk to consumers in Great Britain, and on the impact of gambling sponsorship arrangements across sport, esports and other areas.

## ■ Culture Recovery Fund

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[150939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the timeframe in which successful applicants to the Culture Recovery Fund have to spend their funding; and whether he plans to make further rounds available to help people to safely recover and reopen after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

Last year the government announced the unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the culture sector, of which over £1 billion has now been allocated to over 3,000 arts and culture organisations across the country. This funding is supporting the arts and culture sector up and down the country to survive the pandemic.

In order to support organisations as they prepare to welcome back audiences and visitors between April and June of this year, a second round of the Culture Recovery Fund has been announced. Over £300m of grants and £100m in repayable finance are available during this second round to support the costs organisations face.

An assessment was made of the merits of extending the timeframe in which successful applicants to the Culture Recovery Fund can spend existing funding. Relevant Arms Length Bodies have now contacted all recipients from the first round of the Culture Recovery Fund to confirm that they can request permission to use unspent funds from their round one awards until June 2021 on any eligible costs set out in guidance for the first or second rounds of the fund. We continue to keep the situation under review in order to provide as much support as we can to the sector.

## ■ Culture Recovery Fund: Outdoor Education

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[149824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Culture Recovery Fund to the outdoor learning sector.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

The £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund is an unprecedented support package for culture and heritage. Where outdoor educational centres have extensive public outreach; run professional arts programmes; or own, work with or manage heritage, they may be eligible for support and could apply to the Culture Recovery Fund.

However, please note that the application portals for the second round of the Culture Recovery Fund have now closed.

## ■ Data Protection: EU Law

**Neil Coyle:**

[\[148803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress the Government has made in securing an agreement on data adequacy with the EU.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Although the EU-UK Trade & Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was agreed and implemented before the end of the transition period, the EU left insufficient time to complete and adopt its data adequacy decisions for the UK by the 31 December 2020.

We have therefore agreed with the EU a time limited 'bridging mechanism' as part of the TCA. The mechanism will allow personal data to continue to flow as it did previously whilst EU adequacy decisions for the UK are adopted, and for no longer than 6 months.

We continue to engage constructively with the European Commission and see no reason why the UK should not be granted adequacy and the process concluded promptly.

## ■ Gambling

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[149225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on (a) problem gamblers and (b) children of gambling advertising on daytime TV.

**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 vulnerable people, and the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP) recently concluded a consultation on proposals to amend the advertising codes to further limit the potential for adverts to appeal to these groups. The broadcast advertising codes make clear that adverts for commercial gambling must not be shown during or adjacent to television programmes directed at or likely to appeal particularly to children. In addition, the Industry Code for Socially Responsible Gambling Advertising prohibits gambling advertising on television before 9pm, except for adverts promoting bingo or lotteries, and sports betting in limited circumstances (not immediately around or during live sport).

The government is not aware of specific evidence on the effect of gambling advertising broadcast on television during the day. However, in March 2020 the charity GambleAware published the final report of a major piece of research into the effect of gambling marketing and advertising on children, young people and vulnerable people. That study found that exposure to advertising was associated with an openness to gamble in the future amongst children and young people aged 11-24

who did not currently gamble. It also found that there were other factors that correlated more closely with current gambling behaviour amongst those groups, including peer and parental gambling. Among vulnerable adults, the study found some evidence that problem or heavy gamblers were more likely to report that marketing had prompted them to place a bet or open a new account. It did not suggest a causal link between exposure to advertising and the development of problem gambling in childhood or later life.

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, we have called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing gambling operators to advertise.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Apprentices: Assessments

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[150756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many level 2 apprentices are unable to progress to level 3 as they are awaiting their assessment as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[150757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many level 2 apprentices that have been unable to progress to level 3 for six months or more are (a) awaiting their assessment and (b) have had their employment suspended or furloughed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are committed to supporting apprentices at all levels, to safely continue with, and complete, their programmes during the COVID-19 outbreak while maintaining quality.

Provisional figures show that in the first quarter of 2020/21 academic year, 30,100 apprentices achieved their apprenticeships (frameworks and standards) including 11,270 apprentices at level 2. Latest figures show that 39% (13,789) of active level 2 apprentices are currently past their planned apprenticeship end date, compared to 21% (15,833) at the same time last year. There are a number of reasons why an apprentice may still be on their apprenticeship past their planned end date, beyond any disruption caused by COVID-19. For those apprentices who were expected to have completed their apprenticeship but have not done so yet, we do not have data on the reason for the delay.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has introduced flexibilities for end point assessment (EPA), including remote assessment where practical, 12 week extensions to the time limit for completion, and relaxation of the order in which elements of the EPA can be taken, in order to mitigate the effects of disruption

caused by COVID-19. All assessment flexibilities and discretions put in place due to COVID-19 will be extended until at least 31 August 2021.

We have introduced flexibilities to allow furloughed apprentices to continue their training and undertake end point assessments. We do not collect data on the number of apprentices who have been furloughed as a result of COVID-19.

Apprenticeship standards are designed to ensure the apprentice is occupationally competent at the end of the apprenticeship. While it was previously possible to undertake an apprenticeship framework for the same job at different levels, with standards there is just one level per occupation. This means that upon completion, apprentices are fully equipped with the skills to successfully undertake their job. Apprentices and their employer can choose to progress to an apprenticeship, or further training, at a higher level at a time that is right for them.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

**[150758]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what alternative arrangements he plans to put in place for the assessment of Level 2 apprentices on practical-based courses.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We are committed to supporting apprentices and employers to safely continue with, and complete, their programmes during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Following the announcement of a new national lockdown on 4 January 2021, training and assessment for apprentices at all levels should now take place remotely wherever possible.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has introduced alternative arrangements for end-point assessments, including remote assessment where practical, 12-week extensions to the time limit for completion, and relaxation of the order in which elements can be taken. All assessment flexibilities and discretions put in place due to COVID-19 will be extended until at least 31 August 2021.

To enable apprentices nearing completion to prepare for and undertake their end-point assessments, which were due in January 2021 or are planned for February or March 2021, face-to-face and practical-based training can continue where remote training is not possible.

End-point assessment and Functional Skills assessments can continue in colleges, training providers' premises, assessment venues and workplaces where it cannot be conducted remotely and where providers and end-point assessment organisations judge it right to do so. End-point assessment is a key element of our reforms to enhance the quality of apprenticeships, ensuring apprentices are occupationally competent.

Where it is not possible for the apprentice to undertake their assessment, a break in learning can be agreed. Further guidance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/957704/Providing\\_apprenticeships\\_during\\_the\\_coronavirus\\_COVID-19\\_outbreak.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957704/Providing_apprenticeships_during_the_coronavirus_COVID-19_outbreak.pdf).

## ■ Assessments: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[150852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to announce the detail of the assessment process to replace summer exams for 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, the Government considers that examinations cannot be held in a way which is fair. The Department has therefore announced that GCSE, AS and A level exams will not go ahead this summer as planned.

The Department has already confirmed proposals that, in summer 2021, students taking GCSE, AS and A levels regulated by Ofqual should be awarded grades based on an assessment by their teachers.

To ensure that our approach is developed with the sector, Ofqual and the Department have now concluded a two-week consultation on how to ensure all students are supported to move to the next stage of their lives. The Department is working at pace to provide further clarity to the sector and details of alternative arrangements to exams will be confirmed in our response to the consultation, which will be published by the end of February 2021.

## ■ CITB: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Owen Thompson:** [\[150859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Construction Industry Training Board was able to access support under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme during the first national covid-19 lockdown in 2020.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Construction Industry Training Board was able to access support under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme during the first national COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

## ■ Further Education: Coronavirus

**Karin Smyth:** [\[145051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to allocate catch-up funding to further education colleges due to the covid-19 outbreak in the 2021-22 academic year.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We recognise that the disruption that COVID-19 has caused in education settings has had a huge impact on children and young people's learning.

Overall, the government has committed to a catch-up package worth £1 billion. This includes a 'Catch-Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time.



The £1 billion catch-up package also includes the £350 million National Tutoring Programme, which includes £96 million for a 16-19 Tuition Fund for the 2020-21 academic year to enable further education and sixth form colleges, school sixth forms and other 16-19 providers of further education to provide small group tuition for students aged 16-19 to help them catch-up.

We are also providing a further £300 million for tutoring, building on the existing £350 million. This funding will support a range of catch-up efforts, including those to support colleges, sixth forms and other FE providers to arrange high quality tuition, building on the £96 million provided last year. Further details will be shared in due course.

### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Tim Loughton:** [\[149720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to respond to the urgent letters from the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham of 10 December 2020 and 26 January 2021, on declined reimbursement costs for a local primary school.

**Nick Gibb:**

I can confirm that a response has been sent to my hon. Friend, the Member for East Worthing and Shoreham.

### ■ **Pre-school Education: Coronavirus**

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[140019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the evidential basis for requiring early years private, voluntary and independent providers that have restricted opening to children who are vulnerable or are cared for by critical workers to meet their statutory requirement to ensure safe early education and childcare during covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021 to not count (a) a child where the staff member who would be required to deliver the child's place has been furloughed and (b) children who are temporarily not receiving their funded entitlements, when submitting their Early Years Census 2021 return; if he will make it his policy for funding entitlement to be adjusted to allow for those reporting exclusions; what steps he is taking to ensure that children are not disadvantaged by reduced local authority funding for early years provision in future as a result of the Early Years Census 2021 taking place during a pandemic; and if he will make a statement.

**Vicky Ford:**

On 17 December 2020, the government announced a return to funding early years settings for the spring term on the basis of attendance, as measured by the January 2021 census. The early years census count has gone ahead as expected and the census guidance is unchanged. To support local authorities we have issued some technical advice on how that guidance can be applied this year.

In summary, children who are ill or self-isolating can be counted, as can those whose parents have temporarily withdrawn their children from open nurseries and



childminders out of caution, and so long as the parent/guardian has not altered their parental declaration relating to expected hours with the provider.

Children should not be counted in the census where a setting has closed or restricted attendance, unless as a result of situations as set out in the supporting technical advice eg. staff sickness, COVID-19 isolation, staff shielding.

We will fund local authorities in the 2021 spring term based on their January 2021 census. If attendance rises after the census is taken, we will top-up councils to up to 85% of their January 2020 census level, where a local authority can provide evidence for increased attendance during the spring term. This will give local authorities additional financial confidence to pay providers for increasing attendance later in the spring term.

We continue to work with the early years sector to understand how they can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available to those who need it now, and for all families who need it in the longer term

#### ■ **Primary Education: Sports**

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[\[150942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure funding for the PE and sport premium from 2021 onwards.

**Nick Gibb:**

Physical Education (PE) and school sport plays an important role in supporting children and young people to be physically active during the current COVID-19 restrictions. That is why the Department confirmed that the Primary PE and Sport premium would continue at £320 million for the 2020/21 academic year.

The Department is considering arrangements for the Primary PE and Sport Premium for the 2021/22 academic year and will confirm the position as soon as possible.

#### ■ **Remote Education: ICT**

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[150669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) laptops and tablets and (b) 4G wireless routers have been delivered to (i) schools, (ii) local authorities and (iii) academy trusts as of 4 February 2021.

**Siobhain McDonagh:**

[\[150670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the remote education support scheme being provided by mobile phone networks in partnership with his Department, how many pupils are receiving support from (a) EE, (b) O2, (c) Sky Mobile, (d) SMARTY, (e) Tesco Mobile, (f) Three, (g) Virgin Mobile, and (f) Vodafone as of 4 February 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care services, including securing 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people.

As of Monday 8 February 2021, over 986,000 laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools, academy trusts, local authorities, and further education providers.

