



Daily Report

Monday, 22 February 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 February 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:35 P.M., 22 February 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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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

■ Amazon: Conditions of Employment

Chi Onwurah:

[\[153242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a comparative assessment of Amazon policies on workers' rights in the (a) US and (b) UK.

Paul Scully:

Ministers engage regularly with Amazon, including through the industry-led Retail Sector Council, on a range of topics. The Retail Sector Council has identified employment as one of their priority areas of work. This was discussed at the most recent meeting on 3 February.

■ Arbitration: Criminal Investigation

Neil Coyle:

[\[143775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the commercial arbitration system is obliged to ensure that crimes identified during hearings are raised with the appropriate investigating authority.

Paul Scully:

The general position is that in an English based arbitration, an arbitrator is not under a legal obligation to report to an appropriate investigating authority evidence of crimes arising in a hearing.

■ Arbitration: Disclosure of Information

Neil Coyle:

[\[143774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of making commercial arbitration procedures and findings public.

Paul Scully:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not made an assessment of making arbitration procedures and findings public.

■ Batteries: Factories

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[152596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with private developers on proposals to build a battery factory in (a) Wales and (b) elsewhere in the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government remains committed to securing UK gigafactories.

Ministers and Officials in the Department are regularly engaging with potential investors. These discussions are ongoing, and it would not be appropriate for me to comment on specific cases.

There are a range of factors that will influence the location of any UK gigafactory investment, and ultimately this decision will be a commercial matter. There are several locations across the UK that may meet the requirements of investors, including in Wales.

■ Buses: Manufacturing Industries**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[152506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support bus manufacturing in the UK; and when he or his Ministerial team last met with representatives of UK bus manufacturers.

Nadhim Zahawi:

My noble Friend Lord Grimstone recently met with representatives of bus manufacturers at an automotive sector roundtable on 10 February.

The Government is continuing its longstanding programme of support to ensure that the UK automotive sector remains at the forefront of technological developments. Government and Industry have jointly committed almost £1.5 billion through the Advanced Propulsion Centre and Faraday Battery Challenge to support the research, development, and manufacture of zero and low-emission technologies. The Advanced Propulsion Centre is supporting a number of projects aimed at developing technologies to reduce emissions in bus applications.

In addition, as part of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, nearly £500m of funding for the Automotive Transformation Fund will be made available in the next four years to build an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain.

■ Clean Steel Fund**Matthew Pennycook:**[\[152593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress he has made on implementing the Clean Steel Fund.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In August 2019, the Government announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the UK steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production, through investment in new technologies and processes. The Fund will help the sector towards achieving our target of net zero emissions by 2050, by maximising longevity and resilience while harnessing clean growth opportunities.

Steel industry stakeholders provided positive responses to our Call for Evidence. A summary of the responses was published in December 2020 and will inform the scheme's design. As we develop the Fund, we will continue to engage closely with the sector to ensure that it meets the needs of businesses.

■ **Coal: Mining**

Chris Bryant: [\[153144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Mines and Quarries Act 1969 for securing disused coal tips in England and Wales.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Welsh Government has asked the Law Commission to evaluate current legislation relating to coal tip safety with a view to identifying gaps, inconsistencies and approaches which are unhelpful or have become outdated. It will identify options for alternative regulatory models appropriate for adoption in Wales, and consider the features needed to ensure that any proposed system is effective. The project is expected to take between 13 and 15 months.

The majority of Tips in England are lower risk as the topography is flatter in England and more have been economically restored/developed as they are more suitable for that and there has been more economic drivers. Following the Tylorstown slip in Wales local authorities in England were asked to check any tips they owned and report any concerns. No concerns were reported.

Chris Bryant: [\[153145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many disused coal tips there are in (a) England and (b) Wales.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There are 2144 coal tips in Wales, with continued refinement of information ongoing.

There is no central assessment of the number of Tips in England but the Coal Authority own 7 tips in England and these are kept under regular monitoring.

Chris Bryant: [\[153146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the cost of securing disused coal tips in (a) England and (b) Wales.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

£9m from UK funding has been allocated for coal tip safety in Wales in 2020/21. The UK and Welsh Governments are discussing longer term funding.

The Coal Authority budget an average of £10k per tip per annum for ongoing maintenance and inspection for the tips they own across the UK (26 in Wales, 7 in England). There can be additional costs on individual tips if more extensive work is identified.

■ Computers

Chi Onwurah:

[\[153239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to expand the UK's supercomputer capabilities.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government has set out its commitment to cement the UK as a world-leading science superpower. Increasing investment in Research and Development will help to achieve that ambition, including investing in new and upgraded high performance computing capability.

As announced in February 2020, the Government will be investing up to £1.2 billion in new supercomputing infrastructure for the Met Office to provide the UK with world-leading weather and climate science capability.

UKRI have also announced an investment of £34 million to expand and upgrade data and digital research infrastructure. This includes advanced analytical capability and enhanced capacity to reveal how COVID-19 has influenced urban mobility, and social and economic activity.

■ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[151704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to (a) start the (i) CBILS 12-month interest free period and (ii) capital repayment holiday when lockdown is lifted and (b) reduce the CBILS rate.

Paul Scully:

Many businesses have already begun making capital repayments relating to their Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) facility. While the Government covers the interest payments and any lender-levied fees due on CBILS loans for the first twelve months of the loan, via a Business Interruption Payment, repayments of capital are required during this period unless a lender chooses to grant additional forbearance measures.

Lenders are able to extend the repayment period for CBILS facilities beyond 6 years (up to a maximum of 10 years) where this is needed in connection with the provision of forbearance. CBILS term extensions are offered at the discretion of lenders.

The Government does not set interest rates in connection with CBILS facilities, as CBILS operates as a delegated scheme. All final lending decisions including on pricing are at the discretion of the lender, and the rate varies in line with the lender's own policies, as would be the case with any commercial facility.

However, as part of the accreditation process undertaken by the British Business Bank, lenders are required to demonstrate that the economic benefit of the guarantee is passed on to consumers through a proportionate reduction in their pricing for CBILS facilities.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Overseas Aid**Preet Kaur Gill:** [152609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much Official Development Assistance his Department was allocated in (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21; and how much it will be allocated in 2021-212.

Amanda Solloway:

For financial year 2019/20, the Department was allocated £1.038bn for Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend. For financial year 2020/21 the Department was allocated £1.406bn, which was revised to £1.281bn following the ODA adjustments necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the 0.7% share of our GNI. For financial year 2021/22, the Department was allocated £706m.

■ Disinfectants**Dame Angela Eagle:** [151625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the number of disinfectant products that are marketed and sold in the UK that are making false or misleading claims about their efficacy in killing covid-19 on surfaces; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle those false and misleading claims.

Paul Scully:

The Advertising Standards Authority has an online complaints page for people to report advertisements that make misleading, harmful or irresponsible claims about COVID-19. The form can be found at: <https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint/quick-report.html>.

Furthermore, the Competition and Markets Authority has created a COVID-19 taskforce and set up an online form to enable consumers and business to report any businesses they believe is behaving unfairly during the pandemic. The form can be found at: <https://www.coronavirus-business-complaint.service.gov.uk/>.

The information received through those exercises is fed into the enforcement activities of those respective bodies and discussed at the Consumer Protection Partnership which coordinates activities.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Jonathan Edwards:** [151660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department will take to ensure the electricity network in (a) rural and (b) other areas is able to meet increasing demand from the charging of electric vehicles.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Mechanisms are in place to ensure networks are prepared for the significant new demand for electricity from the transition to electric vehicles (EVs). The Government is working with partners in the Devolved Administrations to ensure that there are

strong and coordinated plans in place to support the rollout of charging infrastructure across the country.

Ensuring the adequacy of local electricity networks is the responsibility of Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), and they are incentivised to do so through the regulatory framework set by Ofgem, the independent regulator. My officials regularly meet DNOs covering both rural and other areas to discuss the impacts of the EV transition. I recognise the particular issues that rural areas may face, such as longer distances between substations.

EVs also offer new opportunities for consumers to be part of a smarter and more flexible energy system. Smart charging can help reduce constraints on the network by shifting charging to off-peak periods. In 2019 the Government consulted on mandating that all private charge points sold or installed in the UK must have smart functionality and meet device level requirements. We intend to lay the relevant legislation later this year.

■ **Employment: Coventry**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[151731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of employment in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on employment in those areas.

Paul Scully:

From March to September 2020, the ONS employment rate in Coventry North East constituency fell by 1.7 percentage points (ppts) (71.7 to 70.0%). In the Coventry local authority, it fell by 0.6 ppts (72.0 to 71.4%).

Both areas had similar decreases in employment rate over six-month periods in 2019. Due to this, and the sampling variation in small geographies, whether the recent decreases in employment rate can be predominantly attributed to Covid-19 is inconclusive.

■ **Energy: Conservation**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[151580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to £1 billion of funding set out under Point 7: Greener Buildings of the Government's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published in November 2020, how much of that funding will be allocated to the (a) Green Homes Grant, (b) Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme, (c) Homes Upgrade Grant and (d) Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As part of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan, £320 million of funding has been allocated the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme for 21/22 to make homes and buildings more energy efficient and less carbon intensive.

The Government is committed to delivering our net zero target and will take further steps to decarbonise the UK economy. The Prime Minister recently set out in his Ten Point Plan a £1bn investment to make our homes, schools, and hospitals greener, warmer and energy efficient. Further details on funding will be announced in due course.

In November 2020, the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution announced the introduction of the Home Upgrade Grant. We are committing £150 million through the Home Upgrade Grant to help some of the poorest homes become more energy efficient and cheaper to heat with low-carbon energy. The Home Upgrade Grant will support low-income households with upgrades to the worst-performing off-gas-grid homes in England. These upgrades will create warmer homes at lower cost and will support low-income families with the switch to low-carbon heating, contributing to both fuel poverty and net zero targets. The Home Upgrade Grant is due to commence in early 2022.

The Autumn 2020 Spending Review committed a further £60million of funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to continue upgrading the least efficient social housing. This funding will support the Government's 10-point plan and makes further progress towards delivering the Government's commitment to invest in the energy performance of homes.

■ Energy: Prices

Ian Murray:

[\[152474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether there will be a regionalisation to the awarding of contracts for difference in the fourth auction later in 2021.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme does not award contracts to projects based on regional quotas. The scheme awards contracts through a competitive process which ensures the most cost-effective projects are supported. The focus on supporting the lowest price bids drives efficiency and cost reduction and has resulted in significant quantities of new renewable electricity capacity being delivered across Great Britain.

Ian Murray:

[\[152475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made has he made of the effect of transmission charges on the pricing of contract for difference tenders; and is he will make a statement.

Ian Murray:

[\[152476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of removing transmission charges as an element in applications for the fourth contracts for difference auction.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

National Grid Electricity System Operator collects transmission charges to recover the cost of installing and maintaining the transmission system in Great Britain and the offshore electricity network infrastructure. These include a locational element to reflect network use as part of the requirement for cost reflective network charges.

Individual Contracts for Difference bidders will determine their bid prices based on their own assessment of expected costs and revenues. The price paid to each successful bid is based on the clearing price of a competitive auction.

However, the Department does set the maximum strike price each technology can receive (the Administrative Strike Price), which takes into account a broad range of factors. This incorporates our latest view of transmission charges, estimated for pipeline projects where possible using tariffs and network charging assumptions for each location (provided by National Grid).

Fuel Poverty: Coventry**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[151734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of fuel poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Fuel Poverty Strategy published on 11 February 2021 confirmed a new metric for fuel poverty of Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE). The first statistics on this basis will be published on 4 March for 2019.

We have gathered new evidence through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Household Resilience survey about the impact of Covid-19 on incomes, housing costs and households occupancy patterns and will use this to publish a projection of fuel poverty in England for 2020 in April. We will also then provide the first statistics for LILEE on a sub-national basis for 2019.

Green Deal Scheme**Anne McLaughlin:**[\[152558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many complaints his Department has received on Green Deal plans sold by Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (a) in total, (b) of which are yet to receive an intention notice and (c) of which are yet to receive a sanction notice to date.

Anne McLaughlin:[\[152559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many complaints his Department has received in relation to breaches of the Green Deal Code of Practice by Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) which took place more than six years before the date of receipt of the complaint.

Anne McLaughlin:

[152560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many complaints in relation to Green Deal plans sold by Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) his Department has refused to consider due to breaches of the Code of Practice having taken place more than six years ago.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

At 15th February, a total of 244 appeals about the mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) have been referred to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State, of which 137 are yet to receive an intention notice and 153 are yet to receive a sanction notice.

The Department has issued 2 Intention Notices setting out 'minded to' decisions not to consider appeals on the basis that they were made more than 6 years after the date on which the alleged breach of the Green Deal Regulations occurred. These decisions have been made in accordance with the Regulations. The Department does not hold data on any further appeals made more than 6 years after the date on which the alleged breach occurred, as it is not possible to categorise appeals as such until case reviews are complete, at which point Intention Notices are issued.

Anne McLaughlin:

[152561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times (a) he and (b) his predecessors have used the power as outlined under Part 9 of the Green Deal Regulations to obtain information from (a) a Green Deal provider, (b) from the Green Deal Finance Company and (c) GDFC Assets Ltd to date.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department has requested information from various Green Deal Parties, including Green Deal Providers and the Green Deal Finance Company, on numerous occasions since the scheme was introduced in 2013. However, because there is no formal requirement to state that the Department is using its powers under Part 9 (reg 86) of the Green Deal Framework (Disclosure, Acknowledgment, Redress, etc) Regulations 2012, no record exists of how many times the Department has invoked the powers.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[151581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what sanctions have been agreed within the contract to ICF for failure to meet performance indicators as part of administering the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department contracted ICF to administer the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme. In line with government best practice, further information about the contract will be made available in due course.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[151582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the £2 billion of funding allocated to the Green Homes Grant scheme he plans to spend by the end of the allocation period 2020-2021.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Green Homes Grant Scheme is made up of the Voucher Scheme and the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme, allocated £1.5bn and £0.5bn, respectively, for the 2020-21 financial year.

Under the LAD scheme, Local Authorities bid for funding to support low-income households in their region. £74million has already been allocated; the remainder of the budget will be allocated this financial year to 5 Local Energy hubs and over 200 Local Authorities, delivering energy efficient upgrades to around 55,000 homes.

As of 8th February, the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme has received 71,953 applications. 22,165 vouchers have been approved and issued to customers; the value of these vouchers is £94.1 million.

Official statistics for the Green Home Grant Voucher Scheme will be published in due course.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[151583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether management of the new £320m Green Homes Grant scheme for the financial year 2021-2022 will be put out to tender to competing businesses.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There is no new £320m Green Home Grant scheme.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced this funding for the existing scheme in the Spending Review for the next financial year (2021-2022).

Munira Wilson:

[\[151863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the deadline for delivery of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Green Homes Grant, Local Authority Delivery Scheme is part of a package of measures aimed at providing an urgent stimulus to the economy. BEIS intends to allocate £300m to the regional Local Energy Hubs for delivery by December 2021.

This aims to balance the aim of the scheme to support economic recovery whilst being pragmatic over delivery timescales.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[152400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to question 148670, if he will publish the individual performance indicators in each of those four major areas in the contract to ICF for carrying out the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In line with Government best practice, we will be publishing the top three performance indicators, outlined in the contract with ICF. BEIS will be publishing the contract and legally required information in due course.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[153100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what allocation of funding has been made under the Green Homes Grant scheme by region.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As of 4pm on 12th February, 23,553 vouchers have been issued to customers under the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme. The value of these vouchers is currently £101.15 million.

BEIS will continue to monitor application data as the scheme progresses.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[153101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many homeowners (a) have applied for vouchers under the Green Homes Grant scheme and (b) are on the waiting list for that scheme

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Homeowners and landlords submit grant applications for energy efficiency and clean heat measures they want to install in their properties, under the scheme. Once approved, vouchers are issued for each measure that has been applied for.

As of 4pm on 12th February, 74,317 applications have been received for the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme, with 23,553 vouchers issued.

BEIS will continue to monitor application data as the scheme progresses.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[153102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how long it is taking on average for a homeowner to receive a voucher under the Green Homes Grant scheme after making an application.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We have designed the voucher process to automate checks where possible and minimise the time taken for voucher approval. However, applications must be thoroughly checked for compliance with the scheme rules to help ensure value for money, consumer protection, and detect malpractice. As such, waiting times can vary.

We continue to work to reduce the time between application and issuance, where possible.

■ Hinkley Point C Power Station

Alan Brown:

[\[152574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2021 to Question 144728, what the revised generation date is for Hinkley Point C unit 2.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The schedule for the construction of Hinkley Point C is the responsibility of the developer and its investors, and not the Government. We understand that the developer is currently managing the schedule for the construction of unit 2 to follow approximately one year behind that of unit 1.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Ian Murray:

[\[151664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment has been carried out with regards to the need for additional and continuing support for the hospitality sector in 2021.

Paul Scully:

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has worked closely with the hospitality sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and has responded with an unprecedented package of business support, which we keep under review.

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[153112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is planning to take to help increase the turnover of hospitality businesses once the covid-19 restrictions begin to be lifted; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

Over the course of the pandemic, the Government has worked closely with the hospitality sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and has responded with a substantial package of business support. We keep all restrictions under constant review.

■ Measurement: Equipment

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[153189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of products that will need to undertake the EC to UK CA transition for weights and measures equipment in 2021.

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[153190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many weighing and measuring products have already successfully transitioned from the EC weights and Measures directive to the UK CA directive in 2021.

Paul Scully:

The UKCA marking requirements came into force at 11pm on 31 December and apply to most products placed on the market in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) that were previously subject to CE marking requirements. The scope of the UKCA regime covers approximately 10,000 to 17,000 manufacturers across industries and product sectors.

In order to help businesses to transition to the new marking requirements, in areas where GB and EU rules remain the same, products with the CE marking, but without the UKCA marking, will be accepted on the GB market until 1 January 2022 in most cases (so long as they meet the relevant regulatory requirements). Businesses are not required to report to Government when they have transitioned to the new UKCA regime.

The Government continues to engage closely with industry to ensure that the transition to the new regime is as smooth as possible.

■ National Measurement Office: Staff

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[153191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many employees work for the National Measurement Office.

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[153192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many employees of the National Measurement Office are working on transitioning products that have an EC weights and measures Directive certification into a UK CA certification.

Paul Scully:

The National Measurement Office (NMO) is part of the Office for Product Safety and Standards which is a directorate within the Department. NMO is an Approved Body responsible for product certification, quality management system certification, pre-assessment, and standards calibration for weights and measures instruments. Of the civil servants working in OPSS, 15 FTE are currently engaged principally on NMO functions of whom around a half are engaged on work related to the transition of certificates.

■ National Minimum Wage (Offshore Employment) (Amendment) Order 2020

Mike Kane: [\[152545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to consult trade unions and other stakeholders on the draft guidance for industry on the National Minimum Wage (Offshore Employment) (Amendment) Order 2020.

Mike Kane: [\[152546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish his final guidance to employers in the shipping industry on the National

Minimum Wage (Offshore Employment) (Amendment) Order 2020; and when he last discussed this matter with ministerial colleagues in the Department for Transport.

Paul Scully:

On 1 October 2020, the Government passed the National Minimum Wage (Offshore Employment) (Amendment) Order 2020 that extended the NMW to include an individual who ordinarily works in the territorial waters of the United Kingdom or in the United Kingdom section of the continental shelf.

The Government's "Calculating the Minimum Wage" guidance has been updated to take account of these changes and can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/calculating-the-minimum-wage/calculating-the-minimum-wage#seafarers>.

We are currently drafting further guidance on this issue for employers and seafarers. We will publish this in due course, and will consult unions and other stakeholders ahead of publication.

The Department works closely with the Department for Transport on this matter, as evidenced by the joint appearance by ministers from both departments at a recent roundtable organised by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.

■ **OneWeb**

Nick Smith:

[151656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to encourage OneWeb to move the manufacturing of its satellites from the US to the UK.

Amanda Solloway:

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

OneWeb is fully aware of the UK Government's ambition to boost domestic capabilities in research and development and bring high-value manufacturing jobs to the UK.

Nick Smith:

[152463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much his Department has allocated for (a) further investment in OneWeb and (b) any other activity relating to OneWeb in the next (i) 12 months and (ii) three years.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK Government is working closely with the company and partners to maximise the value of our investment, including discussing with a range of potential partners about future funding and bringing in additional shareholders.

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

It remains the Government's ambition to supporting OneWeb in providing competitive global broadband and identifying opportunities to protect and promote UK jobs and supply chains.

Nick Smith: [\[152464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's press release of 3 July 2020 announcing its investment in OneWeb, what estimate he has made of the number of households in the UK that will benefit from enhanced broadband through OneWeb in the next 12 months.

Amanda Solloway:

OneWeb plans to have UK coverage of satellite broadband by the end of 2021, with global coverage planned by the end of 2022.

The UK Government is supporting OneWeb in providing competitive global broadband whilst being mindful of its responsibility to the UK Space Sector.

The commercial operation of OneWeb will be separate from Government's duties to ensure the transparent and effective operation of markets.

Nick Smith: [\[152466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much further investment in OneWeb his Department estimates will be made by Bharti Global Ltd in (a) the next 12 months and (b) the next 36 months.

Amanda Solloway:

Details of further investment into OneWeb are a commercial matter for the company.

The UK Government's focus is on securing additional private investment. We are in discussions with a range of potential partners about future funding and bringing in additional shareholders.

Nick Smith: [\[152467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's press release of 3 July 2020 announcing its investment in OneWeb, what assessment his Department has made of the potential for OneWeb to support the UK's national security interests.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK will continue to rely on the SKYNET programme for its defence and security global communications requirements.

■ OneWeb: Staff

Nick Smith: [\[152465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's press release of 3 July 2020 announcing its investment in OneWeb, how many people were employed at OneWeb's UK base as of 10 February 2021.

Amanda Solloway:

Employee and workforce details are a business matter for the company. OneWeb is fully aware of the UK Government's ambition to boost domestic capabilities in research and development and bring high-level manufacturing jobs to the UK.

Public Houses: Coronavirus**Conor McGinn:**[\[152569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with (a) publicans, (b) breweries and (c) associated trade bodies on the effect of the Government's decision not to permit pubs to sell takeaway alcohol in sealed containers during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021.

Paul Scully:

I regularly meet with a wide range of representatives from the hospitality sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and jobs.

Over the course of the pandemic, the Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to businesses, including those in the hospitality sector, which we keep under review.

Renewable Energy**Anna McMorris:**[\[153345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many responses his Department received to its consultation on Aligning UK international support for the clean energy transition from (a) individuals, (b) businesses and (c) NGOs and third sector organisations.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The consultation closed on February 8th and the UK Government is now considering the information received and will respond in due course.

Anna McMorris:[\[153346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of the responses to his Department's consultation on Aligning UK international support for the clean energy transition called for a policy implementation date of (a) March 2021, (b) June 2021, (c) October 2021 and (d) later than 2021.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The consultation closed on February 8th and the UK Government is now considering the information received and will respond in due course.

Small Businesses: Closures**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[153272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of small businesses that have closed in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry and (c) England in each of the last five years.

Paul Scully:

The latest business closure figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for Coventry, and England, are available for 2014-2018. To note, the business closure figures were published as a special ONS request for Coventry and England but not the Coventry North East Constituency. 2019 estimates may be available from the ONS upon request.

Business closures

	COVENTRY	ENGLAND
2018	1,450	297,895
2017	1,510	325,660
2016	1,185	248,655
2015	1,200	249,955
2014	1,045	217,640

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/changetobusiness/businessbirths/deathsandsurvivalrates/adhocs/11790enterprisedeathsindistrictsbyindustry>.

■ Termination of Employment: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[152480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he bring forward proposals to ban employers dismissing workers on medical grounds where an employee is waiting for a medical procedure which has been delayed due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

Throughout this crisis, our priority has been to protect lives and livelihoods, this includes peoples' health, their jobs, their businesses, and their financial security. The NHS continues to work hard to deliver the maximum amount of elective activity as possible, with £1 billion announced at Spending Review to address backlogs and waiting lists by facilitating up to 1 million extra checks, scans and additional operations.

Employees who believe they have been dismissed unfairly may be able to raise their case with an employment tribunal which will give special consideration to cases where the employee has been dismissed as a result of ill health. Employers must also behave reasonably in relation to dismissal and avoid discriminating against employees on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[153309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will provide additional financial support to the wedding industry.

Paul Scully:

I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce to understand the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and jobs in the sector.

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

Tracy Brabin:

[\[153326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the wedding sector and its supply chain on sector re-opening timelines during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce to understand the impact of COVID-19 on wedding businesses and jobs in the sector.

As my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, we intend to publish our plan for taking the country out of lockdown in the last week of February.

Tracy Brabin:

[\[153327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the financial support required by the wedding industry to support its re-opening when it is safe to do so during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce to understand the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and jobs in the sector.

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

CABINET OFFICE

■ Amazon Web Services: Contracts

Chi Onwurah:

[\[153241\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of Amazon's policies on labour rights in the US on Amazon Web Services's suitability as a supplier to Government.

Julia Lopez:

Amazon Web Services (AWS) is a strategic supplier to the Government. As a strategic supplier, AWS is asked to complete the Modern Slavery Assessment Tool annually.

■ **Blood: Contamination****Kate Osborne:****[151874]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to make a decision on the request for a framework of compensation for victims and the families of the contaminated blood scandal before the inquiry into that scandal reports.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [141420](#) on 29 January 2021.

■ **Census: Gender****Ben Bradley:****[153363]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the upcoming National Census will collect information on biological sex.

Chloe Smith:

The census has asked a question on sex since 1801. The sex question for Census 2021 is set out in the Census (England and Wales) Order 2020 and the Census (England) Regulations 2020. The Office for National Statistics has recently published its final guidance for this question on its website at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/questiondevelopment/genderidentity/census2021finalguidanceforthequestionwhatisyoursex>

■ **Local Government: Elections****Matt Western:****[153338]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to provide guidance on how local election counts can be made covid-secure, with particular reference to ensuring those who are observers attending the election counts can maintain social distancing while ensuring (a) scrutiny of the process and (b) the safety of officials and observers.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to PQ [147911](#) on 9 February 2021.

■ **Musicians: Visas****Ms Harriet Harman:****[153103]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he discussed EU-UK reciprocal visa-free touring for musicians with Maroš Šefčovič at their meeting on 11 February 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

The arrangements for touring musicians between the UK and the EU relate to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and not the Withdrawal Agreement which was the subject of the meeting on 11 February between the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Maroš Šefčovič.

The Government recognises the importance of the UK's world leading cultural and creative industries, and we are now focused on helping the sector work as confidently as possible in the EU. DCMS has established a Working Group of sector representatives and other key government departments to look at the issues facing the creative and cultural sectors when touring the EU.

The date of the first meetings of the committees set up under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be announced in due course, when we have agreed with the EU.