Laptops and tablets are owned by schools, academy trusts or local authorities who can lend these to the children and young people who need them most, during the current COVID-19 restrictions.

The Government is providing this significant injection of devices on top of an estimated 2.9 million laptops and tablets already owned by schools before the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Figures on the number of devices already delivered is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data/2021-week-6>. These figures are broken down by local authority and academy trust.

The Department has already provided over 63,000 4G wireless routers, with free data for the academic year, and continues to provide 4G wireless routers where children need to access remote education. Data regarding the number of routers delivered is also published at the site above.

To support access to the internet, the Department has partnered with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help disadvantaged children get online as well as delivering 4G wireless routers for pupils without connection at home.

The Department is grateful to EE, O2, Sky Mobile, Smarty, Tesco Mobile, Three, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone, BT Mobile and Lycamobile for supporting this offer. We are continuing to invite a range of mobile network providers to support the offer. Data regarding the number of pupils receiving free mobile data will be published shortly.

**■ Remote Working: Training****Esther McVey:****[149234]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the need for new skills training on working in a remote environment.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The government appreciates how difficult it can be for both employers and employees to adjust to new and different working environments and recognises they have adapted well across the country during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, remote working arrangements and any training needed for remote working are matters for relevant employers and not this department. Many employers and organisations have developed best practice and guidance in their areas, such as the Local Government Association, which has made available advice on remote working

here: <https://local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/wellbeing/remote-working-top-tips>.

We recognise the importance of digital skills for employability and participation in society. Therefore, we introduced a legal entitlement in August 2020 for adults with no or low digital skills to study new Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs) at entry level and level 1 for free. The digital entitlement mirrors the existing legal entitlements for English and maths and will provide adults with the digital skills needed for life and work. EDSQs are a new qualification type, based on new national standards for essential digital skills, designed to meet the diverse needs of adults with no or low digital skills.

We also support the provision of basic digital skills training for adults in community settings through the Adult Education Budget.

The department funds a wide range of support and training to help teachers to develop their skills and confidence in using technology and teaching effectively online.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Theresa Villiers:**

**[150712]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department is taking steps to help schools improve ventilation to reduce the risk of covid-19 transmission.

**Nick Gibb:**

At each stage of the Department's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have listened to the latest medical and scientific advice. The Department has worked closely with other Government departments, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care, as well as stakeholders across the sector, to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, and to continue to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the impact and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

It is important to ensure that schools are well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

Current evidence recommends that the way to control COVID-19 is the same, even with the current new variants. The PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' which have been in use throughout the COVID-19 outbreak set out in our published guidance, which includes ventilation, continue to be the right measures to take. These measures create an inherently safer environment for children, young people, and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. PHE keeps all these controls under review, based on the latest evidence. Schools therefore need to continue to implement these controls to the fullest extent. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

Our guidance signposts to further advice from the Health and Safety Executive on air conditioning and ventilation during the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm>.

#### ■ Students: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:** **[150840]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 14 January 2021 to Question 135997, if he will provide a timetable for the delivery of a model of alternative student finance.

**Rachael Maskell:** **[150841]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will review the adequacy of the publicly available information and guidance from his Department for students relating to alternative student finance.

**Michelle Donelan:**

I refer the hon. Member for York Central to the answer I gave on 14 January 2021 to [135997](#). As stated in my answer to 135997, the government will provide an update on the Alternative Student Finance product, including any necessary information and guidance, in due course.

### ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

#### ■ Cats: Pet Travel Scheme

**Theresa Villiers:** **[150711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many cats entered the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme in each month of 2020.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The number of cats entering Great Britain under the Pet Travel Scheme in each month of 2020 is as follows:

JANUARY	2844
February	1608
March	1475
April	284
May	407
June	1253

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JANUARY	2844
July	2217
August	2772
September	3708
October	3175
November	2369
December	3147

## ■ Food: Exports

**Andrea Jenkyns:**

[\[149283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to help promote the exports of UK food producers.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As a Government, we have a manifesto commitment that we want people at home and abroad to be lining up to buy British. The UK's growing reputation for high quality food and drink, produced to high standards of food safety, animal welfare and sustainability, is an excellent platform to increase demand for our products still further around the world.

Defra works in tandem with the Department for International Trade to deliver the Food is GREAT campaign, which helps businesses to succeed in overseas markets by ensuring global recognition of UK excellence in food and drink. Food is GREAT is a key element of the joint Defra and DIT agri-food 'bounce back' package of trade support and promotion measures announced last June to help support businesses that have been impacted by coronavirus.

The Food is GREAT campaign is focused on priority markets, including the USA, China, and Japan. In November, the campaign showcased a spectacular display of food and drink products from across the UK at the **China International Import Expo (CIIE) 2020 in Shanghai**. Activity is being planned across all priority markets, where we will work with UK businesses to promote the best of UK food and drink on the international stage.

Defra is strengthening export capability and ambition in the sector through an Export Working Group in collaboration with the Department for International Trade and representatives of the food and drink sector. This group identifies market opportunities and increases awareness of the support and tools available to exporters. A particular focus is helping SMEs build capability to grow their businesses through exports. A new International Action Plan is being developed by this group to set out the export ambition of the sector, priority markets and the full range of

government support available from tailored export advice to campaign activity and a programme of expos and trade shows. This includes further enhancing in market support, building on the success of Defra's first Agri-Counsellors in Beijing and Dubai.

## ■ Horses: Animal Welfare

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[150696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that best practice is understood and widely followed on (a) horse tethering and (b) other horse welfare issues; and if he will make a statement.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This country leads the way in animal welfare, including setting standards for horse welfare. Under the *Animal Welfare Act 2006*, all owners and keepers of horses must provide for the welfare needs of their animals.

The statutory *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids* provides owners and keepers with general welfare information, including a specific section on the correct way to tether a horse. Whilst it is not an offence to breach the Code, if proceedings are brought against someone for a welfare offence under the 2006 Act, it could be used as evidence in support of those proceedings.

In addition, the equine welfare sector promotes good welfare practice through their respective websites and via social media e.g. National Equine Welfare Council's compendium: <http://www.newc.co.uk/advice/>.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements

**Stephen Timms:**

[150653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148675 on Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements, which products originating from settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories must be labelled as such.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Under retained marketing and food information rules, country of origin information is required for unprocessed beef, pork, sheep, goat and poultry, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, fish and shellfish (whether pre-packed or loose), wine, and honey.

Under the provisions of the retained 1169/2011 Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers, the country of origin or place of provenance of food must also be given on prepacked food where failure to indicate this might mislead the consumer as to the true country of origin or place of provenance of the food, in particular if the information accompanying the food or the label as a whole would otherwise imply that the food has a different country of origin or place of provenance.

In addition, retained Regulation 775/2018 requires that if the origin or provenance of food is provided and is different to that of the primary ingredient of that food, the

origin of the primary ingredient must also be given or an indication that it is not the same as that of the food.

In respect of wine, retained Regulation 1308/2013 requires that an indication of the provenance of a wine must be shown on the label. This should match the indication of provenance shown on the V11 import certificate, and be authorised by the appropriate bodies in the exporting country.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Asia: Gambling

**Ronnie Cowan:**

[\[150837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he and his officials have had with the Governments of Asian countries on the sponsorship of UK sport by Asian gambling operators seeking to market products in countries where those products are illegal.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are not aware of any approach by Governments in Asian countries on the sponsorship of UK sport by Asian gambling operators.

### ■ Aung San Suu Kyi

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[150687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to the Government of Myanmar calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK has made representations at the highest level within Myanmar to encourage all sides to resolve disputes in a peaceful and legal manner that respects the results of the November 2020 general election and accepts the expressed wishes of the people of Myanmar. The Minister for Asia formally summoned the Myanmar Ambassador on 1 February and stressed that State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and others who had been arbitrarily detained should be released. We have used our Presidencies of both the G7 and the UN Security Council to secure strong statements which re-iterated these points.

### ■ Bahrain: Political Prisoners

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[150928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Bahrain; and what representations he has made to his Bahraini counterpart on the issue of political prisoners.

**James Cleverly:**

Our latest assessment of the human rights situation in Bahrain was published as part of our Human Rights and Democracy Report in July 2020. FCDO Ministers and Embassy officials regularly raise human rights issues and individual cases with the Government of Bahrain at senior levels, most recently, during my visit to Bahrain in November 2020.

**China: Human Rights****Hywel Williams:**[\[149729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the US administration on sanctions of Chinese officials culpable for human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

**Nigel Adams:**

The government remains gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. We regularly discuss these concerns and related questions of policy with the US. The UK plays a leading role in holding China to account for its human rights violations in the region, working closely with international partners, including the US.

**China: Uighurs****Hilary Benn:**[\[148705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation of the Uighur people in China in respect of reports of rape, torture and forced sterilisation.

**Nigel Adams:**

The 3 February BBC report into this issue offers deeply distressing testimony of the rape, torture and dehumanisation of Uyghur women in Xinjiang detention centres. It is a further, compelling addition to the growing body of evidence of the gross human rights violations being perpetrated against Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in Xinjiang. The Government is committed to taking robust action in respect of Xinjiang. That is why, on 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced a series of targeted measures to help ensure that British organisations are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in the region. The UK has played, and will continue to play, a leading role in building international pressure on China to change course.

**Coronavirus: Vaccination****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[150900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to meet the previous Business Secretary's statement of 14 August 2020 that the UK's Janssen and Novavax agreements will ensure fair and equitable access of a vaccine around the world.



**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, as shown through its commitment of £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC). Our commitment will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 for up to 92 developing countries. Deliveries are expected to begin soon.

The vaccine candidates developed by Janssen and Novavax are both part of the COVAX portfolio. Subject to their approval by stringent regulatory bodies, they will both contribute to doses delivered in developing countries. We welcome Janssen's vaccine being made available on a not-for-profit basis during the pandemic, and Novavax's agreement with the Serum Institute of India to produce its vaccine candidate for COVAX. These will both help ensure global supply and the equitable access of vaccines.

**■ Developing Countries: Nutrition****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[150899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2021 to Question 145834, which Ministers in his Department met with (a) the International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition and (b) members of the Action for Global Health network; and what the agenda items were for those meetings.

**Wendy Morton:**

I met with 4 representatives from the International Coalition for Advocacy on Nutrition (ICAN) on 4th May 2020. The topics covered were:

- COVID-19 and nutrition;
- ICAN's recommendations to the UK government as set out in their paper ' Nutrition: The key to unlocking UK Aid's Impact' ;
- The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes;
- Plans for the Nutrition for Growth Summit; and
- The UK government's commitment to Ending Preventable Deaths.

I met with the CEOs from the Action for Global Health Network on 24th June 2020 to discuss the UK's response to COVID-19 and the indirect impacts of COVID-19 on health essential services. The meeting also covered ODA prioritisation and the DFID-FCO merger.

**■ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Aid****Stephen Doughty:**[\[150820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of access to humanitarian aid for civilians in (a) the Tigray and (b) neighbouring regions of Ethiopia.

**James Duddridge:**

The Foreign Secretary raised the need for untrammelled humanitarian access to Tigray with President Abiy during his recent visit to Ethiopia. We judge that there are still restrictions to access to around 85% of the Tigray region. In this context we welcome the recent visits to Ethiopia by senior UN officials and hope that they will deliver a sustained step-change in humanitarian access.

We remain concerned about the impact of the continued fighting in Tigray on the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and beyond. The UK is working closely with humanitarian organisations to make sure aid reaches civilians affected by the fighting. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are working hard to deliver support in challenging circumstances, including shelter, water and healthcare. The Foreign Secretary announced £11.4m of humanitarian funding to support those affected by the conflict during his visit to Ethiopia where he saw first-hand how UK Aid is supporting the World Food Programme and NGOs to ensure the delivery of aid to those affected by the conflict.