■ OmniGOV: Contracts

Robert Halfon: [\[152483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's advertising and public health messages are reaching residents in Harlow constituency through local media.

Robert Halfon: [\[152484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what mechanisms are included in the Government's contract with OmniGov to ensure that the contract provides value for money.

Robert Halfon: [\[152485\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what requirements are included in the Government's contract with OmniGov on support for local media outlets for the promotion of Government messaging.

Robert Halfon: [\[152486\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the requirement of OmniGov to support local media in Harlow constituency with Government advertising.

Robert Halfon: [\[152487\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that OmniGov supports the only remaining news outlet in Harlow constituency with Government advertising.

Robert Halfon: [\[152488\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government's contract with OmniGov is due for renewal.

Robert Halfon: [\[152489\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what other advertising providers were considered when the Government procured the contract for Government advertising with OmniGov.

Robert Halfon: [\[152490\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria the Government set for OmniGov to support local news outlets when procuring the contract for Government advertising.

Robert Halfon: [\[152491\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that OmniGov is supporting local news outlets in addition to regional providers.

Robert Halfon: [\[152492\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value is of the Government's contract with OmniGov.

Robert Halfon: [\[152493\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government procured the contract with OmniGov.

Robert Halfon: [\[152494\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Government public health messaging through local media outlets in Harlow.

Robert Halfon: [\[152495\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure Harlow residents receive comparable levels of Government public health messaging through local media outlets as neighboring constituencies with printed newspapers.

Sir Greg Knight: [\[153138\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that OmniGov support for local news outlets in Yorkshire is (a) equitable and (b) commensurate with the support provided to regional news outlets.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ 33512](#) on 21 April 2020, [PQ 40655](#) on 11 May 2020, [PQ 45460](#) on 18 May 2020, and [PQ 46692](#) on 29 May 2020.

OmniGOV is the appointed agency responsible for media buying across all Government campaigns. In performing this role, they are responsible for ensuring campaigns are delivered both effectively and cost-efficiently. Titles for this campaign

are selected by OmniGOV based on their ability to communicate in a measurable and effective way with audiences at a national, regional and local level.

The press partnership is designed to support the printed media and to reach older audiences and audiences which consume less online media. The partnership has also been structured deliberately to favour smaller regional and local titles. We have not selected digital-only titles because we are already investing heavily in digital advertising. Every title is assessed by OmniGOV and by our media auditors.

Cabinet Office is continuously tracking and reviewing spending on cross-government campaigns, including Covid-19, to ensure our communications are efficient. Our Covid-19 messages have reached 95% of adults on average 17 times per week.

■ Open Government Partnership

Rachel Reeves:

[\[153226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress the UK has made in its engagement in the Open Government Partnership; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the latest independent report finding that the UK's latest open government commitments were limited in scope, did not take proper account of proposals from the public and charities, and did not address major issues like Freedom of Information processing and public procurement issues, as highlighted by the NAO.

Julia Lopez:

The UK is a founding member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and is committed to upholding the organisation's values of transparency, accountability and public participation. Work on the forthcoming National Action Plan will take place throughout 2021, with a model of engagement designed to encourage greater public participation, collaboration, and expert involvement.

■ Small Businesses

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[152521\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to increase opportunities for small businesses across the UK to bid for Government contracts.

Julia Lopez:

The UK spends a huge sum on public procurement each year. Now that we have left the EU transition period, we aim to make it simpler, quicker and cheaper for SMEs and social enterprises to bid for government contracts, building on work that my Rt Hon Friend pursued at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy including to support SMEs in our wider economy.

Further details of our approach are set out in our Procurement Green Paper.

We have already introduced a policy which will allow below threshold contracts to be reserved for smaller UK suppliers.

In addition, our new approach to social value will secure wider public benefit, by allowing us to contract with firms that deliver more apprenticeships, local growth opportunities and environmental benefits.

■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[150677\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions the Government has had with European counterparts on the introduction of a covid-19 passport to facilitate travel as the covid-19 restrictions ease.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 144802](#) on 08 February 2021.

■ **UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland**

Stephen Farry: [\[134275\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the continued flow of parcels and other deliveries from Great Britain to Northern Ireland in light of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Stephen Farry: [\[134276\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing a bespoke mechanism to facilitate the timely passage of guide dog puppies from Great Britain to Northern Ireland with an agreed derogation from the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the response by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the [urgent question](#) on 2 February 2021, and the [letter](#) by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to the European Commission Vice-President. Further steps are necessary to address regulatory barriers and provide time for a light-touch long-term approach to be codified.

The Government is engaging with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to explore means to streamline pet travel between the UK and Ireland, recognising the high standards of animal health that the UK and Ireland share.

In the meantime, DAERA have confirmed that there will be no routine compliance checks on pets/assistance dogs entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain until 1 July 2021. NI-based pets/assistance dogs returning to Northern Ireland from Great Britain can continue to use an NI-issued EU Pet Passport to re-enter Northern Ireland, and will not need an animal health certificate. Further guidance is set out here: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/travelling-pets>

Rachel Reeves:

[153227]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his oral contribution of 2 February 2021, Official Report column 837 on Northern Ireland Protocol: Implementation, what the significant issues are that he would not describe as teething problems.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Honourable Member to the letter sent to Vice-President Sefcovic on 2 February.

The letter can be found [here](#).

■ **UK Trade with EU**

Helen Hayes:

[153308]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the end of the transition period on (a) charges and (b) costs for businesses that (i) import and (ii) export to the EU; and what steps his Department is taking to support those businesses.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Honourable Member to the [answers](#) given at Cabinet Office oral questions on 11 February.

■ **Veterans: Bury**

James Daly:

[153421]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what funding is available to assist in the establishment of an Armed Forces Hub in Bury to ensure that veterans in Bury, Ramsbottom and Tottington have access to the best support services and facilities.

Johnny Mercer:

Veterans have access to wide ranging support, wherever they live in the UK. In addition to the large number of national initiatives delivered by this Government in support of the Veterans' Strategy, we recognise the hugely important role that charities and communities play, through initiatives such as Armed Forces and veterans' hubs. The Government supports these projects through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, which distributes funds of £10M annually for projects to support the Armed Forces community, including veterans.

DEFENCE

■ Africa: Armed Forces

Stephen Doughty: [\[152535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2021 to Question 149770 on Africa: Armed Forces, if he publish the number of those training places provided by the country of origin of those armed forces personnel.

Stephen Doughty: [\[152536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2021 to Question 149770 on Africa: Armed Forces, how many armed forces personnel the UK trained from those countries listed in that Answer in (a) their country of origin and (b) a third country other than the UK.

James Heappey:

Since 2017/18 we have provided training places on UK-based courses to six military personnel from Ethiopia, 51 from Ghana, 14 from Mali, 244 from Nigeria, one from Somalia, 26 from South Africa, two from Tanzania, and 28 from Uganda. At this time we are unable to provide data on training delivered overseas because records are not centralised.

■ Armed Forces: Foreign Nationals

Stephen Doughty: [\[151727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Foreign and Commonwealth personnel are serving in the (a) Army, (b) Royal Air Force, (c) Royal Navy, (d) Royal Marines, broken down by (i) regular and (ii) reserve status.

James Heappey:

Data as at 1 October 2020 for the Regular trained strength and Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) are provided in the table below.

		ROYAL NAVY		ROYAL MARINES		ARMY		ROYAL AIR FORCE
Regular	FR20	Regular	FR20	Regular	FR20	Regular	FR20	
Commonwealth	570	10	110	10	3,880	140	120	20
Nepalese	10	-	~	~	590	60	10	-
Irish	30	10	20	~	410	130	20	10

The Brigade of Gurkhas are not part of the Regular strength of the Army. However, as of 1 October 2020, their trained strength was 3,740.

Notes/Caveats

1. Nationality is as recorded on the Joint Administration System (JPA).

2. Nationality is defined by that currently recorded, however this may differ from their Nationality on entry. For example, some Foreign and Commonwealth entrants may have subsequently changed their Nationality to British and will therefore not be included in the above table.
3. "~" denotes fewer than 5. "-" denotes zero
4. Nepalese citizens are former Gurkhas who have either transferred out of the Brigade of Gurkhas to serve in the wider Armed Forces or have joined the Reserves on discharge.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Greg Clark:

[\[152442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking in response to the National Audit Office's recommendations in its report, Improving Single Living Accommodation, published on 3 February 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) fully recognises that our Armed Forces personnel are at the heart of everything we do, and it is only right they are provided with good quality and affordable living accommodation. Providing such accommodation is one of the MOD's top priorities, and work to improve our Single Living Accommodation (SLA) estate is an enduring process, which will continue to be driven forward through investment and effective management. We are grateful to the National Audit Office for their report and are in the process of carefully considering their recommendations.

Defence has invested £1.2 billion over the last decade on construction and upgrades of our SLA accommodation and continues to invest in a range of new-build and renovation projects. As part of the wider £200 million upgrade programme for Service Family Accommodation and SLA announced by the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Defence in July 2020, Defence is investing an additional £78 million in upgrading SLA and the training estate between now and 2022. Further investment is being targeted within the Front Line Command Infrastructure Plans.

The new Future Defence Infrastructure Services Built Estate contracts will improve maintenance of SLA in future by enabling pre-planned maintenance of SLA to be prioritised and scheduled more efficiently across the Defence estate; adopting a 'fix first time' approach, targeting the majority of repair tasks being completed at a first visit; providing management information on the condition of SLA in real time which will support the effective maintenance of SLA and implementing new contract performance measures to provide incentives for suppliers to perform well.

James Wild:

[\[152661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the 40 most expensive substitute service family accommodation and substitute single living accommodation properties rented out in the last 12 months were.

Jeremy Quin:

Please see a table below displaying the 40 highest monthly rental charges for Substitute Service Family Accommodation (SSFA) and Substitute Service Single Accommodation (SSSA) in the last 12 months, these figures have been rounded to the nearest pound:

TYPE	MONTHLY RENTAL CHARGE*	TOWN
SSFA	£5,008	Esher
SSFA	£4,850	Taplow
SSFA	£4,026	London
SSSA	£3,100	Grantown On Spey
SSFA	£3,085	Tadworth
SSSA	£2,900	Moray
SSSA	£2,700	London
SSFA	£2,650	Edinburgh
SSFA	£2,640	Wallingford
SSFA	£2,626	Birmingham
SSSA	£2,543	London
SSFA	£2,450	Cambridge
SSSA	£2,426	London
SSSA	£2,413	London
SSSA	£2,337	London
SSFA	£2,300	Cambridge
SSFA	£2,270	Solihull
SSSA	£2,263	London
SSSA	£2,238	London
SSFA	£2,200	Cambridge
SSFA	£2,200	Bishops Stortford
SSFA	£2,144	Havant
SSSA	£2,125	London

TYPE	MONTHLY RENTAL CHARGE*	TOWN
SSSA	£2,125	London
SSSA	£2,108	London
SSFA	£2,100	Woodbridge
SSSA	£2,057	London
SSSA	£2,050	London
SSSA	£2,050	London
SSSA	£2,043	London
SSSA	£2,029	London
SSSA	£2,025	London
SSSA	£2,023	London
SSFA	£2,023	Middlesbrough
SSSA	£2,011	London
SSSA	£2,000	London
SSSA	£2,000	London
SSSA	£2,000	London
SSSA	£2,000	London
SSSA	£2,000	London

* Includes where appropriate contributions to monthly rent paid by service personnel.

The substitute accommodation contract contains regional maximum rental charges which are commercially sensitive. Other than in exceptional circumstances MOD will pay only up to the maximum rent.

Personnel below the rank of Major (and its equivalents) in SSSA are expected to share with personnel of a similar rank, which is the case in some of the SSSA shown in the table.

Service personnel can also make a contribution towards the rent of a property over the rental charge limit, based on their personal requirements, which is the case in some of the properties shown in the table.

■ Army: Foreign Nationals

Stephen Doughty:

[151728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Foreign and Commonwealth personnel there are in the (a) Welsh Guards, (b) 1 and 3 Royal Welsh, (c) Queens Dragoon Guards and (d) 1 Rifles; and how many of those personnel in each of those categories have (i) regular and (ii) reserve status.

James Heappey:

Trade Trained Regular and Trained FR20 Reserve Foreign and Commonwealth Personnel by Regiment/Battalion as at 1st October 2020

REGIMENT/BATTALION (4)	TOTAL	REGULAR	FR20 RESERVE
The Queen's Dragoon Guards	20	20	-
1st Battalion Welsh Guards	25	25	-
1st Battalion The Royal Welsh	70	70	-
3rd Battalion The Royal Welsh	~	~	~
1st Battallion The Rifles	30	30	-

Notes/Caveats:

1. The figures are for Trade Trained Regulars and Trained FR20 Reserves only.
2. These figures represent only the requested Regiments/Battalions.
3. This breakdown includes only those members of the Regiment/Battalion serving at Regimental Duty.
4. These figures include any Attached Arms serving in the Regiment/Battalion including non-Combat personnel, eg Chaplains & clerks.
5. Nationality is as recorded on the Joint Administration System (JPA).
6. Nationality is defined by that currently recorded, however this may differ from their Nationality on entry. For example, some Foreign and Commonwealth entrants may have subsequently changed their Nationality to British and will therefore not be included in the above table.
7. The cohort of Officers with a Paid Rank of Colonel and above are recorded as STAFF and have been excluded from these figures.

8. The data have been rounded to the nearest 5 to limit disclosure and ensure confidentiality.
9. "~" denotes fewer than 5. "-" denotes zero

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Navy**

Patrick Grady: [\[152557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148829 on British Indian Ocean Territory: Navy, which stated that the UK has a 12 nautical mile territorial sea in the Chagos Archipelago, when that limit was first claimed by the UK Government; and how information on that limit was promulgated by the UK Government.