**■ EU Countries: Migrant Camps****Daisy Cooper:**[\[144851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the provisions in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on allowing charitable organisations to send aid to refugee camps in EU countries.

**Daisy Cooper:**[\[144852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what documentation is required by UK-based charitable organisations to send (a) new and (b) used (i) clothes, (ii) bedding, (iii) toiletries, (iv) books, (v) children's toys, (vi) mobile phones, (vii) tents, (viii) non-prescription medicines, (ix) first aid supplies and (x) tents to refugees in camps in EU countries.

**Wendy Morton:**

*[Holding answer 1 February 2021]:* From 1 January 2021 export declarations are required for all goods moving from Great Britain to the EU. A step by step guide detailing how to do this can be found at [www.gov.uk/export-goods](http://www.gov.uk/export-goods).

The UK Tariff provides details of how to complete an export declaration and the different procedure codes that can be used when exporting goods. Generally, exports of humanitarian aid come within customs procedure code 10 00 001; but for donated aid that has no commercial value, the relevant customs procedure code is 10 00 098. Further information on UK export tariff requirements can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-trade-tariff-exports](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-trade-tariff-exports), and export custom procedure codes can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-trade-tariff-customs-procedure-codes](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-trade-tariff-customs-procedure-codes).

The procedures involved also depend on the destination of the goods, so charities should check what is required with the relevant member state or read their guidance published online. Information on this can be found at [https://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/home\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/home_en).

## ■ Indonesia: Papua

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[150921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to (a) his Indonesian counterpart and (b) the international community on the recent comments made by General Hendropriyono that two million West Papuans be transmigrated to Manado.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government fully respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia, including the provinces of Papua and West Papua, and notes the continued efforts on behalf of the Indonesian government to invest in the economic and social development of both provinces in recent years. We continue to support efforts to address the needs and aspirations of the people in both provinces. General Hendropriyono is no longer an Indonesian government official and we understand that his comments do not reflect official Indonesian government policy. Ministers regularly engage with their Indonesian counterparts on a range of bilateral issues, including Papua.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Fuels

**Chris Green:**

[\[149778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on reports that Iran has started enriching uranium with a new cascade of centrifuges in its underground Natanz plant.

**Chris Green:**

[\[149779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of confirmation by Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran has two cascades of advanced centrifuges with almost four times the enrichment capacity of previous ones in operation at its underground Natanz facility.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran's continued systematic non-compliance with its nuclear commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is jeopardising our efforts to preserve the JCPOA and risks compromising the important opportunity for a return to diplomacy with the new US Administration. We continue to engage closely with the US and JCPOA participants on this, and have made our position clear, including in recent E3 statements, that Iran must halt this activity, and return to compliance with its JCPOA commitments without delay.

**■ Myanmar: Journalism****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[150946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect journalists facing threat of harm or arrest in Myanmar.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK condemns the coup conducted by the Myanmar military on 1 February. We have made representations at the highest level within Myanmar to encourage all sides to resolve disputes in a peaceful and legal manner. We condemn restrictions on social media as a means of limiting freedom of expression and the intimidation and persecution of those opposing the military coup. We urge the military to exercise utmost restraint towards them and refrain from actions against civil society and further disruption of communication or freedom of expression and the media. Journalists must be allowed to carry out their job without fear or threat of violence. We and the EU have called for a Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on Myanmar on 12 February. We condemn the coup in Myanmar and the arbitrary detention of elected politicians & civil society by the military.

**■ Overseas Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[150902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 2021 to Question 144797 on Overseas Aid, how many of his officials are working on that internal planning; and which directorates were they in previously.

**James Cleverly:**

Internal plans are being prepared by Posts and Directorates across the entirety of the organisation. This is a routine, but important, process to agree objectives alongside budgets for the next financial year and which enables internal accountability for delivery. The internal planning process is being co-ordinated by teams from Finance, Strategy and Delivery Directorates.

**■ Overseas Aid: Research****Chi Onwurah:**[\[148778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will guarantee funding for successful international scientific research programmes and partnerships in light of the reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget.

**James Duddridge:**

The Covid pandemic's economic impact has forced the government to take the difficult decision to temporarily reduce ODA to 0.5% of GNI. The Foreign Secretary has set out a strategic approach to ensure maximum impact for our aid spend. This includes the use of ODA to support scientific research programmes that can provide

new solutions to critical challenges in development, such as climate change and infectious diseases.

Ministers will be engaged during February and March on spending plans for financial year 2021/22. For this reason, I am not yet able to comment on the direct implications for specific programmes or activities.

### ■ **Palestinians: Coronavirus**

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[148913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on ensuring that Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory have (a) equitable, (b) comprehensive and (c) timely access to covid-19 vaccines.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK regularly engages with both the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority (PA) and will continue to raise timely and appropriate access to COVID-19 vaccines. We welcome steps both parties have taken so far to coordinate the response, including the recent delivery of 2,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine from the Israeli Authorities to the PA for Palestinian health workers. We continue to encourage further cooperation between the two parties.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[133817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the guidance for care home visitation will be updated following the introduction of the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and whether care homes should be facilitating visits for care home residents during this period.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* As set out in the national lockdown guidance, visits to care homes can continue to take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not currently allowed. Visits in exceptional circumstances including end of life should always be supported and enabled.

### ■ **Carers: Government Assistance**

**Jeremy Hunt:**

[\[120019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to increase support for unpaid carers.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 30 November 2020]:* The Carers Action Plan, announced in 2018, set out a cross-Government programme of work to support carers. We continue to implement and build on the commitments made at that time, including committing in our manifesto to extend the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers to one week.

We have also sought to support carers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have provided funding to a range of charities including funding to extend the Carers UK's helpline opening hours so unpaid carers are able to access trusted information and advice. This funding has been extended to March 2021. A further £500,000 was provided to the Carers Trust to provide support to unpaid carers experiencing loneliness during the pandemic

In addition, to help carers and those they care for, we have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence, to publish guidance to help providers make decisions on restarting day services. We have also enabled local authorities to use some of the money provided to them through the Infection Control Fund to help services reopen safely or be reconfigured to work in a COVID-19 secure way.

**■ Coronavirus: Hospitals****Helen Hayes:**[\[139068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 January 2021 to Question 134007, if he will undertake an assessment of (a) long covid and (b) the other long-term health effects of covid-19 on NHS staff and outsourced staff working in hospitals.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 January 2021]:* The National Health Service is working hard to establish data collection systems for the new post COVID-19 assessment services, whilst it is prioritising the management of the COVID-19 demand.

**■ Health Professions: Misconduct****Daisy Cooper:**[\[149342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman has the authority to investigate matters of sexual misconduct where the (a) General Medical Council or (b) NHS Trust Disciplinary routes have been exhausted.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 9 February 2021]:* The Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO) investigates complaints about National Health Service care or service where a complainant believes that they have suffered an injustice or hardship.

Where a complaint has not been resolved by the NHS complaints procedure, the complainant can raise it with the PHSO. It is for the PHSO to decide which complaints they investigate.

**■ Health Professions: Regulation**

**Damian Green:** [\[133615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the statutory regulation of clinical technologists.

**Damian Green:** [\[133616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential risk of patient harm by medical professionals not statutorily regulated.

**Damian Green:** [\[133617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department had made of trends in the (a) recruitment, (b) number and (c) development of non-statutory regulated clinical technologists.

**Damian Green:** [\[133618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an estimate of the number of overseas-trained clinical technologists the NHS needs to recruit to fill the workforce gap.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* We have no plans to extend statutory regulation to clinical technologists at this time. No assessment has been made of the potential merits of the statutory regulation of clinical technologists nor any assessment of trends in the recruitment, number and development of non-statutory regulated clinical technologists. We do not hold data on how many overseas-trained clinical technologists the National Health Service needs to recruit.

The statutory regulation of healthcare professionals should only be used where the risks to public and patient protection cannot be addressed in other ways, such as through employer oversight or accredited voluntary registration. Anyone undertaking or seeking employment in a health and social care occupation, whether regulated or unregulated, will also be subject to employer checks. The Department does not have any current plans to bring clinical technologists into statutory regulation.

Clinical Technologists can register with the Register of Clinical Technologists which is a voluntary register accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA). The PSA sets standards for organisations holding voluntary registers for health and social care occupations and accredits those registers that meet the standards. Accreditation provides assurance that a voluntary register is well run; for example, ensuring that registrants are required to meet high standards of personal behaviour, technical competence and, where relevant, business practice.

The Department does not collect data on the number of clinical technologists employed by the NHS.



**■ Health Professions: Training**

**Sarah Champion:** [\[133872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the financial effect of tuition fees on healthcare students.

**Sarah Champion:** [\[133873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the reimbursement of tuition fees for current nursing, midwifery and allied healthcare students.

**Sarah Champion:** [\[133874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to reimburse tuition fees or forgive current debt for all current nursing, midwifery and allied healthcare students.

**Sarah Champion:** [\[133875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to introduce a universal, living maintenance grant for healthcare students in England.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government keeps the funding arrangements for all National Health Service health professionals' education under close review, to ensure that students are appropriately supported.

The Government has already introduced new maintenance funding for many healthcare courses. In September 2020, the Department introduced the new, non-repayable, training grant of at least £5,000 per academic year, for all eligible new and continuing pre-registration nursing, midwifery and most allied health profession students studying at English universities, with a further £3,000 available to support eligible students studying in hard to recruit areas or those studying a specialist subject as well as support for childcare costs. This grant is in addition to funding provided by the Students Loan Company and grants available through the 'NHS Learning Support Fund' such as travel and dual accommodation expenses, parental support and an exceptional hardship fund.

Student loans are income contingent and only need to be repaid from their statutory repayment date, which for most undergraduate students is the April after students finish their course. Monthly repayments are always linked to income, not to interest rates or the amount borrowed. Repayments are taken directly from salary at a rate of 9% above the repayment threshold, which is currently £26,575 annually and will rise to £27,295 from April this year. Furthermore, if a borrower stops working, or their income drops below the threshold, repayments will stop and only start again when income exceeds the threshold.

At the end of the 30-year period any outstanding loan amount is written off at no detriment to individual borrowers.



Healthcare students will continue to be required to pay tuition fees and there are no plans for a specific debt write-off or reimbursement scheme for these students. There have been no specific discussions at Cabinet level on the reimbursement of tuition fees for current nursing, midwifery and allied healthcare students.

#### ■ Health Services and Social Services: Staff

**Neale Hanvey:** [\[136642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate staff across the (a) health and (b) social care sectors under the new UK immigration rules.

**Helen Whately:**

In August 2020 my Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department launched the Health and Care Visa for health and care professionals from overseas, giving them a faster and cheaper route to come and work in the United Kingdom. This visa route is conditional on having a job offer for an eligible role from an eligible sponsor. Overseas health and care staff are also either exempt from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge when applying for a visa or can claim a reimbursement.

#### ■ Health Services: Reciprocal Arrangements

**Claire Hanna:** [\[134244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Northern Ireland citizens who hold dual nationalities under the Good Friday Agreement will be eligible for the new EHIC card from 1 January 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* Under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement all United Kingdom residents, including the people of Northern Ireland, will receive the new UK Global Health Insurance Card announced on 11 January 2021.

This offers equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare needs to the European Health Insurance Card when in the European Union on a temporary stay.

This is without prejudice to the rights people may have under the Withdrawal Agreement. Citizens of Northern Ireland who live in the UK will not usually have ongoing rights under the Withdrawal Agreement, but they may have such rights if they have resided or paid contributions in the EU in the past.