James Heappey:

The reference to 12 nautical miles refers to the Mauritian claim as put in the original question on 8 February 2020; a claim which the UK does not accept. Nevertheless, I am grateful for the opportunity to provide clarification. The UK claims a territorial sea of three nautical miles around the British Indian Ocean Territory.

■ **European Fighter Aircraft**

Dave Doogan: [\[153364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's annual budget was allocated to operating and supporting the Typhoon Aircraft in 2018-19.

Dave Doogan: [\[153365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's annual budget was allocated to operating and supporting the Typhoon Aircraft in 2019-20.

Dave Doogan: [\[153366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's annual budget is allocated to operating and supporting the Typhoon Aircraft in 2020-21.

Jeremy Quin:

The operating and support costs for Typhoon aircraft are spread over a number of business areas within the Department and therefore the information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Dave Doogan: [\[153367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Typhoon aircraft are stationed at (a) RAF Conningsby, (b) RAF Akrotiri and (c) the detachment permanently deployed to the Falkland Islands at British Forces South Atlantic Islands, Mount Pleasant.

Jeremy Quin:

As at 1 February 2021 RAF Coningsby had 47 aircraft in the forward fleet, RAF Akrotiri had seven whilst British Forces South Atlantic Islands, Mount Pleasant had four.

The number of Typhoon aircraft in the forward fleet at any base can vary over time.

The forward fleet comprises 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.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[151633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2020 to Question 10756 on Strategic Defence and Security Review: Trade Unions, what consultation has taken place with trade unions on the Integrated Review since that Answer was given.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The MOD Permanent Secretary and other senior officials have continued to meet with our recognised Trades Unions on a regular basis to discuss a range of Defence-wide issues. Recent meetings have provided updates, on a confidential basis, of ongoing work on the Integrated Review, and related work on the implementation of the Defence multi-year Spending Review settlement.

■ Islamic State: Military Intervention**James Wild:**[\[152662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) flying hours and (b) air strikes have been conducted by British armed forces against Daesh in (a) Iraq and (b) Syria in each of the last 12 months.

James Heappey:

There have been 37 Weapon Release Events in the past 12 months (37 in Iraq and zero in Syria). The combined flying hours of Reaper and Typhoon during this period were 15,192 (Reaper: 7,799; and Typhoon: 7,393). As the data concern operational activity, figures may be updated in future.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[151634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in his Department's assessment, whether the fan lift system on the F-35b is attributed as being UK-made.

Jeremy Quin:

Rolls Royce has estimated that approximately 40% of the lift system is manufactured in the UK; this element is directly apportioned to the 15% by value of each F-35 air frame attributed to the UK industry.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[153143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of Question 148725, on Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement, what criteria his Department used to allocate that subcontract as UK-content when the majority of the work is outside the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

Rolls Royce have confirmed that it has based its assessment for manufacturing the Lift System on similar criteria to that used by the Ministry of Defence. According to these principles, the UK Defence Industry is defined as covering suppliers, including both UK and foreign owned companies, that create value, employment, technology or intellectual assets in the UK.

■ Kenya: Military Exercises**Stephen Doughty:**[\[151726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which variant of covid-19 has been identified in the UK forces personnel that have tested positive for that disease at the BATIK training centre in Kenya.

James Heappey:

Information on the variant of COVID-19 is not available.

Stephen Morgan:[\[151822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the extent of the reported outbreak of covid-19 among service personnel at British Army Training Unit Kenya.

Stephen Morgan:[\[151823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to ensure that service (a) personnel and (b) staff at the British Army Training Unit Kenya receive regular covid-19 tests.

Stephen Morgan:[\[151825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to (a) treat, (b) contain and (c) protect the welfare of service personnel after the reported outbreak of covid-19 at the British Army Training Unit Kenya.

James Heappey:

The Army's latest assessment is that this is a small-scale outbreak that has been robustly and capably handled by local British Army commanders. The Army continues to monitor the situation closely.

As with all UK Armed Forces deployments, extensive protective measures have been taken to ensure this necessary training can safely be undertaken both for the personnel exercising, temporary and permanent staff at the British Army Training Unit Kenya and for our Kenyan neighbours. These measures meet or exceed the legislative guidelines for travel in both Kenya and the UK and include: planned periods of isolation before and after the deployment; the mandatory PCR testing of all personnel before departure from the UK; the creation of 'households'; regular temperature monitoring; and the establishment of a robust contact tracing system, with further testing available. All personnel will also be tested as part of their return to the UK.

As part of this process, a small number of personnel, including some identified close contacts, have tested positive after arrival. All who have tested positive for COVID-19 have, where necessary, been given appropriate medical care. The contact tracing system was initiated and, based upon this, some exercising troops were placed into enhanced isolation and are being medically monitored. This is an evolving situation as the unit works with the assistance of the Kenyan Defence Forces - who have been extremely helpful throughout - to PCR test the entire battle group. Between 7-10 February 2021, 13 positive cases were identified; all of these cases were exercising troops.

Commanders immediately initiated heightened measures to prevent further infections which will remain until there is confidence that there are no positive cases on camp. In addition, collaboration with Kenyan Defence Force colleagues, medical surveillance of asymptomatic personnel has been increased to assist identification of any further cases. Additionally, locally employed civilians who work in high transit areas such as the kitchen and gym etc have been asked not to come into work, in order to protect local communities. These areas are being deep cleaned and soldiers will be fed on rations in the meantime.

Stephen Morgan:

[151824]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service (a) personnel and (b) staff at British Army Training Unit Kenya have tested positive for covid-19 in each of the last eight weeks.

James Heappey:

Between 16-31 December 2020 the British Army Training Unit Kenya recorded that one member of staff tested positive for COVID-19. Between 7-10 February 2021, 13 positive cases were identified, all were exercising troops.

■ Military Aircraft: Training

Hywel Williams:

[151630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department made of the suitability of the Texan T1 for operations from RAF Y Fali prior to the transfer of basic flying training to Y Fali from Linton-on-Ouse.

James Heappey:

The Military Flying Training System Fixed Wing Element contract was for a system of training covering three different aircraft types selected by the bidder to provide Elementary Flying Training, Basic Flying Training (BFT) and Multi-Engine Flying Training, along with associated qualified instructors, infrastructure, course-ware, advanced simulation and aircraft engineering support across a multiple training RAF Stations. The procurement of modern glass cockpit turboprop trainer aircraft for the BFT role enabled much more sophisticated training which better prepares our trainee aircrew for the frontline. Coupled with an increase in simulator training, the overall live flying element of the BFT course has been reduced for each student.

Alongside the procurement contract, the collocation of BFT with Texan alongside the Advanced Training of Hawk T2 at RAF Valley provided additional benefits of shared infrastructure and support efficiencies, alongside use of the existing Valley Aerial Tactics Area airspace. This has enabled the wider rationalisation of UKMFTS training estate, delivering better value for money while also generating further job and investment opportunities at RAF Valley supporting the regional economy.

Hywel Williams:[\[151631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he became aware of the certification issues with the Texan T1 training aircraft; and whether an assessment was made of the potential merits of purchasing an alternative aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

The Texan T Mk1 entered service in 2019. It is a Civil Certified aircraft, certified by the Federal Aviation Authority and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency. The Ministry of Defence operates Texan on the Military Register, which requires a Military Type Certificate (MTC) issued by the Military Aviation Authority (MAA). The MAA imposed a restriction in the MTC on initial Release To Service to minimise flight over water in order to drive further improvements to the Texan, so that its operation would be coherent with the protection levels afforded by other UK military aircraft. This has led to work to implement improvements to the Harness, Life Preserver and Life Raft. The Department is now preparing for a review of the MTC Restriction.

During procurement, Texan was assessed as the most suitable training aircraft for the required syllabus. The MTC restriction was imposed after the procurement of the Texan and as such no further assessment has been made of any potential merits of purchasing an alternative aircraft.

■ Military Bases: Scotland**Dave Doogan:**[\[151848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many bases his Department had open in Scotland in 1990.

Dave Doogan: [151849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many bases his Department had open in Scotland in 2000.

Dave Doogan: [151850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many bases his Department had open in Scotland in 2010.

Dave Doogan: [151851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many bases his Department has open in Scotland as of February 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

Whilst the time required to search legacy systems prevents this question being answered in full the hon. Member will be aware of the following major disposals in Scotland in the last 20 years:

RAF Pitreavie Castle

RAF Edzell

RAF Stornoway

RAF Machrihanish

Ministry of Defence present and future disposals can be found on the Defence Disposals Database at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disposal-database-house-of-commons-report>

Dave Doogan: [151852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what bases his Department plans to close in Scotland.

Jeremy Quin:

Defence is committed to making best use of its estate to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces. Much of this work is being delivered by the Defence Estate Optimisation Portfolio, which is a 25-year portfolio announced in November 2016 of construction activity, unit and personnel moves, and site disposals that will deliver a better structured, more economical and modern estate that more effectively supports military capability.

As part of the optimisation process, defence will dispose of sites it no longer requires. These sites create opportunities for alternative use, resulting in regeneration, housing or business growth and job creation within the local area. Full details of the sites identified for disposal, subject to assessment, can be found on the regularly updated Defence Disposals Database:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disposal-database-house-of-commons-report>

■ Ministry of Defence: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[152453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much Official Development Assistance his Department was allocated in the financial years (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21; and what estimate his Department has made of the amount of Official Development Assistance his Department will be allocated for the financial year 2021-22.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence was allocated £5.5 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding for financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21. Given the Department receives a ring-fenced budget for ODA expenditure, it is expected the allocation for 2021-22 will be similar to the previous two financial years.

■ Roll-on Roll-off Ships

Grahame Morris:

[\[153197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to include the armed forces strategic need for roll-on roll-off sealift capacity to 2030 in the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

Jeremy Quin:

The Royal Navy, together with Defence Equipment and Support, are currently conducting a review of the 30-year shipbuilding Master Plan, as we committed to doing in the National Shipbuilding Strategy. This will document the schedule and capabilities of the ships in which we will invest over the next 30 years, providing industry with the clear demand signal and confidence they need to invest in themselves and their people.

As this review is ongoing, it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Grahame Morris:

[\[153198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) Ratings and (b) Officers have been trained by Foreland Shipping Limited in each year of the current Strategic Sealift contract with his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

YEAR	NUMBER OF OFFICERS TRAINED PER YEAR	NUMBER OF RATINGS TRAINED PER YEAR
2003 - 2015	6	2
2015 - 2021	4	1

Grahame Morris:[\[153199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the use of Foreland Shipping Limited's fleet on the Strategic Sealift contract with his Department to provide additional maritime freight capacity for the supply of Category 1 goods.

Jeremy Quin:

As part of No-Deal EU Exit contingency planning the use of a Defence Strategic Roll-on-Roll-off vessel (operated by Foreland Shipping Ltd) in support of the supply of Category 1 goods was considered, and discussed by Officials and Ministers across Government. It was decided that no military contingency plan was required, as sufficient capacity had been secured within the Government Secured Freight Capacity Framework. No further discussions on this contingency measure have taken place since this time.

Grahame Morris:[\[153200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the annual payments made by his Department to Foreland Shipping Limited under the terms of the current Strategic Sealift Service Concession Agreement.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun on 12 October 2020 to question 99036.

Attachments:

1. 99036 - MOD Private Finance Initiative [99036 Ministry of Defence - Private Finance Initiative.docx]

Ian Mearns:[\[153202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the procurement of new tonnage as part of the Strategic Sealift contract (a) up to and (b) beyond the end of the existing contract with Foreland Shipping Limited in 2024.

Jeremy Quin:

As part of the current PFI agreement, there is no contractual requirement for FSL to provide the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with any sealift capacity over and above the four Point Class vessels. Any additional MOD requirements would need to be met in the short term through commercial charters. Procurement of tonnage from 2024 onwards will be subject to the conditions of any future contract, the terms of which are yet to be determined.

Ian Mearns:[\[153203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) extending and (b) renewing the contract between his Department and Foreland Shipping Limited for point class strategic roll-on roll-off vessels; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

The current PFI contract expires in 2024. On current plans a new contract will be required to sustain this capability from 2024 onwards. All equipment decisions are subject to the ongoing Integrated Review.

Ian Mearns:[\[153204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the age of each ship in the Strategic Sealift contract between his Department and Foreland Shipping Limited; and what plans he has to order new tonnage to replace those vessels.

Jeremy Quin:

The four Point Class vessels range between 19 and 20 years old having been built between 2001 and 2002. As part of the current PFI agreement, there is no contractual requirement for FSL to provide the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with any sealift capacity over and above the four Point Class vessels. Any additional MOD requirements would need to be met in the short term through commercial charters.

Ian Mearns:[\[153205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of his Department's strategic need for roll-on roll-off sealift capacity to 2030.

Jeremy Quin:

There is a well established strategic need for the UK to be able to deploy military stores and equipment as required, globally on an assured and readily available basis. However all equipment and supply decisions and how these are met are subject to the ongoing Integrated Review.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Cultural Heritage: Tax Allowances****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[153322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits for (a) the heritage sector, (b) the Welsh economy and (c) rural jobs of lifting the cap on Sideways Loss Relief for heritage attractions for the 2020-21 financial year.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK's heritage assets are important to tourism and are internationally admired, but any change in the current Sideways Loss Relief system, such as an increase in the cap to £100,000, must be thoroughly considered and protected against abuse.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has been working hard to support our sectors through this period of uncertainty, including the heritage sector. DCMS will continue to explore this proposal with HMT as we move forward into future fiscal events.

Ben Lake:[\[153340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits for (a) the heritage sector, (b) the Welsh economy and (c) rural jobs of lifting the cap on Sideways Loss Relief for heritage attractions for the 2020-21 financial year.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK's heritage assets are important to tourism and are internationally admired, but any change in the current Sideways Loss Relief system, such as an increase in the cap to £100,000, must be thoroughly considered and protected against abuse.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has been working hard to support our sectors through this period of uncertainty, including the heritage sector. DCMS will continue to explore this proposal with HMT as we move forward into future fiscal events.

■ Culture Recovery Fund: West Yorkshire

Tracy Brabin:[\[152599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the recipients of the Cultural Recovery Fund are located in West Yorkshire; and what proportion of that fund has been spent in West Yorkshire.

Caroline Dinenage:

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 Culture Recovery Fund is supporting the arts and culture sector to survive the pandemic and continue operating.

According to the latest figures, 4% of CRF recipients are located in West Yorkshire and just under 5% of the Culture Recovery Fund has been spent in West Yorkshire.

■ Cycling: Rural Areas

Mr Laurence Robertson:[\[152406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to increase opportunities for cycling in the countryside; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus. That's why we have made sure that people can exercise throughout the national and local tiered restrictions including cycling.

Last month Sport England published its new strategy Uniting the Movement which sets out their 10 year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. A key part of the strategy is creating and protecting the places and

spaces that make it easier for people to be active including encouraging walking and cycling.

■ **Gambling: Advertising**

Tulip Siddiq:

[153317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of (a) the effect of gambling advertising on the rate of gambling disorders in the UK and (b) the potential merits of introducing a ban on gambling advertising on TV.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government has not seen evidence which demonstrates a causal link between exposure to gambling advertising and the development of problem gambling amongst adults or children.

However, 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. We remain committed to an evidence based review.

■ **Horse Riding: Coronavirus**

Bill Esterson:

[152514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to permit horse riding lessons to resume as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

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

On Monday 4 January the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown and instructed people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS and save lives. The National Restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions and include closing riding centres. The restrictions will remain in place until this situation improves.

You can continue to exercise alone, with one other person or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, in a public outdoor place and you should not travel outside your local area. You should maintain social distancing. Indoor and outdoor sports facilities must close. The Prime Minister is due to set out a roadmap to recovery this week.

Tulip Siddiq:

[153315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the scientific basis for extending the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown restrictions to horse riding lessons and activities.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are crucial for our mental and physical health and I recognise horse riding is a popular choice for many to get active.

As the Prime Minister has said, with the virus spreading faster than expected we cannot allow our health system to be overwhelmed. The current restrictions are designed to get the R rate under control through limiting social contact and reducing transmissions. In order for these measures to have the greatest impact, we all need to sacrifice doing some things that we would otherwise do, for a short period of time. These regulations were voted on by the House on 6 January. The Prime Minister is due to set out a roadmap to recovery this week.

■ **Internet: Fraud**

Chi Onwurah: [\[152524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the potential merits of expanding the scope of the proposed Online Safety Bill to tackle online scams and fraud.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Secretary are jointly responsible for the online harms programme. The government has set out its position on the scope of the online safety bill in the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper.

The government is committed to tackling online scams and fraud. We are working tirelessly across government and with industry, consumer groups, law enforcement and regulators to pursue fraudsters, close down the vulnerabilities they exploit and make sure people have the information they need to spot and report scams.

■ **Listed Buildings: VAT**

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[151787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on cutting VAT on the repair and maintenance of listed buildings.

Nigel Huddleston:

My officials are in contact with Her Majesty's Treasury regarding cutting VAT to repairs and maintenance to Listed Buildings. I understand that many in the heritage sector regard the current system as a negative incentive to demolish existing buildings entirely and start again. As with all tax matters, this is something which HMT keeps under regular review. My officials and I will continue to engage with the heritage sector to build a robust evidence base and develop targeted interventions that might benefit listed buildings in this space.

■ Musicians: Visas

Apsana Begum: [\[153407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to negotiate with the EU fast-track visas for musicians to work and tour in the EU.

Apsana Begum: [\[153408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to support musicians who have purchased ATA Carnets to travel and work in EU countries.

Apsana Begum: [\[153409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that musicians are able to continue to tour in EU countries and that additional costs do not stop that practice being financially viable.

Caroline Dinanage:

In negotiations with the EU we fought for a great proposal for our world-leading creative industries. I deeply regret that the EU rejected our proposals. Our proposals remain on the table and our door is open if the EU is willing to reconsider its position.

DCMS has established a Working Group to bring together sector representatives and other key government departments to look at the issues facing the creative and cultural sectors when touring the EU. The group will work together to provide clarity regarding the practical steps that need to be taken by creative professionals when touring the EU, including around carnets and customs declarations, and it will explore how these sectors can be supported to work and tour in the EU with confidence.

■ National League: Coronavirus

Mr Toby Perkins: [\[153195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of clubs in the Vanarama National League and National League North and South which are unable to fulfill their fixtures; and whether he has had discussions with the National League on supporting those clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

Government has already facilitated a unique promotional deal with the National Lottery who provided a £10 million cash injection to the Vanarama National League and National League North and South in October 2020. Further support is available to clubs in these three divisions through the Sports Winter Survival Package: this will allow them to both survive and finish their seasons if they choose to do so. Sport England, as administrators of the Sport Winter Survival Package, are working with any club that wishes to access support through the scheme. I discussed the support package with the National League on 29 January 2021.

■ Night-time Economy: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[152577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support venues in the nighttime economy during the imposition of covid-19 restrictions.

Caroline Dinenage:

Many businesses that operate within the nighttime economy, including nightclubs and music venues, have received support via the Government's wider £280bn business support package, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and grants to businesses forced to close due to Covid-19.

In addition, the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) has also provided support for venues that operate in the nighttime economy, such as nightclubs and music venues. So far, £170m has been awarded from the CRF to over 690 organisations classed as 'music'. Within that over £54m has been awarded to over 300 music venues specifically. Examples of venues that have received CRF funding so far include Motion, Night People, Village Underground, Ministry of Sound and Fabric.

Additionally, a second round of CRF funding was announced in December 2020 with application portals closing on 26 January 2021. As in round one, nighttime economy businesses were eligible to apply and we know that many businesses have done so. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their applications by the end of March 2021.

■ Platinum Jubilee 2022: Medals

Michael Fabricant:

[\[153113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to issue a medal to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on 6 February 2022; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

On Thursday 12 November 2020 plans were announced to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. This will include the issue of a Platinum Jubilee medal. The medal will be awarded to people who work in public service including representatives of the Armed Forces, the emergency services and the prison services.

■ Public Libraries

Dawn Butler:

[\[152423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support the Government is providing to local authorities to help ensure libraries are accessible for (a) click and collect services and (b) information technology services for the most vulnerable and digitally excluded communities.

Caroline Dineneage:

The COVID regulations allow public libraries in England during the current national restrictions to continue to provide physical library services including an “order and collect” provision, as well as access to public PCs for people to use essential services.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has worked closely with Libraries Connected to develop their toolkit which provides practical guidelines for heads of service and library staff to support the delivery of library services. The toolkit has helped the library sector navigate this difficult period and has been updated to reflect national and local restrictions.

The government exemptions enable public libraries to provide certain services, but do not compel them to do so. Whether library services can or will be provided in each area is for each local council to determine after undertaking appropriate risk assessments, involving staff and unions, looking at the safety of both users and people working in libraries.

■ Reading: Coronavirus**Tracy Brabin:****[151791]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage reading during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021.

Caroline Dineneage:

Many people have sought comfort in reading during this pandemic period. Before libraries physically closed their doors last March, public libraries allowed people to take out many books, suspended late fines and then moved swiftly to digital and online services, investing in ebooks and audio. During March 2020 new registrations to access libraries econtent increased by over 600%.

Through national regulations Government has enabled public libraries to continue to offer an “order and collect” provision, as well as home lending services for vulnerable users. We are also pleased to support The Reading Agency’s new campaign: Read, Talk, Share - which will combat loneliness and promote wellbeing through bibliotherapy, working closely with local libraries to reach struggling communities.

In addition we have worked with the Department for Education to remind parents and children that libraries continue to provide free access to reading material, both physically and digitally, through library membership.

Beyond libraries, the Government has supported the publishing industry during the pandemic, to help ensure readers can continue to enjoy the benefits that come with a thriving UK publishing sector. This support has included introducing a zero rate of VAT to e-publications, which was brought forward to 1 May 2020, which ensures e-publications are entitled to the same VAT treatment as their physical counterparts.

Jamie Stone:

[152613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of reading habits among (a) adults and (b) children during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dineneage:

DCMS has not undertaken an assessment of adults' or children's reading habits during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are aware the publishing industry has reported that, while sales of fiction and digital formats rose over the first six months of 2020, total book sales across the industry fell by 11% in that period.

The Government recognises the importance of English skills both in work and everyday life. Whilst we do not track the reading habits of adults, the Government does provide full funding for learners who do not have a level 2 qualification in English who need to improve their literacy skills.

The Government is also committed to continuing to raise literacy standards – ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding. Recognising the importance of reading during the disruption to education caused by Covid-19, a Reading Together Day was held on 16 July 2020 to celebrate the benefits of reading.

Understanding the impact of the Covid-19 disruption on students is a priority for the Government, and the Department for Education has commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to provide a baseline assessment of catch up needs for pupils in schools in England and monitor progress over the course of the year. The Department for Education will publish interim findings prior to the final research report being published in October 2021.

■ Sports: Health

Alison McGovern:

[151702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made a recent assessment of the effect on people's wellbeing of (a) community outreach aspects and (b) other (i) non-sporting and (ii) non-physical benefits of sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health and have been shown to treat, manage and prevent a range of conditions including heart disease, cancers, diabetes, stress, depression or anxiety. It can also bring communities together and tackle issues such as loneliness.

Sport England's Active Lives Adult and Children surveys provide information not only on activity levels but also on social outcomes such as physical and mental wellbeing too. The latest reports can be found [here](#).

In September last year, Sport England published research (undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University) on the social impact and the economic importance of sport and physical activity in England. The findings of this research show that for every £1

spent on community sport and physical activity in England, an economic and social return on investment of £3.91 is generated. In addition, the combined economic and social value (SROI) of taking part in community sport and physical activity in England in 2017/2018 was £85.5 billion.

Furthermore, last month Sport England published its new strategy Uniting the Movement which sets out their 10 year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. The strategy seeks to tackle the inequalities we have seen in sport and physical activity and provide opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, helping to remove barriers to activity.

■ World Book Day

Jamie Stone:

[\[152612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support World Book Day 2021.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS will be marking World Book Day across social media channels. We are highlighting positive stories of the benefits of reading, and showcasing the work of the Reading Agency, which is working with public libraries across England to tackle loneliness and promote wellbeing and mental health, supported by £3.5m from DCMS.

Although libraries are closed for browsing, over two thirds of local authorities are offering click and collect services. Libraries Connected and The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians have joined forces to support World Book Day and to encourage libraries to participate. The majority of library services will engage via social media, and four Library Services (Doncaster, Blackpool, Nottingham and Middlesbrough) are participating in targeted programmes in partnership with World Book Day and the National Literacy Trust focused on the Literacy Hubs to engage more children in reading.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Literacy and Reading

Jamie Stone:

[\[152610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 on children's (a) reading for pleasure and (b) literacy levels.

Jamie Stone:

[\[152611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve (a) reading for pleasure and (b) literacy levels among children.

Jamie Stone:

[152614]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support reading for pleasure among children during the national covid-19 lockdown that has been in place since January 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards by ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding. The Department is aware that reading for pleasure brings a range of benefits, including reading attainment, writing ability, text comprehension and grammar, breadth of vocabulary, and pleasure in reading in later life.

In 2018, the Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs Programme dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, particularly for disadvantaged children. Since its launch, the Government has provided a further £17 million in funding for this improvement programme, which focusses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. The programme has provided targeted support to several thousands of schools across England, and in the 2020-21 academic year, is providing intensive support to over 850 partner schools.

To provide support to schools in developing the ability to switch from classroom teaching to remote provision, the Department has made £4.84 million available to Oak National Academy to provide video lessons in a broad range of subjects for Reception up to Year 11. Oak National Academy's video lessons include coverage of literacy, reading for pleasure and English as appropriate from Early Years Foundation Stage up to Key Stage 4.

To support schools in making up for lost classroom time, the Government has announced a £1 billion catch-up package, including a universal catch-up premium worth £650 million. Our expectation is that this funding will be spent on the additional measures required to support children and young people to catch up after a period of disruption to their education. This can include support in reading through systematic synthetic phonics and reading for pleasure initiatives.

The catch-up package includes a £350 million National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils. The programme comprises three elements: a tuition programme for five to 16 year olds, with tuition partners and academic mentors specialising in English available to schools; a 16 to 19 tuition fund, including support for small group tuition in English, and a targeted early language support programme for Reception aged children to support early literacy.

The Department is regularly conducting evidence reviews to understand the effect of COVID-19 on reading comprehension, as well as other subjects. As expected, published studies show that primary pupils faced considerable loss in overall reading comprehension, as well as other subjects, based on studies that assessed pupils in the autumn 2020 term, although there are some methodological limitations, which mean that the exact estimates are uncertain.

The Department has not yet published data on the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on reading for pleasure. Recognising the importance of reading during the disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department held a Reading Together Day on 16 July 2020 to celebrate the benefits of reading. As part of this, we published 10 top tips to help parents support their children to read and this information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read>.