#### ■ Home Care Services: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[137968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that asymptomatic domiciliary care workers providing intimate care for clinically

extremely vulnerable people and others with vulnerabilities are able to access regular covid-19 testing.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 19 January 2021]:* On 23 November 2020, we began offering domiciliary care organisations access to regular, weekly COVID-19 testing for their carers looking after people in their own homes from an online portal.

Domiciliary care workers are able to access weekly PCR tests to administer at home, which will help identify more asymptomatic cases and protect care recipients who are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[83653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is giving to Domiciliary Care Companies during the covid-19 outbreak; what recent assessment he has made of the (a) importance of their role and (b) the potential merits of facilitating their work on behalf of vulnerable people; for what reason those companies have been denied access to the infection control grant scheme; and if he will make it his policy to (i) provide such access, and (ii) put in place other measures of financial support for those companies during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 7 September 2020]:* We recognise the importance of supporting the domiciliary care sector.

The £3.7 billion already granted to local authorities can be used to support adult social care, including domiciliary care. Moreover, local authorities can use some of the Infection Control fund for infection control measures in domiciliary care.

We continue to review and update the support measures that we have put in place for the home care sector.

■ **NHS: Insurance**

**Holly Mumby-Croft:**

[\[120195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of automatic death-in-service insurance for people on unpaid placements in NHS hospitals.

**Helen Whately:**

We are immensely grateful for the hard work of all our healthcare students throughout this pandemic. Ministers have made it clear that for the purposes of the NHS & Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme students on placement will be treated in the same way as other staff working on the frontline.

**■ Nurses: Training**

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[138989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of nursing students in England who have had the completion of their university education delayed due to covid-19; and what the average length is of that delay.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[138990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nursing students in England have had their clinical placements cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement on the effect of that matter on the completion of their courses.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 January 2021]:* Data collected by Health Education England (HEE) from universities, indicated that as a result of COVID-19, up to 2,092 nursing students had extended their education and were not able to complete their programme by July 2020 as anticipated. The average delay to completion of training was estimated at seven weeks.

HEE will continue to work with system partners to ensure any impact on training and placements is minimised, including supporting universities to rearrange interrupted clinical placements and finding alternatives such as using simulation where that is appropriate. In cases where extensions to students' courses are unavoidable, the Government will continue to ensure that appropriate financial support is made available to affected students.

**Emma Hardy:** [\[139122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of nursing students in England who have had their (a) clinical placements cancelled or (b) university education delayed due to covid-19; and what the average length of those delays is.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 January 2021]:* Data collected by Health Education England (HEE) from universities indicated that as a result of COVID-19, up to 2,092 nursing students had extended their education and were not able to complete their programme by July 2020 as anticipated. The average delay to completion of training was estimated at seven weeks.

HEE will continue to work with system partners to ensure any impact on training and placements is minimised, including supporting universities to rearrange interrupted clinical placements and finding alternatives such as using simulation where that is appropriate. In cases where extensions to students' courses are unavoidable, the Government will continue to ensure that appropriate financial support is made available to affected students.

**■ Social Services: Finance****James Grundy:** [\[129161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his funding plans are for future adult social care provision.

**Helen Whately:**

As part of the 2020 Spending Review the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Government will provide councils with access to an additional £1 billion for social care next year. In addition, we expect to provide councils with estimated funding of around £3 billion to help manage the impact of COVID-19 across their services, including in adult social care, and to compensate for income losses.

This funding will support local authorities to maintain care services while keeping up with rising demand and recovering from the impact of COVID-19.

**■ Social Services: Reform****Jon Trickett:** [\[138387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish proposals on reforming social care.

**Helen Whately:**

As set out in the 2020 Spending Review, the Government is committed to reform of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals this year.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Alcoholic Drinks: Crime****Dan Carden:** [\[150918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Institute of Alcohol Studies' report, Inequalities in victimisation: alcohol, violence and anti-social behaviour, published in May 2020, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the findings of that report.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is committed to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of flexible tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to anti-social behaviour.

The Government has a wide-ranging approach to support the most vulnerable at risk from alcohol misuse, including support for children of alcohol dependent parents and action to reduce alcohol-related crime. Since 2016 the Government has invested more than £16 billion in local government public health services, including alcohol treatment services.

Alcohol is no excuse for domestic abuse or any other kind of abusive behaviour. The Domestic Abuse Bill introduces new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders that will allow courts to tailor requirements to address the perpetrator's behaviour. This could include abuse exacerbated by alcohol, for example a requirement to be assessed for an alcohol treatment programme.

## ■ Asylum: Penally Camp

**Olivia Blake:** [\[150976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the review of initial accommodation for single adult asylum seekers undertaken by Human Applications.

**Olivia Blake:** [\[150977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Penally barracks had been used to accommodate people for a period of longer than three months prior to be used for accommodating asylum seekers.

**Olivia Blake:** [\[150978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what surveys have been undertaken to assess the quality of the buildings at the Napier barracks site for their use as accommodation and workplaces.

**Olivia Blake:** [\[150979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to extend planning permission for the Penally Camp, which is set to expire on 20 March 2021.

### **Chris Philp:**

As part of our assurance of our accommodation contracts we recently asked a third party, Human Applications, to undertake a series of property inspections and stakeholder interviews specifically focused on compliance with Covid measures. Human Applications completed their visits, which included both the Napier and Penally sites, and they have now submitted a report with their findings and recommendations. Once we have responded to the report, we intend to share a summary of the findings and actions taken with key stakeholders. We have already shared the report with accommodation providers to allow them to action specific findings.

We do not hold information on how long individuals were accommodated in Penally Training Camp prior to it being used to accommodate asylum seekers.

Napier Barracks, which was previously used to house soldiers and army personnel is safe, habitable, fit for purpose and correctly equipped in line with existing asylum accommodation standards contractual requirements. Risk assessments were carried out following a recent fire at the site and a fire-damaged block has been secured and cordoned off to be demolished, other blocks remain in use.

The Ministry of Defence has given permission to use Penally Training Camp for 12 months. The use of contingency initial accommodation is temporary, and we will discontinue it, and Napier Barracks as soon as we are able.

### ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[R] [\[150784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will reinstate an explicit protest exemption in covid-19 regulations.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The right to peaceful protest is one of the cornerstones of our democracy. However, in these unprecedented circumstances, any gathering risks spreading the disease, leading to more deaths, so it is vital that everyone plays a part in controlling the virus. The Covid-19 regulations are being kept under constant review by the Department of Health and Social Care, in close consultation with other Government departments.

### ■ **Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[150917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to improve (a) access to and (b) provision of domestic violence support services.

**Victoria Atkins:**

This Government is committed to ensuring domestic abuse organisations are able to meet the needs of victims. To that end we have awarded £27 million in additional funds to support domestic abuse services this financial year alone, comprising £25 million from the government's £76 million in emergency funding for the most vulnerable in society, and an extra £2 million from the Home Office in April 2021 to bolster the capacity of domestic abuse organisations affected by the pandemic.

To ensure victims know where and how to access support, we have launched guidance on our gov.uk website and delivered a successful #YouAreNotAlone awareness raising campaign to signpost access to help and support services - reaching almost 25 million UK adults and securing over 130 million followers on social media

This January, we also launched a new Ask for ANI Codeword scheme to enable domestic abuse victims to seek safe and discreet support from over 2,600 participating pharmacies who will be able to provide victim focussed support, including engagement with specialist victim support services and the police as necessary.

### ■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Protest**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[150749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with (a) the National Eviction Team, (b) the landowners, (c) HS2, (d) the High Court

Enforcement Officer, (e) the Metropolitan Police and (f) the British Transport Police on policing of the protests at Euston Square Garden; what assessment she has made of whether the right to peaceful protest is being upheld at that site; what steps she is taking to ensure and monitor the safety of the protestors; and if she will make a statement.

**Kit Malthouse:**

We have a long tradition in this country of respect for legal protest. However, these protestors are putting themselves and those who might have to try to rescue them at risk. The response to the situation is being led by the police, who are operationally independent of Government.

■ **Immigration: EU Nationals**

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[150947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made on expanding the Youth Mobility Scheme to EU nationals.

**Kevin Foster:**

Each Youth Mobility Scheme is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK Nationals.

The UK Government has indicated its desire to negotiate a youth mobility arrangement with the EU, or with individual countries within it if a collective agreement is not possible, as well as with those further afield.

The Home Office will not add nations to the scheme unilaterally in the absence of such an agreement. We do however, remain open to concluding further schemes on this reciprocal basis.

**Wendy Chamberlain:**

[\[150948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from which countries have been issued a Youth Mobility Scheme visa in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office regularly publishes data of Immigration Statistics (Managed Migration Datasets) which includes this information. It can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets#entry-clearance-visas-granted-outside-the-uk>).

This data was last published in November 2020. As a result of this the data for 2020 is only up to the end of September. Please note all figures for 2020 are provisional.

■ **Police: Digital Technology**

**Bambos Charalambous:**

[\[149315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Digital Evidence Transfer Service (DETS).



**Kit Malthouse:**

A programme to support the development of a Digital Evidence Transfer Service (DETS) was funded through the Police Transformation Fund. The ambition of DETS was to develop a single product which could be used by all forces to share digital evidence with Criminal Justice System. However, a decision was made in September 2019 to discontinue the project. This was following a review of the project and the national landscape for digital evidence sharing capabilities across all forces, which found that the majority of forces had subsequently acquired and implemented their own digital evidence sharing capabilities. Lessons learnt from this project are being taken forward to ensure joined-up approaches on wider programmes within the wider Criminal Justice System.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Community Development: Regeneration****Mike Amesbury:**[\[150924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing financial support to community groups looking to use the proposed right to regenerate.

**Christopher Pincher:**

*[Holding answer 11 February 2021]:* The Government welcomes feedback on ways in which we could encourage the Right to be utilised more effectively and more widely. Following the conclusion of the consultation, the Government will publish its formal response.

**Mike Amesbury:**[\[150925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of ensuring community priority for the proposed right to regenerate.

**Christopher Pincher:**

*[Holding answer 11 February 2021]:* The Government is consulting on a number of reforms as part of its Right to Regenerate proposals, in order to make it easier for people and communities to help shape their local area.

One of the reforms that the Government is consulting on would be to provide a right of first refusal for those who make successful requests, potentially giving a priority to those who have made the effort to research and submit a request, within the existing rules governing best value for public land sales. This would enable local communities to benefit where they identify land in their local area which could be put to better use.

The Government welcomes feedback on ways to make the Right more effective encourage wider use. Following the conclusion of the consultation, the Government will publish its formal response.



## ■ Housing: Older People

**Bambos Charalambous:** [\[150903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether it is the Government's policy to implement the Law Commission's 2017 recommendations on the regulation of event fees in retirement properties.

**Christopher Pincher:**

*[Holding answer 11 February 2021]:* In 2017, the Law Commission published a report of their review of event fees on behalf of this Department. The Law Commission made a number of recommendations in its report, which can be downloaded at <http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/event-fees-in-retirement-properties>.

The Government responded to the Law Commission, thanking them for the report and agreeing to implement the majority of the recommendations. The Government is further considering two recommendations, on succession rights and a database of leasehold retirement properties with event fees. These recommendations are being considered alongside the wider leasehold reform programme.

## ■ Local Government: Reorganisation

**Steve Reed:** [\[150824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2020 to Question 124761 on Local Government: Reorganisation, whether elections due to be held in North Yorkshire, Somerset and Cumbria will be deferred to allow any proposed local government reorganisation.

**Luke Hall:**

We have received representations for and against the postponement of local elections due to take place in the areas of Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset on account of proposals for re-organisation, and we are considering those proposals and whether to follow past precedents to postpone local elections for one year in areas where reorganisation is under consideration. An announcement will be made in due course.