■ Department for Education: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[152451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much Official Development Assistance his Department was allocated in the financial years (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21; and what estimate his Department has made of the amount of Official Development Assistance his Department will be allocated for the financial year 2021-22.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education's estimates of spending on Official Development Assistance (ODA) primarily relate to the provision of education to child and unaccompanied child asylum seekers in the 12 months after they make an asylum claim in the UK. The Department does not have a separate funding stream for educating asylum seeker children and is not allocated an ODA budget. Instead, to calculate ODA spending we estimate how much of the wider core schools funding for England is allocated due to having these children on schools' rolls.

The Department's estimated spending on ODA in each calendar year from 2015 to 2019 is given below:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Department for Education spend classified as ODA (£ million)	22	28	24	20	21

The level of spending in future years will be dependent on the number of asylum seeker children that arrive in the country.

■ Extended Services: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[152602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the safety of vulnerable children unable to attend wraparound care during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of vulnerable children and young people. Work is being co-ordinated across the government to address the increased needs of vulnerable children and young people and their families. During the period of national lockdown which was announced on 4 January 2021, primary, secondary, alternative provision, special schools and further education providers have remained open to vulnerable children and young people.

Throughout all restrictions to date, children's social care services and early help services have continued to support vulnerable children and young people and their families. There are a range of exemptions to national restrictions which allow key services to operate for these children and young people including childcare, contact between birth parents and children in care, therapy or other forms of support, as well as essential youth services such as 1-1 youth work and support groups.

We recognise the value that the wraparound childcare sector offers to our children and young people, in terms of the enriching activities they provide and the valuable support they provide to our critical worker parents and vulnerable children. That is why we have ensured they have been able to open for all children eligible to attend school for on-site provision and encouraged all local authorities to consider how they could use local grants made available to them by the government to help bolster this part of the childcare sector in their areas, to safeguard sufficient childcare provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable children. This includes the expanded Holiday Activities and Food Programme, comprising of a £220 million fund to be delivered through grants to local authorities, to provide healthy food and enriching activities over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

We are acutely aware of the impact that the COVID-19 outbreak has had on young people and the vital role our youth services play. That is why more than £60 million of the unprecedented £750 million package for the voluntary and charity sector has been directed towards organisations supporting children and young people. More recently, a Youth COVID-19 Fund has been announced:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-165-million-youth-covid-19-support-fund>. The fund will protect the immediate future of grassroots and national youth organisations across the country. This is on top of £200 million of government investment in early intervention and prevention support initiatives to support children and young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence, made available through the Youth Endowment Fund. This will provide a transformational investment in new and refurbished safe spaces for young people, so they can access support youth workers and positive activities out of school, including sport and culture.

■ Free School Meals: Migrants

Stephen Timms: [151592]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to (a) conclude and (b) publish the review in respect of the extension of free school meals to children from low-income families affected by no recourse to public funds.

Stephen Timms: [151593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made from the October 2020 schools census of the number of children from families with no recourse to public funds accessing free school meals.

Stephen Timms: [151594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending free school meals eligibility to undocumented children.

Vicky Ford:

We are continuing to work with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the temporary extension of eligibility will continue until a decision on long-term eligibility is made.

Once the review is complete, we will update our guidance accordingly. Our current guidance regarding the extension can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-to-nrpf-groups>.

At present, data is not available regarding the take-up of free school meals from children from families with no recourse to public funds during the temporary extension.

■ GCSE and IGCSE: Coronavirus

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [152616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on equality of opportunity for pupils of the cancellation of GCSE exams and not iGCSEs due to the covid-19 outbreak in the 2020-21 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

International GCSEs are not regulated by Ofqual and it is therefore a matter for the two exam boards that run them – Cambridge Assessment International Education and Pearson – whether exams go ahead this summer, so long as they are not prevented from doing so by public health requirements. The Department understands that both exam boards have decided that exams for their international GCSEs will not go ahead in the UK in summer 2021 due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, and pupils will be awarded grades based on teacher assessment instead. They will decide themselves exactly how this is carried out for their qualifications.

Further information is available on the relevant websites:

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/news/news-details/view/update-for-cambridge-schools-on-the-2021-exam-series-20210219/> and
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/pearson-covid-19.html>.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[152418]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing students, parents and carers the choice of retaking a school year due to the effects of the covid-19 pandemic.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises that the national lockdown has had a huge impact on children and young people's education, which will take more than a year to catch up. On 27 January 2021, the Government announced a further £300 million of new funding for high quality tutoring to help children and young people catch up. The Government will be working in collaboration with the education sector to develop specific initiatives for summer schools, and a COVID-19 premium to support catch up, alongside developing a long term plan to support pupils to catch up over the course of this Parliament. Further detail on this funding and support will be confirmed in due course.

■ Remote Education: Oxford West and Abingdon

Layla Moran:

[153357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many laptops have been distributed by his Department to school pupils in Oxford West and Abingdon constituency since 1 March 2020 as part of the Department's programme to help pupils, students and families access remote education during the covid-19 outbreak.

Layla Moran:

[153358]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many broadband routers have been distributed by his Department to school pupils in Oxford West and Abingdon constituency since 1 March 2020 as part of the Department's programme to help pupils, students and families access remote education during the covid-19 outbreak.

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

The laptops and tablets are to help support schools, academy trusts and local authorities to provide access to remote education and online social care. Schools, colleges, academy trusts and local authorities are responsible for distributing the

laptops and tablets and are best placed to know which children and young people need access to a device.

As of Monday 15 February 2021, over one million laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools, academy trusts, local authorities and further education providers. We are making further deliveries all the time and expect to achieve our overall commitment of delivering 1.3 million devices by the end of the spring term.

We have partnered with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help disadvantaged children get online as well as delivering 60,000 4G wireless routers for pupils without connection at home.

Figures on the number of devices already delivered are available here:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data>. These figures are broken down by local authority and academy trust. Figures by constituency are not available.

■ Secondary Education: Harlow

Robert Halfon:

[152481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much per pupil funding uplift will each secondary school in Harlow receive in 2021-22.

Nick Gibb:

Secondary schools in Harlow are attracting £33.6 million in total next financial year - a 7.5% cash increase - through the schools national funding formula (NFF). For Harlow secondary schools, this reflects an increase of 2.4% in per-pupil pupil-led funding compared to the 2020-21 financial year. "Pupil-led" funding is the funding allocated to schools through the NFF on the basis of their pupils' characteristics – this includes funding for "additional needs" factors in the NFF, such as deprivation and low prior attainment.

These figures are based on notional school-level NFF allocations; we do not update the constituency figures on actual school-level allocations.

Next financial year, at a national level, mainstream school funding will increase by 3.5% overall. The NFF continues to distribute this fairly, based on the needs of schools and their pupil cohorts. The NFF is levelling up school funding, delivering resources where they are needed most, while ensuring that every school is attracting at least 2% more pupil-led funding per pupil.

Every secondary school will receive at least £5,150 per pupil in 2021-22, delivering on the Government's pledge to level up the lowest funded schools. On top of that these schools, and all schools, will receive additional funds to cover additional teachers' pay and pension costs. This adds a further £265 to the minimum per pupil amounts for secondary schools.

The majority of secondary schools in Harlow attract an increase of 2% in pupil-led per pupil funding through the NFF in 2021-22. This is because these schools are on the

funding formula “floor” which ensures that all schools attract a minimum uplift even where the core formula factors indicate that their funding should be lower.

For Burnt Hill Academy, St Mark’s West Essex Catholic School and Mark Hall Academy, the increase is higher with a 2.2%, 3.0% and 3.4% increase in pupil-led per pupil funding next financial year (2021-22) respectively, through the NFF.

With the NFF, school funding is now distributed to local authorities based on the individual needs and characteristics of every school in the country. Local authorities continue to have discretion over their schools funding formulae, in consultation with schools. The final funding allocations are therefore also influenced by the local authorities’ own formulae.

■ Special Educational Needs

Olivia Blake:

[\[151886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his department's timescale is for publishing the finding of the major review into support for special educational needs announced on 6 September 2019.

Vicky Ford:

The review into support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a major priority for the government. We all want to see the vision of the 2014 reforms fully delivered, with better outcomes for children and young people, co-produced with them and their families, which prepare them for adulthood.

The COVID-19 outbreak has been extremely challenging for many families of children with SEND. Supporting them continues to be a priority for this government, and their wellbeing has been central to our response throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

The COVID-19 outbreak has unavoidably delayed completion of the review and altered the context in which it will be implemented. Our ambition is to publish proposals for public consultation in the spring of 2021 and we are working to understand how to structure that so that everyone can fully participate in it.

■ Special Educational Needs: Speech and Language Disorders

Geraint Davies:

[\[151584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and (b) Secretary of State for Justice on the recommendation that Government should be levelling up on spending on speech and language therapy around the country as set out in the Children’s Commissioner’s report, *Still not safe: The public health response to youth violence*, published in February 2021.

Vicky Ford:

Spending on speech and language therapy is determined at a local level.

We do not prescribe in detail how local authorities should allocate their high needs funding, but local authorities and schools have statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 to support children and young people with special educational

needs and disabilities (SEND), including those who require speech and language therapies.

The department remains committed to continuous improvement. The cross-government SEND Review was announced in September 2019 and is looking at ways to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high quality, and integrated across education, health, and care. It is also considering measures to make sure that money is being spent fairly, efficiently, and effectively, and that the support available to children and young people is sustainable in the future.

The SEND Review is looking at ways to support mainstream settings to identify and get support to children and young people more quickly, through making best use of precious expertise such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. These issues are long-standing and complex, but the government is determined to deliver real, lasting change. We intend to publish the SEND Review in spring 2021.

Geraint Davies:

[151585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's announcement of 3 February 2021 on the appointment of the Education Recovery Commissioner, what plans the Commissioner has to ensure that there is a comprehensive programme of catch-up for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs whose support and learning may have been impacted by school closures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to helping children and young people recover education lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In June 2020, the Department announced a catch-up package worth £1 billion, including a 'Catch Up Premium' worth a total of £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time and £350 million for the National Tutoring Programme.

In January 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, also committed a further £300 million for tutoring and to engage with parents, pupils and teachers to develop and deliver a plan to help all pupils catch up over the course of this Parliament.

To support the Government with this, the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, have appointed Sir Kevan Collins as the Education Recovery Commissioner. Sir Kevan will advise ministers on the best approach for education recovery, with a particular focus on helping all pupils catch up on learning lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We know that one size does not fit all and will be looking at how interventions can address the individual needs of pupils, including those with speech, language and communication needs.

We will set out more detailed plans in due course.

Geraint Davies:

[151586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 3 February 2021 on the appointment of the Youth Mental Health Ambassador, what plans the (a) Ambassador has and (b) Mental Health in Education Action Group have to ensure the (i) identification of and (ii) appropriate support for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.

Vicky Ford:

The Mental Health in Education Action Group will look at the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in nurseries, schools, colleges, and universities. It will consider how to support mental wellbeing while children and young people are being taught remotely, as they return to education settings and with transitions period between education settings in September 2021.

In the first instance we will engage with health experts to bring together the evidence of impact on children and young people, identify the existing range of support and how to make sure it is easy to access and has the greatest possible impact. The department will also engage with education stakeholders, including staff and leadership unions, to ensure that we understand the issues that are facing staff in nurseries, schools, colleges, and universities and how those can be supported in the coming months. We will also work with the existing higher education task force to ensure that the issues it is considering around mental health are reflected. Further information about the remit of the group will be available in due course, but it will look at the specific mental health and wellbeing issues faced by children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children with speech, language and communication needs.

The SEND Review was announced in September 2019 and is looking at ways to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high quality, and integrated across education, health, and care. It is also considering measures to make sure that money is being spent fairly, efficiently, and effectively, and that the support available to children and young people is sustainable in the future. The SEND Review is looking at ways to support mainstream settings to identify and get support to children and young people more quickly, through making best use of precious expertise such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. These issues are long-standing and complex, but the government is determined to deliver real, lasting change. We intend to publish the SEND Review in spring 2021.

On the 4 February 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, appointed Dr Alex George as Youth Mental Health Ambassador to advise the government and raise the profile of mental health education and wellbeing in schools, colleges, and universities. As Youth Mental Health Ambassador, he will use his clinical expertise and personal experience to champion the government's work on children's and young people's mental health, and help shape policy on improving support for young people in schools, colleges, and universities.

■ Students: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[151716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about providing financial support to university students during covid-19; and what support is being provided for students' (a) mental health and (b) remote learning.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact this crisis will have on some students. Officials are working with the sector to continue to monitor the situation.

We have worked closely with the Office for Students (OfS) to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £256 million for academic year 2020/21, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment for remote learning, and mental health support. We are also making available an additional £50 million of hardship funding this financial year. In total we have made £70 million of funding available for student hardship given the £20 million made available to higher education (HE) providers in December 2020.

Providers will have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to students, in a way that will best prioritise those in greatest need. We will continue to monitor the situation to look at what impact this funding is having.

We have worked with the OfS to provide Student Space, which has been funded with up to £3 million by the OfS. Student Space is a mental health and wellbeing platform that aims to bridge any gaps in support for students arising from this unprecedented situation and is designed to work alongside existing services. I have been clear that ensuring students have access to quality mental health support is my top priority, which is why I asked the OfS to look at extending the platform. I am delighted they have been able to extend the platform to support students for the whole 2020/21 academic year because no student should be left behind at this challenging time. This resource provides dedicated one-to-one phone, text and web chat facilities as well as a collaborative online platform providing vital mental health and wellbeing resources.

Furthermore, we have asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22 through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities Grant funding.

On 13 January 2021, I wrote to the OfS, the regulator for HE providers in England. I outlined government expectations of the HE sector: universities should maintain the quality and quantity of tuition and seek to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have the resources to study remotely.

The OfS does not get involved in individual student complaints. Students can, however, notify the OfS of issues that may be of regulatory interest to it. These are called 'notifications'. The OfS uses this information as part of its regulatory monitoring

activity and keep HE providers under review to ensure that they comply with the ongoing conditions of registration.

OfS has produced a guide for students to support them in this process:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/office-for-students-notifications/>.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[153171]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to allocate funding additional to existing funding arrangements, known as the minimum growth award, to colleges that are facing increased pressure on their bursary budgets as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

Each year, we revisit the method used for awarding growth and the thresholds at which individual institutions become eligible for a growth award, with the key considerations being the levels of growth in the sector and affordability.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we have amended the method for calculating growth awards for this year. This allows for more colleges that have seen an increase in student numbers for the 2020/21 academic year to receive extra funding to help them with the cost of supporting these additional students.

As well as providing additional programme funding, an increased student number allocation resulting from this process may also result in increased 16-19 bursary funds and further education free meals allocations to institutions. In addition, we are releasing additional bursary funding outside the main growth process where analysis of the data suggested that an increased student number could put an institution's bursary allocation under considerable pressure.

We are contacting the institutions eligible for additional extra funding directly.

We continue to keep the Bursary Fund situation under review, including gathering evidence, with a view to considering what more we can do to support students and providers through this difficult time.

■ Students: Disadvantaged

Dan Jarvis:

[151717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Office for Students report on digital poverty will be published.

Michelle Donelan:

On 23 June 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, commissioned Sir Michael Barber in his capacity as Chair of the Office for Students (OfS) to lead a review of digital teaching and learning in higher education (HE).

The review is considering opportunities for innovation in the delivery of HE in the medium and long term and will explore how HE providers can ensure that all students have access to a high-quality digital teaching and learning experience.

The review is in the final stages and will be published shortly.

■ Students: Loans

Emma Hardy:

[\[153355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making Advanced Learner Loans available for (a) part-time and (b) modular higher education courses.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises the importance of studying flexibly and the benefits it can bring to individuals, employers and the wider economy.

We have made changes to support part-time undergraduate students and mature students. Since September 2012, eligible students undertaking part-time undergraduate courses have been able to apply for up-front tuition fee loans to meet the full costs of their tuition. Students starting to attend part-time degree level courses since August 2018 have also been able to access full-time equivalent loans as a contribution towards their living costs.

Advanced Learner Loans provide fees support for designated further education courses at advanced and higher levels, including levels 4 to 6. Those courses may be studied at an intensity decided by the student and institution. Fees are determined by the course subject and guided learning hours.

However, we need to take more radical steps to support lifelong learning. This is why my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced that we will introduce a flexible Lifelong Loan Entitlement equivalent to four years of post-18 education. The loan entitlement will be for modules at higher technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6), as well as for full years of study. It will make it easier for adults and young people to study more flexibly, allowing them to space out their studies, transfer credits between institutions, and partake in more part-time study. We will consult on the detail and scope of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement this year, setting out proposals for how and when it will be introduced.

As recently set out in the Skills for Jobs white paper, while it is our intention that the Lifelong Loan Entitlement will ultimately be the primary route of funding for advanced technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6), including modular provision, in the 2021/22 financial year we intend to fund trials of modular high-quality technical provision. This will stimulate demand and supply and improve our understanding of what works in delivering effective modular provision ahead of the introduction of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement.

We will continue to look at what other short-term changes could be helpful to ensure that we are continuously building towards the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, ensuring that we take advantage of any available opportunities to test and learn prior to its introduction.

■ Training: Finance

Munira Wilson: [\[151864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to increase funding for retrofit skills under the Government's National Skills Fund.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member for Twickenham to the answers I gave on 18 January 2021 to Questions [134016](#) and [134029](#).

■ Turing Scheme

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[152653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of students who will take part in the Turing Scheme in the 2021-22 academic year.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[152654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of not including (a) adult educational institutions, (b) youth groups and (c) sporting bodies in the Turing Scheme on the Government's levelling up agenda.

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[152655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding (a) projects and (b) institutions in Scotland have received through Erasmus+ in each year since 2015.

Michelle Donelan:

The Turing scheme will be backed by £110 million for the 2021-22 academic year, providing funding for similar numbers of UK students to travel abroad as under Erasmus+, which is approximately 20,000 higher education (HE) students, 10,000 further education and vocational training students and 5,000 school pupils, subject to demand.

Widening participation and levelling up is a core aim of the Turing Scheme. That is why we plan the following, to widen access to mobilities for disadvantaged groups with additional grants for living costs and living expenses:

- When bidding, providers will need to demonstrate how their project will support widening access. The assessment criteria will be heavily weighted towards this criterion.
- Maintaining parity with Erasmus+ grant rates and existing student finance support, but provide additional financial support for those from disadvantaged backgrounds by reimbursing travel-related costs.
- We will actively target and promote the scheme in those geographical areas of disadvantage, helping to level up the country.
- We have reduced the minimum HE duration of outward mobilities from a minimum of one term to 4 weeks.

Adult education mobilities under Erasmus+ were for staff rather than students. In considering which elements of the Erasmus+ programme we would immediately replicate under the Turing Scheme, we prioritised ensuring that as many students, learners and pupils as possible have access to life-changing mobilities to support them in developing the skills that will help them to thrive.

Youth and sport are policy responsibilities of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Erasmus+ Sport is a very small part of the programme, representing only 1.8% of the overall budget. DCMS estimates that UK organisations have, on average, benefited by less than £1.5 million a year from Erasmus+ Sport.

We do not need to create a specific programme to replace Erasmus+ Sport activities. We are already investing significant sums of money in sport programmes that align with Erasmus+ Sport themes and objectives. For example, through Sport England, we are investing more than £1.2 billion between 2016-21 on grassroots sport and physical activity programmes.

The National Agency collect and publish data on projects funded as part of Erasmus+, including for broken down by England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which can be found here: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/statistics>.

The table below shows the value of Erasmus+ projects funded in Scotland from call year 2015 to 2017 (the call year is the year in which applications can be made). This is the latest data available, and it can be found in table 11 at the following link: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/file/14125/download>.

Value of Erasmus+ projects funded in Scotland (in euros)

	2015 CALL	2016 CALL	2017 CALL
Total value of projects funded	€14,719,965	€15,617,009	€21,436,222

■ **World Book Day**

Tracy Brabin:

[151790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support World Book Day 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has spoken with World Book Day about plans for the 2021 event, and we are exploring potential opportunities to highlight the importance and benefits of reading for pleasure on the day. The event is an opportunity for young people to celebrate what they most enjoy about reading, and we know that reading for pleasure brings a range of benefits, including: reading attainment and writing ability, text comprehension and grammar, breadth of vocabulary, positive reading attitudes, and

pleasure in reading in later life. Further information on reading for pleasure can be found here: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/reading-pleasure-research-overview/>.

Research also suggests that reading for pleasure is more important for children's educational development than factors such as their parents' level of education. Further information on this can be found at: <https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Readingforpleasurestoppress.pdf>. The Department supports reading for pleasure in a number of ways, including through the National Curriculum and the English Hubs programme.

The National Curriculum emphasises the importance of children listening to, discussing and – as their fluency increases – reading for themselves a wide range of stories, poems, plays and information books. The English Hubs programme is a £26.3 million programme dedicated to improving the teaching of reading, particularly for disadvantaged children. Since its launch in 2018 we have invested a further £17 million in this school-to-school improvement programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language and reading for pleasure. The programme has provided appropriate and targeted support to several thousands of schools across England and, in this academic year (2020/21), the programme is providing intensive support to over 850 partner schools.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Bridleways

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[151600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to increase the number of bridleways; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is a great supporter of the health and wellbeing benefits that access to the countryside can bring. As articulated in the 25 Year Environment Plan, public access to the countryside provides a huge range of benefits, including improving physical and mental health and supporting local communities and economies.

The Government is supporting and enhancing access to the countryside in several ways, for example by completing the England Coast Path, supporting our network of National Trails, ensuring that rights of way are recorded and protected, as well as developing ways to support access through financial provisions in the Agriculture Act for environmental land management. Our new schemes will make a significant contribution to the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan, including beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment. Public access is a key way that people can engage with the environment and so supporting greater and more varied access is an important aspect of achieving this goal.

We are looking at ways in which our new agri-environment schemes could fund the creation of new paths, such as footpaths and bridleways, providing greater and safe

access for cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians. Working in close collaboration with stakeholders we are exploring the best ways of making further enhancements to our wonderful access network.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Overseas Aid**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[152450]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance his Department was allocated in the financial years (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21; and what estimate his Department has made of the amount of Official Development Assistance his Department will be allocated for the financial year 2021-22.

Rebecca Pow:

HM Treasury has published departmental allocations of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for 2019-20, here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-aid-tackling-global-challenges-in-the-national-interest/official-development-assistance-oda-allocation-by-department>. This table confirms Defra's ODA allocation for financial year 2019/20 was £81m.

Outturn information of 2019 calendar year ODA spend are available in the Statistics of International Development publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

The Government has committed to publishing departmental allocations of ODA for 2020/21 in due course. Outturn information of 2020 calendar year ODA spend will be published later this year, as normal, in the Statistics of International Development publication: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

The Foreign Secretary recently published departmental ODA allocations for 2021-22, including HM Treasury's allocation, in a Written Ministerial Statement available online here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-01-26/hcws735>. This statement confirms Defra's £92m ODA allocation for financial year 2021/22.

■ **Fishing Vessels: Territorial Waters**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[151596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ban supertrawlers from UK waters; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

We are reviewing our policy on access for supertrawlers. This review will be driven by evidence. We will need to consider how any measures fit with our obligations under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU and avoid taking any action against individual vessels which could be construed as discriminatory.

Under the Fisheries Act 2020, vessels permitted to fish in UK waters will have to be licensed and comply with UK rules and regulations including those on sustainability. Licence conditions set by UK Sea Fisheries Authorities will apply to both UK and foreign vessels alike.

■ Food: Production

Simon Hoare:

[\[153306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the report by the Office for National Statistics on covid-19 deaths by occupation in England and Wales, published on 25 January 2021, if he will discuss with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care the potential merits of classifying food production staff as a priority group for the second phase of the covid-19 vaccination rollout.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has decided that the vaccine delivery plan should prioritise preventing mortality, by directly protecting those most at risk of death and hospitalisation. With this direction, the Joint Committee for Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI) has been tasked with putting forward advice on prioritisation. This will carefully consider the arguments for prioritising sectors within the overall goal around health outcomes. We will ensure Defra sectors, including food production workers, are fully considered in this process.

■ Genetically Modified Organisms

Sir David Amess:

[\[153096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of (a) public support for genome editing farm animals and (b) consumer interest in purchasing products made from such animals in the regulation of genetic technologies consultation, which closes on 17 March 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

We recognise that there is a spectrum of opinions on these topics. We are consulting on genome editing to provide an opportunity for all views to be shared. No decisions on any legislative changes will be made before the results of the consultation are analysed. The UK has no intention of reducing its high standards of animal welfare. We are committed to proportionate, science-based regulation that protects people, animals and the environment, and ensuring that safe products reach the market. Our consultation opened on 7th January and closes on 17th March 2021.

■ Pet Travel Scheme: Dogs

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[153387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Intra Trade Animal Health Certificates were issued for dogs entering the UK in 2020; which countries those dogs originated from; and how many dogs were imported under the Pet Travel Scheme during the same period.

Victoria Prentis:

45,447 Intra Trade Animal Health Certificates (ITAHCs) were issued for dogs entering the UK in 2020 from the following countries:

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ITAHCs
Austria	8
Belgium	13
Bulgaria	16
Croatia (Local Name: Hrvatska)	135
Cyprus	4,277
Czech Republic	108
Denmark	2
Estonia	8
Finland	7
France	13
Germany	86
Greece	355
Hungary	3,739
Ireland	2,804
Italy	230
Latvia	6
Lithuania	94
Malta	4
Poland	3,415
Portugal	242
Romania	24,499
Slovakia (Slovak Republic)	83
Slovenia	4
Spain	5,268

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	ITAHCs
Sweden	12
Switzerland	1
The Netherlands	18

There were 165,890 dogs imported under the Pet Travel Scheme during the same period. Figures for December 2020 will be confirmed once all relevant information has been submitted by pet checkers and carriers.

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[153388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many Intra Trade Animal Health Certificates were issued for dogs entering the UK from Romania in 2020; and what discussions officials in his Department have had with their Romanian counterparts on ensuring that dogs entering the UK from Romania are (a) bred in conditions similar to UK standards, (b) vaccinated according to the health certification required and (c) transported appropriately.

Victoria Prentis:

There were 24,499 Intra Trade Animal Health Certificates issued for dogs entering the UK from Romania in 2020.

Regarding contact with colleagues in Romania, Defra has been in routine contact at an official level with the relevant authorities in Romania, on matters concerning the movement of puppies and dogs, including on issues relating to biosecurity and animal health. Defra is committed to working constructively with our counterparts internationally to safeguard the welfare of these animals and protect the biosecurity of our country.

All non-commercial dogs, cats and ferrets entering Great Britain on approved routes under the Pet Travel Regime undergo 100% documentary and identity checks to ensure they are compliant with all the relevant vaccination, other health and documentary requirements. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) presently carry out post import checks at destination on commercial cats and dogs from the European Union (EU) on a risk-based approach. Defra has opted to implement this approach to protect our rabies-free status and the health of pets and people in the UK.