## ■ Public Sector: Land Use

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[150923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of the proposed right to regenerate on existing strategies for the disposal of public land.

**Christopher Pincher:**

*[Holding answer 11 February 2021]:* The Government is clear that public bodies should use their estates as efficiently as possible. This includes disposing of land where it is surplus to requirements.

A reformed Right to Regenerate will help people and communities better hold public bodies to account, challenging them to use public land effectively and to dispose of it where it can be put to a better use.

### ■ Troubled Families Programme

**Steve Reed:** [\[150823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to publish allocations to local authorities for the extension to the Troubled Families scheme for the financial year 2021-22.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Local authorities have now received their individual allocations for the Troubled Families Programme in 2021-22. There are no current plans to publish these. Up to £165 million has been made available for the programme in that year.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Fossil Fuels: Finance

**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[150886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many of the fossil fuel projects UK Export Finance had planned for 2021 will continue; and where those projects will be located.

**Graham Stuart:**

In line with the Prime Minister's announcement, UK Export Finance (UKEF) will continue to consider fossil fuel projects, subject to our due diligence, until the new policy is implemented. We do not yet know what the date of implementation will be.

**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[150889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many fossil-fuel projects UK Export Finance is planned to conclude in each of the timeframe scenarios outlined in the consultation document on aligning UK international support for the clean energy transition.

**Graham Stuart:**

When considering a request for support, UKEF conducts extensive due diligence, including environmental, social, and human rights due diligence and consideration of climate change, to understand the risk it is being asked to take. There are various reasons why an application to UKEF might not result in support being provided, or, if support is offered, why delays in providing that support might arise. All these factors make determining when UKEF support may, or even will, be provided difficult and imprecise.

UKEF will publish details of any projects supported in its Annual Report and Accounts.

**■ Trade Agreements: Cameroon**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[150721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148746, what (a) precedents exist and (b) the legal basis is for the use of a Memorandum of Understanding as a bridging mechanism pending the ratification and entry into force of an agreement that has not yet been signed.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[150722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February to Question 148746 on Trade Agreements: Cameroon, if she will update paragraph six of the Provisional Application and Bridging Mechanisms Information Note published by her Department in December 2020 to clarify the position on the use of bridging mechanisms in relation to trade agreements that have not yet been signed.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[150723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148746 on Trade Agreements: Cameroon, when she expects to sign the UK's economic partnership agreement with Cameroon.

**Greg Hands:**

Where the UK or its treaty partners are unable to fully ratify or provisionally apply an agreement, the UK has sought to give effect to the preferences in arrangements reached with partners through alternative bridging mechanisms. These non-binding and temporary mechanisms include Memoranda of Understanding or the Exchange of Diplomatic Notes, which ensure continuity of trade and prevent disruption.

The UK considers arrangements under bridging mechanisms to be compliant with WTO rules under Article XXIV of GATT and Article V of GATS. Accordingly, we have notified to the WTO these trading arrangements.

We are working to ensure that the Economic Partnership Agreement with Cameroon is signed and ratified as quickly as practicable. We have established a bridging mechanism with Cameroon to ensure continuity in trade preferences between our countries, avoiding any disruption that otherwise would have occurred.

The text of the agreement will be laid in Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRaG) and the corresponding Memorandum of Understanding published on GOV.UK once the formal process of signing the Agreement is complete.

**■ Trade Agreements: Ghana**

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[149722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's press release, Ghana-UK Joint Statement: Ghana-UK Trade Partnership Agreement, published on 4 February 2021, if she will publish a timetable for the full restoration of tariff free trade between Ghana and the UK; what plans her Department has to refund tariffs

paid by UK importers from Ghana once that deal takes effect; what the planned timescale is for such refunds; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

As set out in the Joint Statement of 4<sup>th</sup> February, negotiations with Ghana have been finalised. We are working with Ghana to put the deal in place as soon as possible, and this requires both sides to work at pace. As with any trade agreement, there are a number of internal processes that need to take place on both sides to allow the terms of the agreement to be applied.

The collection of tariffs is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs, but the Hon. Gentleman will know that imports from Ghana are currently receiving the correct tariff treatment under the United Kingdom's Generalised Scheme of Preferences. We are focused on putting a trade deal in place as quickly as possible so that tariffs are lifted on a lasting basis.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Advisory Board on Female Offenders

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[150738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's announcement of 23 January 2021 entitled Extra funding for organisations that steer women away from crime, whether the Advisory Board on Female Offenders has been given access to his Department's modelling of demand for places in women's prisons.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[150739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Minister of State for Prison and Probation plans to meet with members of the Advisory Board on Female Offenders on plans to spend £150 million on 500 additional prison places for women.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[150740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which members of the Advisory Board on Female Offenders were (a) consulted on and (b) informed of the decision to build 500 additional prison places for women prior to the announcement of the 23 January 2021.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Female Offender Strategy set out the Government's vision of fewer women offending and reoffending; fewer women in custody, especially on short-term sentences, with a greater proportion of women managed in the community successfully; and where prison is necessary, better conditions for those in custody. The average female prison population in 2010 was 4236, compared to 3126 as of 29 January 2021 - a decrease of 26%. Delivery of the community commitments in our Strategy and in the recent Sentencing White Paper should see this trend continue in the long-term.

We published our latest population projections in November 2020, in which we included prison projections for four scenarios – the three police impact scenarios in response to the plan to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers and a fast court recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a meeting of the Advisory Board on Female Offenders (ABFO) on 21 January, attendees were informed that the additional police officers were expected to lead to an increase in the male and female prison populations, and that it was necessary to plan for this, to ensure that there were safe, decent and secure places to meet this demand. On 22 January 2021, in advance of the announcement on 23 January 2021, we informed all ABFO members that up to 500 new places, designed to meet the specific needs of women, will be built in existing prisons to increase availability of single cells and improve conditions as part of the 18,000 additional prison places programme. These places will enable us to hold more women closer to home and their families.

All ABFO members were invited to a workshop on 4 February, attended by the Minister of State for Prisons and Probation, to discuss and understand their views and concerns surrounding the women's prison estate. During this session, we were able to provide further information on the scope of our work, and our future proposals. We will continue to engage with stakeholders as our plans develop.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[149764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what estimate his Department has made of the number of care home (a) residents and (b) staff in Northern Ireland diagnosed with covid-19 in each of the last 6 months.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State and I are working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive on the response to Covid-19.

As my Hon Friend will be aware, health is a devolved matter. The Covid-19 dashboard on the Department of Health's website provides daily updates on the number of confirmed outbreaks in NI care homes. This dashboard is the responsibility of NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) statistics within the Department of Health and can be found on the following link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/covid-19-daily-dashboard-updates>

Supporting the care home sector through this pandemic has been a critical part of the UK's response, and while public health and social care are devolved, the UK Government has provided support to the Department of Health where necessary, including increasing testing capacity, with over 1 million tests provided under the

national testing initiative, providing vaccines across the UK and supporting healthcare in Northern Ireland with over £3bn extra funding.

The UK Government is ensuring essential services are protected. That is why we have committed to offer the first vaccine dose to all those aged 80 and over, care home residents and staff, and frontline health and social care workers by 15 February, in line with advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ A303: Stonehenge

**Rebecca Long Bailey:** [\[150831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of implications for his policies of the Unesco World Heritage Committee's concerns that proposed changes to the A303 near Stonehenge would impact adversely on the Stonehenge landscape because the tunnel is too short.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Secretary of State's decision to approve the A303 (Amesbury to Berwick Down) Development Consent Order ("A303 Stonehenge") road scheme promoted by Highways England was issued on 12 November 2020. The reasons for his decision, including consideration of its impacts on the World Heritage Site, are set out in the decision letter which, along with the other decision documents, is available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#). The decision is currently subject to a claim for judicial review and, therefore, no further comment can be made on either the decision or the live litigation case.

### ■ Aviation: Coronavirus

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[150816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many (a) direct commercial, (b) indirect commercial and (c) cargo flights operated into UK airports from countries on the red list during the covid-19 pandemic in each of the last three months.

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[150817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many general aviation flights originating in countries on the red list during the covid-19 pandemic operated (a) directly and (b) indirectly into UK airports in each of the last three months.

**Robert Courts:**

Information on the number of commercially operated flights is collected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), and is currently complete up to November 2020. The list of 'red list' countries was last updated on 29 January 2021, therefore the 'red list' designation did not apply at the time that the flights operated.

The data shows that in November 2020, flights operated into UK airports from countries which are now currently identified as 'red list' were as follows:

- 709 direct commercial passenger flights, and
- 146 direct commercial cargo-only flights.

Complete data for December 2020 and January 2021 will be made available to the Department later in 2021.

The CAA does not collect data on General Aviation flights at UK airports by country of origin. Further timely information on overall volumes of flights directly performed to and from the UK across all types of flight operations (inclusive of passenger, cargo-only, military and general aviation flights) are made publicly available by Eurocontrol on their [website](#), however breakdowns by country of origin and flight type are not routinely made available.

The Department does not hold statistics on indirect flights operating into UK airports.

**Stephen Doughty:**

**[150818]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to taken to ensure the biosecurity of aircraft crews that may have been in a country on the red list during the covid-19 pandemic in the last 14 days.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government has put in place robust border measures to prevent people travelling into the UK if they have Covid-19, including the requirement to present a negative Covid-19 test before departure. An entry ban is currently in place for the 33 countries identified as high risk (otherwise known as the 'red list'), as well as direct flight ban for 7 of these countries.

The Government has worked with the travel industry to put in place safer travel guidance for both operators and passengers.

This guidance is clear that robust social distancing, regular cleaning, and good hand and respiratory hygiene are the best ways of protecting against the transmission of coronavirus.

Where this may not be possible - such as on board an aircraft - airlines are advised to carry out a risk assessment and implement appropriate risk controls. For example, wearing a face covering can play a role in helping to protect passengers and crew, which is now mandatory.

## ■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[150707]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to meet the 2025 cycling and walking targets in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy; and what estimate he has made of the funding required to do so.



**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

On 28 July 2020 the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking, with the ambition that half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. This includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over the next 5 years, which is the largest ever boost for cycling and walking, and will deliver transformational change.

The Department published in February 2020 the technical reports supporting its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) Active Travel Investment Model. This was designed to identify the efficacy of and range of costs associated with a wide range of cycling and walking interventions. The technical reports are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-active-travel-investment-models>

**■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus**

**Jessica Morden:** [\[150729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have had the two-year validity on their driving theory test expire since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jessica Morden:** [\[150730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support learner drivers who need to resit their driving theory test because the two-year validity on their qualification has expired as a result of being unable to sit their practical test during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

A candidate whose theory test certificate expires will have received the service for which they paid the fee. If a practical test is already booked at the time when the theory test expires, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency will refund the fee for the practical driving test.

The maximum duration of two years between passing the theory test and a subsequent practical test is in place for road safety reasons. 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.

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.

A total of 195,814 theory test certificates expired between the period of 25 March 2020 and 31 December 2020 without a practical test pass.



In the normal course of events, on average, 14,000 candidates let their certificate expire each month.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[150838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to support (a) key workers and (b) other people learning to drive who have been unable to take their practical test within the timeframe their theory test certificate was valid as a result of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Rachel Maclean:**

A candidate whose theory test certificate expires will have received the service for which they paid the fee. If a practical test is already booked at the time when the theory test expires, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency will refund the fee for the practical driving test.

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. 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.

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.

## ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

**Michael Fabricant:**

[\[150682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he had discussions with HS2 on the inclusion in (a) the consultation on HS2 Phase 2a of the route (b) a leaflet published by HS2 and sent to relevant residents and businesses the inclusion of a paragraph which states given the extensive consultation already undertaken for Phase 2a and consideration of the scheme by both select committees in Parliament, the Government does not intend to make changes to the Phase 2a scheme or to its planned construction programme in light of this consultation; and if he will make a statement.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

No, Ministers did not have discussions with HS2 Ltd on the paragraph included in the Phase 2a consultation and leaflet prior to its publication.

The leaflet published by HS2 Ltd did not accurately set out the purpose of the consultation and how responses will be analysed and considered. I have asked HS2 Ltd to send out an updated leaflet to those residents living within 1km of the route

who received the first leaflet to make this clear, making clear that all responses will be carefully considered.

The aim of the Phase 2a consultation is to help the Government understand in more detail the environmental impacts of the scheme on local communities as it takes the scheme forwards, and to identify and implement further mitigation measures. It will also help the Government better understand the concerns of local communities on their local transport provision. Once the responses are analysed the Government will publish a summary report and set out how it proposes to address the issues raised.

### ■ **Motorcycles: Training**

**Emma Hardy:** [\[150916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to extend Compulsory Basic Training licenses during the period of covid-19 lockdown restrictions announced in January 2021.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The two-year validity period of a compulsory basic training (CBT) certificate is set out in legislation. It is in place to ensure learner moped and motorcycle riders can ride safely on their own, with L-plates, while they practise for a full moped or motorcycle test. The Government has no plans, on road safety grounds, to waive that two-year validity period.

### ■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

**Sarah Olney:** [\[150897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will ensure that the decision making process for new and transferred trains includes an assessment to ensure that step gaps at stations are not increased as a result of those trains.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

When introducing new or cascaded trains, it is a matter for operators to undertake risk assessments at each station to ensure that platforms conform to relevant standards before the trains are approved for entry into service. The platforms have to pass a design test and a practical physical test, demonstrating compliance.

### ■ **Railways: Pedestrian Areas**

**Sarah Olney:** [\[150896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage Network Rail and Train Operator Companies to install tactile paving and other accessibility features when renewal works are taking place.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department expects the industry to meet current accessibility requirements whenever it installs, renews or replaces station infrastructure.

Failure to do so can lead to enforcement action by the Office of Rail and Roads.

**■ Travel: Quarantine****Stephen Doughty:**[\[150819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether (a) passengers and (b) crews on flights arriving (i) directly and (ii) indirectly at general aviation airports in the UK from countries on the red list during the covid-19 pandemic will be subject to hotel quarantine procedures.

**Robert Courts:**

As outlined by the Heath Secretary's announcement to the House of Commons on 9 February 2021, new measures will come into force from 15 February 2021 to deliver robust measures, coupled with stronger enforcement action. A range of measures will apply to passengers and crew travelling from 'red list' countries, and those who have been in 'red list' countries in the past 10 days. Further guidance and information following this announcement will be issued in due course.

**■ Travel: Urban Areas****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[150708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what traffic reduction measures he is planning for as part of his strategy to ensure that half of all journeys in towns and cities are taken on foot or by bike by 2030.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Last summer the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking in England, so that half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. This includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over the next 5 years.

Traffic reduction measures in towns and cities are matters for the relevant local highway authority. The Spending Review in November confirmed that a further £257 million of dedicated funding would be made available next financial year to support cycling and walking schemes. Much of this will go to local authorities to allow them to deliver high quality local schemes to boost cycling and walking in their areas.

**TREASURY****■ Arts: Tickets****Sarah Olney:**[\[150894\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the First Report of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee of 2020-21 entitled, Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report, HC 291, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of a three-year extension to the reduced rate of 5 per cent on tickets, as recommended by the Committee.

**Jesse Norman:**

The temporary VAT reduced rate came into effect on 15 July 2020 and was initially scheduled to end on 12 January 2021.

In order to continue supporting the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and to protect 2.4 million jobs, the Government extended the temporary reduced rate of VAT (five per cent) to goods and services supplied by the tourism and hospitality sectors until 31 March 2021.

The Government keeps all taxes under review, and any future tax decisions will be made at Budget.

**■ Beer: Small Businesses****Julian Sturdy:****[150793]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a scheme similar to the Scottish Government's Brewers Support Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises that breweries have been acutely disrupted by recent necessary restrictions to hospitality businesses.

In January the Chancellor announced that £594 million is being made available for Local Authorities and the Devolved Administrations to support businesses ineligible for grants for closed businesses, but who might be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, such as the hospitality supply chain. This funding comes in addition to the £1.1 billion discretionary grant for Local Authorities previously announced. Local Authorities have discretion to determine how much funding to provide to businesses and have the flexibility to target local businesses that are important to their local economies.

The Government is also delivering support to the hospitality sector and its supply chain through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which has been extended until April; Government backed finance through loan schemes, 'Pay as You Grow' long-term repayments options, a VAT cut, a VAT deferral for up to 12 months, a 12-month business rates holiday; and a moratorium on evictions to protect commercial tenants.

In addition, Small Brewer's Relief (SBR) provides reduced rates of beer duty for small brewers producing less than 60,000 hectolitres. Following requests from brewers to look again at the scheme, the Treasury is currently in the process of reviewing SBR to ensure it further supports growth in the sector. A technical consultation launched on 7 January 2021, and can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/small-brewers-relief-sbr-technical-consultation>.

## ■ Build Back Better Council

**Caroline Lucas:** [150746]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether environmental protections and regulations will be out of scope of the Build Back Better Council.

**Caroline Lucas:** [150747]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what checks and balances will be applied to ensure that regulatory changes recommended by the Build Back Better Council supports the UK's environmental objectives.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Build Back Better Business Council brings together a broad range of business leaders from across the whole British economy to work in partnership with the government to unlock investment, boost job creation, promote Global Britain and level up the whole of the UK – ensuring that we build back better, fairer, greener, and faster. The Business Council will be advisory and will hold no policy or decision making powers.

**Caroline Lucas:** [150748]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) scope and (b) timetable for the work due to be carried out by the Build Back Better Council.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Council has been established to support the UK to Build Back Better in 2021. It will enable a broad range of business leaders from across the economy to work with the Government to unlock investment, boost job creation, promote Global Britain and level up and unite the whole of the UK. The Council will provide an opportunity for the Government and business leaders to share ideas and views in a confidential forum. It will meet quarterly in plenary, and further meetings can be held with the agreement of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor. The Council's terms of reference were published on the Government's website on 9 February 2021 and can be found via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-business-council-terms-of-reference>

## ■ Business: Coronavirus

**John Spellar:** [149160]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the equity of companies (a) maintaining or (b) increasing (i) dividends and (ii) management bonuses while receiving financial support during the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Glen:**

The Government acted quickly to deliver an unprecedented package of support measures, well-targeted at businesses in genuine need. It is our expectation that everyone should act responsibly and in the spirit of the package, and only claim and use support as intended.

Under the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), borrowers are required to restrict dividend payments and are only allowed to make dividends payments which were a) declared before the CLBILS loan was taken out, b) are in keeping with similar dividends payments made in the preceding 12 months, and c) do not have a material negative impact on the borrower's ability to repay the loan. Firms borrowing more than £50m will be required to agree to defer dividend payments and share buybacks, alongside restrictions on pay and bonuses for senior management. These restrictions remain in place until the loan has been repaid.

Additionally, Companies accessing the Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) beyond 19 May 2021, are required to defer capital distributions, pay rises and cash bonuses to senior management. The Government continues to keep all measures under constant review.

### ■ **CITB and CITB Northern Ireland: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[150860\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February 20221 to Question 145080 on CITB and CITB Northern Ireland: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, when HMRC's guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme that organisations can use the scheme if they are not fully funded by public grants and they should contact their sponsor department or respective administration for further guidance, came into force.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) guidance on employers of the public sector was updated on 12 June 2020 as follows:

If you have staff costs that are publicly funded (even if you're not in the public sector), you should use that money to continue paying your staff, and not furlough your staff.

Organisations can use the scheme if they are not fully funded by public grants and they should contact their sponsor department or respective administration for further guidance.

Prior to that date, the guidance that stated:

Where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, we expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion – and correspondingly not furlough them. This also applies to non-public sector employers who receive public funding for staff costs.

Organisations who are receiving public funding specifically to provide services necessary to respond to COVID-19 are not expected to furlough staff.

In a small number of cases, for example where organisations are not primarily funded by the government and whose staff cannot be redeployed to assist with the coronavirus response, the scheme may be appropriate for some staff.

## ■ COP26 Private Finance Hub: Staff

**Matthew Pennycook:**

[\[150882\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Minister has responsibility for the COP26 Private Finance Hub; how many staff work in the Hub; how many of those staff are seconded from Departments, organisations or bodies outside of his Department; and if he will list those Departments, organisations or bodies from which those staff are seconded.

**John Glen:**

The Treasury is supporting preparations for COP26 across a range of policy areas, including private finance. There is a team of 19 staff, drawn from secondees across the Bank of England, the Financial Conduct Authority, the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, as well as HM Treasury officials working on this area. The team reports to the Chancellor and Treasury ministers.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**

[\[150836\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that clinically extremely vulnerable workers who cannot work from home are automatically furloughed by their employers under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the challenges presented by COVID-19 for all those who have been asked to shield. Individuals who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and cannot work from home have access to the substantial financial package that the Government has introduced at this difficult time.

The CJRS is available to all employers and employees providing they meet the eligibility criteria, and this includes CEV individuals. The Government has sought to ensure that as many people have access to the CJRS as possible.

CEV individuals should speak to their employer as soon as possible to discuss and agree options on work. The furloughing of staff through the CJRS is a voluntary arrangement entered at the employers' discretion and agreed by employees. That means it is not for the Government to decide whether an individual firm should put its staff on furlough, or take its staff off furlough; that is a decision for the employer, in consultation with the employee.

## ■ Future Fund: Applications

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[150690\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his Answer of 8 February to Question 148706, how many (a) applications and (b) successful applications for investment support have been made to the Future Fund scheme by firms located in (i) London, (ii) the South East and (iii) Yorkshire and the Humber.



**Kemi Badenoch:**

The British Business Bank regularly publishes Future Fund data by location on its website. As of the 28<sup>th</sup> January, Future Fund applications data is as follows:

	TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATION	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS APPROVED TO DATE	PROPORTION OF APPLICATION APPROVED TO DATE
London	939	606	65%
South East	181	122	67%
Yorkshire and the Humber	50	31	62%

The Future Fund uses a set of standard terms with published eligibility criteria. Applications that meet all the eligibility criteria receive investment, irrespective of location.

The total number of applications includes those which were declined and withdrawn, and those applications which are still being considered.

### ■ Gaming Machines: Excise Duties

**Ian Lavery:**[\[150804\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of reducing Machine Games Duty to five per cent to increase support for high street arcades.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has no current plans to reduce Machine Games Duty. High street arcade operators will have been able to benefit from the package of measures introduced to mitigate the financial impact of Covid-19 worth over £280 billion, including the Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended until April, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the bounce back loan and payment deferral schemes.

However, HM Treasury keeps all taxes, including Machine Games Duty, under active review.

### ■ Gift Aid

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[150846\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Charities Aid Foundation proposal to temporarily increase Gift Aid for two years, similar to the 2008 Gift Aid Transitional Relief Scheme, in order to support charities affected by the covid-19 pandemic.



**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is fully committed to supporting charities through the Gift Aid regime. This relief is tied to the basic rate of tax paid by donors, currently at 20%, so can only be changed if the personal basic tax rate changes.

The Government recognises that the sector is experiencing significant pressures and has made available an unprecedented package of economic support, including a £750 million package specifically for charities.

**Hospices: Scotland****Ian Murray:**[\[150762\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a final consequential funding figure specifically for hospices in Scotland.

**Steve Barclay:**

The UK Government has provided the Scottish Government with an unprecedented upfront funding guarantee this year. This means they are receiving at least £8.6 billion in additional resource funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding.

The final amount will be confirmed at Supplementary Estimates 2020-21, including Barnett consequentials resulting from additional spending on hospices in England. Full details of Barnett consequentials will be published in Block Grant Transparency after the UK Budget.

It is up to the Scottish Government to allocate this funding across their devolved responsibilities as they see fit, including to hospices in Scotland.

**Hospitality Industry: VAT****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[150941\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential the merits of extending the hospitality industry's VAT reduction to include wine and spirit sales.

**Jesse Norman:**

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July to support the cash flow and viability of over 150,000 businesses and protect 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors, and will run until 31 March 2021.

This policy will cost over £2 billion and it is necessary for a boundary for eligibility to be drawn. The Government keeps all taxes under review, and any future decisions on tax policy will be made at Budget.

The Government has announced a significant support package to help businesses from a whole range of sectors through the winter months, which includes an extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, an extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant, and an extension of the application window for the Government-backed loan schemes. Alcohol duty was frozen at Budget 2020 to help pubs and the alcoholic drinks sector.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

**Jessica Morden:** [\[148747\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the viability of the UK steel sector of industry companies paying Carbon Price Support while EU companies do not.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Decarbonisation in the power sector, driven in part through the Carbon Price Support (CPS) tax rate, has accounted for almost 78% of the reduction in the UK's carbon emissions between 2012-18.

The government compensates eligible energy intensive businesses for up to 75% of the costs in their electricity bills due to the UK Emissions Trading System (previously the EU ETS) and the Carbon Price Support (CPS). This support was worth £120m in 2019, with those businesses benefiting from it mainly operating in the steel, chemicals and paper and pulp sectors.

## ■ Levelling Up Fund

**Dr James Davies:** [\[149277\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the prospectus for the first round of applications to the Levelling Up Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Levelling Up Fund will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery. We will publish a prospectus for the fund and launch the first round of competitions very soon.

**Dr James Davies:** [\[149278\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the needs of cross-border commuters and their communities are taken into account during the preparation of the prospectus for the first round of applications to the Levelling Up Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Levelling Up Fund will empower local areas to identify and bring forward genuine local priorities: we will only fund projects prepared in collaboration with local stakeholders that have clear benefits to the local community and are aligned with a broader local economic strategy. Further details will be published in the prospectus.

## ■ Levelling Up Fund: Union Connectivity Review

**Dr James Davies:** [\[149279\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has in place to take into account the recommendations of the Union Connectivity Review when assessing applications to the Levelling Up Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

This government recognises the importance of connectivity to levelling up all parts of the UK. The Levelling Up Fund is one part of this wider strategy and its investments will include local road schemes, bus lanes, and rail station upgrades. Further details will be published soon in the prospectus.

**Members: Correspondence****Robert Largan:**[\[149360\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 30 November 2020 with regard to Reference Number RL15984.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

I responded to the Member's email on 15 January.

**Mortgages: Coronavirus****Hywel Williams:**[\[149730\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to cap the interest accrued during mortgage payment holidays.

**John Glen:**

Mortgage holidays have provided support for borrowers to manage their finances during a period of uncertainty. Borrowers will still need to repay the full balance of their loan, and will continue to accrue interest during the payment holiday, unless the lender has indicated otherwise. There are various options for managing this, for example, by increasing their remaining monthly payments, or by adding an extension to the term. Borrowers should talk to their lender to understand the options they offer.

**Multinational Companies: Tax Avoidance****Duncan Baker:**[\[150962\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a root-and-branch assessment of the implications of the business models of large internet companies for his policies on state aid and tax avoidance.

**Jesse Norman:**

Ensuring an effective solution to the challenges related to the taxation of the digital economy is a priority for the Government. In April 2020, the Government introduced a Digital Services Tax which ensures digital businesses pay UK tax that reflects the value they derive from UK users. The Government is also strongly supportive of OECD negotiations which seek to come to a global consensus agreement on the taxation of the digital economy.

Regarding subsidy control, following the end of the transition period, the UK also has the freedom to design a new domestic regime. The Secretary of State for Business,

Energy and Industrial Strategy recently published a consultation seeking views on the approach the Government should take.

### ■ Railways: Season Tickets

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[150750]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answers of 11 January 2021 and 24 November 2020 to Questions 131241 and 115584 respectively, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on a policy response to the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on people's travel patterns and the need to accommodate a more flexible style of working and commuting; what assessment he has made of (a) the commercial effect of a ticketing system that offers increased value and convenience for people who commute on a part-time or flexible basis and (b) the cost to the Treasury of introducing flexible ticketing for all rail users; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the need to accommodate a more flexible style of working and commuting. Passenger demand has fallen dramatically over the last year and its recovery is uncertain. Due to this and a potential shift in passenger behaviour, rail income in the future is also uncertain. Any flexible season ticket products will aim to encourage and support passengers returning to the railway when it is safe to do so. HM Treasury has been engaged by the Department for Transport on this issue. The Department for Transport are working closely with industry to develop a solution and will provide further details in due course.

### ■ Revenue and Customs: Debts

**Sarah Olney:**

**[150893]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the revenue owed to HMRC by businesses as a result of the deferral of VAT payments due to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Jesse Norman:**

The VAT payments deferral scheme enabled businesses to defer approximately £34bn of VAT payments that were due between 20 March and 30 June 2020.

Businesses can pay their deferred VAT in full by the end of March 2021 or spread payment from March 2021 across smaller monthly instalments. Further details are available at [www.gov.uk/hmrc/vat-deferral](http://www.gov.uk/hmrc/vat-deferral).

### ■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

**John McNally:**

**[148828]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what further support he plans to make available to small businesses that have so far been ineligible for financial support during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will amend the eligibility criteria to include previously ineligible businesses.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Since the beginning of this crisis, the Government has put in place an unprecedented package of support for businesses worth over £280 billion. These schemes were designed with two principles in mind: the need to target support at those who need it most, and the need to protect the exchequer against error, fraud, and abuse. This is because the Government needs to balance its commitment to support people through the pandemic, with its duty to protect the taxpayer to ensure that public funds are managed responsibly.

The Government has acknowledged that it has not been possible to support everyone in the way they might want. However, businesses not eligible for certain forms of support may still be able to benefit from government-backed loans and general and sector-specific grants.

In January, all local authorities in England received a top-up worth a total of £500m to their allocation from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), which has already provided local authorities with £1.1 billion. This funding will ensure that local authorities can make discretionary grants to businesses which are not eligible for other forms of support, but which are nonetheless experiencing a severe impact on their business due to the national lockdown. We encourage businesses in this position to contact their local authority to discuss what support may be available.

The Treasury is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups and other Government departments to understand the impacts of COVID-19 and specific challenges in the economy. We will continue to take a flexible approach and keep all policies under review to explore how we can better support different groups and ensure that the support provided is right for the economy as a whole over the coming months.

**■ Soft Drinks: Taxation****Daisy Cooper:**[\[150949\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to ring-fence moneys that accrue to the public purse from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy for child food and health initiatives.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has no plans to formally link revenue from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to any specific spending. Departmental spend for children's food and to promote children's health is allocated through Spending Reviews. This provides departments with certainty over their programme budgets, as tax revenues vary year-to-year.

The Government continues to invest in children's health, through the Department for Education's promotion of healthy eating and physical activity in schools and holidays and the Department for Health's focus on health and wellbeing.

**■ UK Trade with EU: Scotland****Brendan O'Hara:** [150826]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Barnett consequentials will be for Scotland from the five annual instalments under Article 145 UK-EU trade deal.

**Steve Barclay:**

Under Article 145 of the UK-EU trade deal, the EU will make five payments to the UK in relation to the net assets of the European Coal and Steel Community.

As set out in the Statement of Funding Policy, the Barnett formula applies to changes in UK Government spending rather than to changes in UK Government revenue.

Scotland will benefit from future UK Government spending funded by these revenues, either through the Barnett formula or through UK-wide schemes.

**■ Wind Power****Jonathan Edwards:** [150751]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue has been raised by the Crown Estates' Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 in (a) total and (b) Welsh territorial waters.

**Jonathan Edwards:** [150752]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much money has accrued to the public purse from (a) previous and (b) current offshore wind auctions by the Crown Estate relating to Welsh territorial waters.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Crown Estate's Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 has not yet concluded and therefore this information is not known. The revenue raised will depend on the outcome of the upcoming plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment, as well as how developers subsequently progress potential projects through to construction.

The Crown Estate publishes its financial returns in relation to all its activities in Wales on an annual basis. As set out in The Crown Estate's most recent Wales Highlights Report, total revenue from offshore renewables in Wales in 2019-20, totalled £3.4 million, up from £3 million in 2018-19. Figures are not published for individual leasing rounds. [ <https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/media/3558/wales-highlights-2020.pdf> ]

**■ Wines: Excise Duties****Darren Jones:** [R] [150911]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing wine duty to support the UK's wine industry.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Alcohol duties are kept under review and the merits of a change to wine duty is considered at each fiscal event. Announcements about any changes to wine duty will be made in the usual way at the next Budget.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Child Maintenance Service: Members****Dan Jarvis:**[\[150809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the average response time to hon Members' offices regarding Child Maintenance Support enquiries; and if she will make a statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Department does not measure timings as described in the question and to determine this request, we would need to examine each individual case, which the Department considers to be cost prohibitive to provide.

The Department has a 15 working day target for MP to Director General Correspondence and a 20 working day target for Private Office correspondence. These timescales are in line with Cabinet Office directives.

As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department had to make changes to its complaints and MP correspondence model to allow staff to be deployed to support processing benefit claims and payments. From 9 July 2020, the Department now triage complaints and MP Correspondence giving priority to vulnerable claimants who may be at risk, and those with benefit payment issues.

We continue to look into all complaints and MP correspondence as quickly as we can and, as part of the triage process used to determine priority, we write or call those customers and MPs where there may be a delay in answering their complaint or enquiry.

We are reviewing the effectiveness of the approach we have taken throughout the pandemic as part of an ongoing review into complaints and MP correspondence handling.

**■ Cold Weather Payments****Ian Mearns:**[\[150766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to change the measure for the Cold Weather Payment scheme from the actual temperature to the feels like temperature.

**Guy Opperman:**

There are no plans to use the "feels like" temperature as a basis for Cold Weather Payments. Feels like temperature is the perception of external temperature rather than a measured air temperature. Cold Weather Payments are designed to contribute to the additional costs of heating homes in unseasonably cold weather, while "feels like" temperature does not impact on the amount of heating that homes require.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[150982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of using fixed Met Office Weather Stations to determine payment under the cold weather payment scheme.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[150983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the criteria for cold weather payments in situations where the relevant Met Office Weather Station records higher temperatures than that experienced by people whose eligibility for payment is determined by that station.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[150984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the locations of the Met Office Weather Stations used to determine eligibility for the cold weather payment to ensure that the measurements taken to activate those payments accurately reflect the temperatures where people live.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Met Office reviews the scheme annually to assess whether the linkages between postcode areas and weather stations remain the best available. Any necessary changes are made prior to the start of the following Cold Weather Payment season.

## ■ Funeral Payments

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[148938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications for social fund funeral expenses her Department has approved since April 2020.

**Guy Opperman:**

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020, there were approximately 25,800 applications awarded for Funeral Expenses Payments, in England and Wales.

This figure is an estimate using unaudited internal DWP figures on the number of FEP loans. It is not quality assured to the same extent as Official / National statistics.

## ■ Jobcentres: Scotland

**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[148926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the proportion of the 13,500 additional work coaches that will be recruited that will be deployed in Scotland.

**Mims Davies:**

Circa 7% of the 13,500 work coaches are planned to be deployed in Scotland.



## ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Jon Trickett:** [\[148695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons 118,000 places in the Kickstart scheme are yet to be filled; and what the planned timescale is for filling those places.

**Mims Davies:**

We are pleased that over 2,000 young people have started in jobs created by the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme since November.

After being approved and the grant agreement with the employer or Gateway is signed, a job placement becomes available once the employer has provided the job details and confirmed when they want to fill it. A Kickstart job does not have to start right away but anytime within the life time of the scheme. It is then advertised via Job Centre Plus for referrals of eligible young people.

Employers are taking appropriate care to help young people start their jobs safely and we are pleased that so many young people have been able to benefit from the scheme.

**Drew Hendry:** [\[148840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average rejection rate is for the Kickstart scheme, by constituency.

**Mims Davies:**

Data regarding the average rejection rate of applications for the Kickstart scheme, by constituency, is not available.

**Alison McGovern:** [\[150794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of (a) jobs created by, (b) placements started under and (c) applications made to the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

From the launch of the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme until 04/02/21, there have been:

- a. Over 120,000 jobs approved;
- b. Over 2,000 jobs started;
- c. Over 8,000 applications made. An employer or organisation can make multiple applications to the scheme.

**Alison McGovern:** [\[150795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what requests the Government has made to (a) local authorities and (b) combined authorities for data on the uptake of the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

As of 04/02/2021 there were over 120,000 approved jobs on the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme.

Data regarding the uptake of the Kickstart Scheme is collected by the DWP. Local and Combined Authorities are welcome to apply for funding through the scheme and some already have.

**■ Poverty: Coventry**

**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[151732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of pensioner poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

**Guy Opperman:**

No such assessment has been made.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[149287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant of the Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 133065 on Social Security Benefits: Disability, if she will publish a list of the (a) disabled and deaf people's organisations and (b) other charities and organisations her officials have consulted with ahead of the forthcoming health and disability green paper to date.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[149288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant of the Answer of 11 January 2021 to Question 133065 on Social Security Benefits: Disability, if she will instruct her officials to explore opportunities to utilise digital technology to increase direct engagement with disabled and seriously unwell people during the formal consultation on the health and disability green paper.

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[149289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant of the Answer of 9 June 2020 to Question 52280, whether her Department has set a budget for the formal consultation on the Health and Disability Green Paper.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We have undertaken engagement with a range of stakeholders, disabled people's organisations and disabled people ahead of the forthcoming publication of the health and disability Green Paper. This will ensure the Green Paper focuses on the issues that are important to those who use our services.

This has included several consultation events, face to face prior to the pandemic and through video after, attended by disabled people, representatives from charities and disabled people's organisations from across the country.

We will produce the Green Paper in a range of accessible formats. Engagement will continue alongside the formal consultation after publication where we will maximise the way we engage using a variety of digital methods such as on-line video platforms and Citizen Space. There is not a fixed budget for the public consultation, but it will come from the Department's existing funding allocation.

## ■ Universal Credit: Telephone Services

**John Nicolson:**

[\[148826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to provide hon. Members with a dedicated universal credit helpline.

**Guy Opperman:**

There is no dedicated MP Hotline for Universal Credit. Prior to the roll-out of Universal Credit Full Service in their constituency, we wrote to each Hon. Member in March 2019. The letter explained the implicit consent arrangements for MPs and also provided the telephone number and email address of the Service Leader in the constituency, so that MPs can contact Service Leaders if there are urgent constituent cases that need attention. This is the best route to raise issues on behalf of constituents and works well because MPs' offices can establish local relationships.

The Department regularly provides updated contact information to the W4MP.org website indicating the best and most efficient ways to contact it.

## ■ Winter Fuel Payments

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[148818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to tackle the technical issues that have caused delays to some households receiving their winter fuel payments for 2020-21.

**Guy Opperman:**

DWP paid ninety-nine per cent of payments on time, which equated to 11.4 Million payments.

DWP has deployed additional resources to ensure that the remaining Winter Fuel Payments are made as soon as possible, as well as boosting our capacity to handle an increase in telephone enquiries.

The remaining 1% of payments, and supplementary payments generated by a customer's change of circumstances, will be made by 31 March 2021.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

#### ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Sir Graham Brady:**

[\[147741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will take steps to assist British citizens living overseas to access vaccination for covid-19.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 February 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is closely following other countries' plans to roll out vaccines. We are keeping British Nationals updated on what healthcare options are available to them and how they can receive a vaccine locally through Travel Advice pages and 'Living In' guides on gov.uk. In addition, the UK is playing a leading international role to ensure global access to vaccines, including by contributing the equivalent of £330m a year, totalling £1.65bn, for the next five years to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance that provides equitable access to safe and effective vaccines for 190 economies. There are no plans to roll out the UK's NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme to British Nationals living abroad. We are closely following other countries' plans to roll out vaccines. We are providing information through Travel Advice pages and 'Living In' guides on gov.uk to inform British Nationals of healthcare options available to them and how they can receive a vaccine locally. The UK is playing a leading international role to ensure global access to vaccines. For example we are contributing the equivalent of £330m a year, totalling £1.65bn, for the next five years to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance that provides equitable access to safe and effective vaccines for 190 economies.

#### ■ Jagtar Singh Johal

**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**

[\[147005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether Jagtar Singh Johal has been subjected to torture during his detention in India.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 February 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Nigel Adams:**

We are aware that some restrictions on internet connectivity have been imposed at protest sites and call for these to be lifted as soon as possible. The right to gather lawfully and demonstrate a point of view is common to all democracies. Governments also have the power to enforce law and order if a protest crosses the line into

illegality. During his visit to India, the Foreign Secretary discussed the protests with his Indian counterpart, whilst making clear that the handling of protests is an internal matter for the Indian authorities.

The UK Government takes all allegations of human rights violations very seriously and raises concerns with the local authorities where appropriate. We regularly raise Mr Johal's case directly with the Government of India, including his allegations of torture, right to a fair trial, and concerns about delays to legal proceedings against him. The Foreign Secretary raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, on 15 December 2020. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, last raised Mr Johal's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 28 January 2021, and with the Indian Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, on 3 November 2020. Lord Ahmad has also met with Mr Johal's family on a number of occasions, most recently on 27 January 2021.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Police: Suicide

**Dehenna Davison:**

[\[129111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support her Department is providing to police forces to prevent suicides amongst (a) serving and (b) retired police officers.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 December 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Kit Malthouse:**

The death of any serving or retired police officer is a tragedy. The Government and police leaders take this matter seriously and are working to support the mental and physical wellbeing of all police officers and staff.

We have invested in programmes which offer help directly to officers and staff. This includes £7.5 to fund the development of the National Police Wellbeing Service, which was launched in 2019. The Service is helping forces to identify where there is most risk of impacts on mental health, and developing work around building resilience, as well as putting in place support for those who need it in response to traumatic events.

The Government has also accelerated work to introduce a Police Covenant, which will ensure our police get the support and protection they need. We have been clear that the Covenant will also cover those who are retired from policing, to ensure that they are also supported effectively once they leave the service. The Covenant will be enshrined in law, with provisions being brought forward later this session, and the Home Secretary will have a duty to report annually on the work undertaken.

Our focus will be on health and wellbeing, physical protection and support for families. We are in no doubt that an area we must focus on is mental health support. We will continue to work closely with policing partners to ensure the Covenant has a lasting impact on both serving and retired officers and staff.

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## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DEFENCE

#### ■ Reserve Forces and Cadets Association External Scrutiny Team Report 2020

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

[\[HCWS779\]](#)

I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of a report into the condition of the Reserves and delivery of the Future Reserves 2020 programme compiled by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations External Scrutiny Team. I am most grateful to the Team for their work and I will respond to the report shortly.

**Attachments:**

1. EST Report [EST Report 2020.pdf]

### PRIME MINISTER

#### ■ Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee's Northern Ireland-related Terrorism Report

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**

[\[HCWS781\]](#)

On 05 October 2020, the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) published their report entitled 'Northern Ireland-Related Terrorism' (NIRT). Our thoughts remain with those who have been impacted by the enduring threat of violence in Northern Ireland, in particular the friends and families of those who have lost their lives.

Today, the Government is publishing its response to this report.

I remain grateful to the Intelligence and Security Committee for its continued independent oversight and scrutiny. I would like to thank the former Committee for their work in the last Parliament, and I look forward to working with the appointed Committee in the future.

Copies of the Government responses have been laid before both Houses.

### TRANSPORT

#### ■ Light Dues 2021-22

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Robert Courts):**

[\[HCWS778\]](#)

A strong and growing maritime industry is vital to the economy of the United Kingdom and it is critical that we treasure and protect this vital artery if we are to remain a world-leading maritime centre.

The work of the General Lighthouse Authorities, which provide and maintain marine aids to navigation and respond to new wrecks and navigation dangers in some of the busiest

waters in the world, is crucial to underpinning that vision whilst maintaining our vigorous safety record and continuously improving safety standards.

Light Dues, which are paid by the shipping industry such that the General Lighthouse Authority's costs are met without the need to call on the UK Exchequer, have reduced by 40 per cent in real terms since 2010.

The unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has, however, added additional operational costs and resulted in a significant reduction in Light Dues income reflecting the major impact it has also had on the industry.

To ensure the General Lighthouse Authorities have the funding they need to complete their vital maritime safety work I have, therefore, made the difficult decision to increase the Light Dues rate by one penny to 38½ pence per net registered tonne for 2021-22.

Light Dues will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the General Lighthouse Authorities are challenged to provide an effective and efficient service which offers value for money to Light Dues payers.

## TREASURY

### ■ Normal Minimum Pension Age: consultation

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

**[[HCWS780](#)]**

The normal minimum pension age is the minimum age at which most pension savers can access their pensions without incurring an unauthorised payments tax charge (unless they are taking their pension due to ill-health). The normal minimum pension age is currently age 55. This minimum helps to ensure that tax relieved pension savings are used to provide an income, or funds on which an individual can draw, in later life. In 2010 the minimum pension age was increased from age 50 to 55. In 2014, the coalition government announced that the normal minimum pension age would increase from age 55 to 57 in 2028.

Since the normal minimum pension age was introduced, life expectancy at birth for both men and women has continued to increase, according to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics. It has continued to increase since the announcement in 2014. Increasing the normal minimum pension age reflects increases in longevity and changing expectations of how long we will remain in work and in retirement. Raising the normal minimum pension age to age 57 could encourage individuals to save longer for their retirement, and so help ensure that individuals will have financial security in later life.

The government therefore reconfirms its intention to legislate to increase the normal minimum pension age to age 57 on 6 April 2028 and is today publishing a consultation on how to implement the increase. The consultation is available on [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/increasing-the-normal-minimum-pension-age-consultation-on-implementation](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/increasing-the-normal-minimum-pension-age-consultation-on-implementation)

The increase to age 57 will not apply to those who are members of the firefighters, police and armed forces public service pension schemes. This reflects the unique nature of



these occupations. The consultation also sets out the proposed protection regime for some other pension savers. The government does not intend for this increase to apply to individuals who already have unqualified rights to take a pension at an earlier age. Protected pension ages will be specific to an individual as a member of a particular scheme, so protection will not apply to other schemes where there is no existing right held.

People in the UK are living longer, and the proportion of over 50s in the labour force is continuing to increase. The government recognises the importance of supporting over 50s to remain active in the labour market and is committed to supporting them to find and retain employment. The government is working with employers via the Business Champion for Older Workers to enable over 50s to retain employment and is aiming to provide early and targeted employment and skills support to help individuals move back into work, including into new sectors.

This consultation on implementing the increase in normal minimum pension age will run for 10 weeks.