Regarding transportation, Defra has provided comprehensive information about the new requirements for transporting live animals into Great Britain to our counterparts in the EU and has encouraged them to share this with their own transporters.

■ Public Footpaths: Christchurch

Sir Christopher Chope:

[153108]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148676 on Public Footpaths: Christchurch, whether the Inspector plans to hold a public inquiry into the objections; and what the timeframe is for the completion of the Inspector's report for consideration by the Secretary of State.

Rebecca Pow:

The Planning Inspector plays an independent role in the determination of the objections received on a set of proposals. It is up to the Inspector to decide whether it is necessary or expedient to hold a public inquiry or other hearing in connection with the consideration of objections to Natural England's proposals.

In the case of the Kimmeridge Bay to Highcliffe stretch, the Inspector's consideration of the relevant objections has been delayed due to the impact of the European Court ruling known as People Over Wind. Natural England is reviewing the relevant Habitats Regulations Assessment in compliance with this ruling.

Given this, and the impact of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the department is unable to give a firm timeframe for the completion of this work.

■ Seed Potatoes: UK Trade with EU

Dave Doogan:

[153368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reasons the EU is allowed to export potato seed into Great Britain.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra ministers agreed a policy proposed by Defra officials and cleared with Devolved Administration (DA) colleagues to accept EU seed potatoes for 6 months beyond the end of the transition period, until 30 June. This policy was a change from an original policy to block EU seed potatoes entirely, to protect Scotland's specialist industry. The policy options regarding the import of seed potatoes from the EU were discussed between officials of all four administrations and industry organisations. In the absence of a reciprocal agreement with the EU, the original preference was to block EU seed potatoes immediately after the transition period. However, the coordinated request from three organisations representing interests across the potato industry, and the UK Government's concern that entirely blocking EU potatoes, could prove detrimental to a reciprocal agreement in the longer term, led us to revisit the policy. The industry organisations expressed concerns that although the UK is broadly self-sufficient in the total quantity of seed potato production, it does not currently produce the range of varieties required by the UK market. They also explained that the transitional provisions in the Withdrawal Agreement for goods on the market were unhelpful for seed potatoes because of the need for specialist storage. To address both issues, their request was to allow EU seed potatoes to be imported for planting in spring 2021 to provide a further period of adaptation. This led

to the final proposal to accept EU seed potatoes in England and Wales until June 2021, supporting the industry as it adapts.

Defra officials and the DAs re-visited the policy following a joint letter from industry organisations representing both seed and ware potato growers. They proposed a compromise policy to accept EU seed potatoes for a limited time to ensure supply for the Spring growing season. This policy was discussed and agreed with the DAs and a sixth month period of grace was proposed, in line with other 'standstill' policies.

■ Shellfish: Exports

Sir Greg Knight:

[151629]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to (a) tackle the issues that UK exporters of crab and lobster have been experiencing at UK borders and (b) minimise the volume of paperwork associated with those exports; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is working with other government departments, industry and EU authorities to ensure smooth trade flow and minimise disruption at the border. To do so, we have established a twice-weekly seafood exports working group to identify issues and resolve across government, as well as a Scottish Seafood Exports Task Force to consider medium to longer term issues, with the aim of increasing confidence in the seafood and aquaculture supply chains.

To further support businesses, Defra has developed a support package of guidance and training with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), including an online journey that guides fish exporters through each step of the export journey. The £23 million Seafood Disruption Support Scheme opened for applications for support towards the costs of disruption of exports to the EU during January, whilst expanded eligibility criteria were announced on 21 February to target catching and shellfish aquaculture businesses which have been affected by a reduction in demand from the hospitality sector in the UK and abroad.

We are also conducting a series of sector-specific workshops in cooperation with HMRC and other partners to provide technical support to exporters, including a dedicated session for crab and lobster exporters. A joint Defra/HMRC support package of online guidance and training has also been issued to exporters,

The UK has developed the Fish Export Service to provide catch certificates for UK fish exporters for free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are also looking at improvements to the Export Health Certificate Online system to simplify the process for exporters and certifiers and we continue to work closely with the European Commission and EU Member States to address issues in interpretation of Export Health Certificates where they arise at the EU Border.

■ Shellfish: UK Trade with EU

Rachel Reeves:

[\[153228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to alleviate the difficulties trading with the EU experienced by UK shellfish exporters since 1 January 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra is working with other government departments, industry and EU authorities to ensure smooth trade flow and minimise disruption at the border. We have established a weekly seafood exports working group to identify issues and resolve across government. A joint Defra/HMRC support package of guidance and training has also been issued to exporters, including sector-specific technical workshops for shellfish exporters. A £23 million fund has also been made available to support seafood businesses, covering losses caused by delays incurred between 1 - 31 January, with applications now open.

With regard to live bivalve molluscs, we continue to raise the issue with the EU to seek urgent resolution to their unacceptable change of position regarding exports from 'Class B' waters. We have offered to provide reasonable additional reassurances to demonstrate shellfish health, on the understanding the Commission must recognise the existing high standards and history of UK-EU trade.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[152606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff are employed in the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative team; and at what grade each of those staff is employed.

Nigel Adams:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Australia: Visas

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[152470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Australian counterpart on temporarily extending visas for UK citizens in Australia while quarantine measures are in place in the UK.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign Secretary speaks to his Australian counterpart frequently and on a wide range of issues, including on our responses to COVID-19. They spoke most recently on 15 February. The Foreign Secretary has not raised temporarily extending visas for UK citizens in Australia. British citizens in Australia are free to return to the UK with

proof of a negative pre-departure Covid-19 test carried out within 72 hours prior to departure, but are subject to mandatory 10-day home quarantine upon arrival.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Legal Opinion**

Stephen Doughty: [\[153250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what total cost to the public purse is of (a) direct and (b) indirect expenditure by his on external legal advice on disputes over the Chagos Islands.

Nigel Adams:

According to the available records, the FCDO has spent £5,841,662 million on external legal services relating to disputes concerning the British Indian Ocean Territory. This includes Government Legal Department costs, as well as counsel fees, in respect of the arbitral proceedings brought by Mauritius under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the advisory proceedings before the International Court of Justice, as well as relevant domestic litigation. It also includes the UK's contribution to the cost of the tribunal established for the arbitral proceedings brought by Mauritius.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Navy**

Lisa Nandy: [\[152518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January 2021 to Question 148829 on British Indian Ocean Territory: Navy, what communications his Department had with the Ministry of Defence prior to the publication of that Answer.

Lisa Nandy: [\[153235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 January 2021 to Question 148829 on British Indian Ocean Territory: Navy, whether legal advisors from (a) his Department and (b) the Ministry of Defence gave their approval to that Answer before its publication.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was consulted by the Ministry of Defence over its reply.

■ **British Indian Ocean Territory: Sovereignty**

Lisa Nandy: [\[152517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking in response to (a) UN General Assembly resolution 73/295 and (b) the judgment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on 28 January 2021 on the future sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago.

Nigel Adams:

The United Kingdom voted against General Assembly resolution 73/295 and we remain firmly of the view that the International Court of Justice and General Assembly are not the appropriate fora for resolving what is fundamentally a bilateral matter of disputed sovereignty between two UN member states. The resolution is non-binding. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom contributed to the Secretary-General's report, made pursuant to the resolution.

The UK was not a party to the proceedings of the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), which have no effect for the UK or for maritime delimitation between the UK (in respect of the British Indian Ocean Territory) and the Republic of the Maldives.

Canada: Foreign Relations**Catherine West:**[\[153325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to strengthen the relationship between the UK and Canada following the end of the transition period.

Wendy Morton:

The UK and Canada share a strong and collaborative bilateral relationship. This partnership is complemented by our work on the international stage, where the UK and Canada continue to work closely in multilateral organisations, including the UN, Commonwealth, G7, NATO, and as members of the 'Five Eyes.' We consistently work together to promote international leadership on our shared values around open societies, defending human rights, and tackling climate change. The UK and Canada agreed a Trade Continuity Agreement at the end of 2020, and this year, will begin negotiations on a bespoke Free Trade Agreement that will deliver for both countries, with technology, science, and environmental cooperation at its core.

China: Animal Welfare**Patrick Grady:**[\[152556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on the animal welfare issues associated with the annual Yulin Dog Meat Festival.

Nigel Adams:

The Government is committed to raising standards of animal welfare at home and abroad. The sale and consumption of dog meat is legal in many countries, including China, and there are no international norms, laws or agreements governing this. We believe that it is necessary to work with governments around the world to gain agreement to animal welfare standards. We have raised our concerns on specific animal welfare issues with the Chinese authorities and will continue to do so.

■ China: Uighurs**Ms Nusrat Ghani:**[\[153297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the legal opinion by Alison Macdonald QC, Jackie McArthur, Naomi Hart and Lorraine Aboagye on International criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity and genocide against the Uyghur population in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, published on 26 January 2021.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has taken careful note of the recently published legal opinion by Alison Macdonald QC et al. Our deep concern about the serious and widespread human rights violations in Xinjiang is a matter of record. The UK has led international efforts to hold China to account, and on 12 January the Foreign Secretary announced a package of measures to help ensure that British organisations, whether public or private sector, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[151785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK plans to use as G7 president to lead global efforts to strengthen primary health care systems.

Wendy Morton:

Leading the global recovery from coronavirus while strengthening resilience against future pandemics is a priority for our G7 Presidency. We are using our G7 Presidency to champion support for vulnerable countries and to promote global health and development. This will include strengthening global and national health systems, as we pursue our vision for a safer, healthier and more prosperous world.

■ Developing Countries: Maternity Services**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[151783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborn babies and children across the world; and whether UK Aid has supported global interventions which seek to (a) ensure that every child has access to a measles vaccines, (b) reduce disruptions in antenatal check-ups and post-natal care and (c) provide essential nutrition services to children.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO is committed to working with others to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children by 2030. Our steps to deliver this commitment include: Support for efforts to protect children in low income countries through our commitment of up to £1.65 billion to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Over 2021-2025,

Gavi will support the roll-out of the most comprehensive package of vaccines to the world's poorest countries, focusing the hardest to reach children. This will include immunising 490 million children against measles, averting approximately 1.4 million preventable deaths; Support for delivery of quality antenatal and post-natal care, including through the Global Financing Facility in 36 countries, which is helping countries challenged by service disruptions due to the pandemic; and; Promotion of a highly cost-effective set of nutrition services for women and children, including breastfeeding support, provision of nutritional supplements and treatment for acute malnutrition. Between April 2015 and March 2020, we reached 55.1 million young children, women and adolescent girls through our nutrition programmes.

■ **Developing Countries: Nutrition**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[151786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will use the 2021 Nutrition for Growth summit to emphasise that the UK is committed to reaching over 50 million children, women and adolescent girls through nutrition-specific programmes by 2025.

Wendy Morton:

Between April 2015 and March 2020, the UK reached 55.1 million young children, women and adolescent girls through our nutrition programmes.

We remain committed to the Nutrition for Growth process and will continue to work closely on preparations for the 2021 Summit with the Government of Japan. Options for any new Nutrition for Growth commitment will be reviewed once the internal business planning process is complete.

■ **Developing Countries: Water**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[151784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to support the one in four countries with ongoing humanitarian crises who are experiencing reductions of 10 per cent or more in household drinking water services compared with the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government recognises that countries with ongoing humanitarian crises can be particularly affected by COVID-19 and that access to drinking water can be reduced. In the first response phase to COVID-19 we provided £20 million of finance to UNICEF for urgent COVID-19 support including for water, sanitation and hygiene. We also supported the provision of emergency drinking water in a number of humanitarian contexts, including to nineteen Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in Yemen, through our support to the Hygiene and Behaviour-change Coalition (HBCC), working with Unilever during the pandemic. As a longer-term effort, the UK Government met its 2015 - 2020 target of 60 million people with improved water or sanitation, of which 26.2 million people were based in fragile states. Going

forward, the UK will continue to work with the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, which includes 69 partner governments, to increase political commitment to improving access to clean water and sanitation in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery.

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

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[152605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department and its predecessor Department spent on consultants in each of the last 10 years.

Nigel Adams:

Spend on consultants by legacy Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID), for each of the last 10 years, was as follows:

	FCO	DFID
2019/20	£2,936,902	£24,609
2018/19	£1,927,753	£27,176
2017/18	£1,261,979	£11,630
2016/17	£814,467	£25,822
2015/16	£1,080,000	£52,120
2014/15	£1,600,000	£101,330
2013/14	£1,500,000	£198,344
2012/13	£3,500,000	£251,383
2011/12	£12,040,000	£700,000
2010/11	£19,200,000	£1,400,000

■ **Gibraltar: Coronavirus**

Catherine West:

[\[153323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is providing to the Government in Gibraltar to assist their covid-19 recovery.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has agreed a £500 million loan guarantee, enabling the Government of Gibraltar to borrow at preferential rates, to fund its Covid-19 support measures.

Furthermore, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, together with Public Health England, the Department of Health and Social Care, the RAF, and the UK Vaccine Taskforce, is coordinating the deployment of vaccines to Gibraltar. Gibraltar's vaccination programme is ongoing.

■ **Hussein Ayoob and Mohammed Rashid**

Layla Moran:

[\[152629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department is taking to help secure the release of (a) Mohammed Rashid and (b) Hussein Ayoob who were detained in Bahrain on 7 February 2021.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the detention of Mohammed Rashid and Hussein Ayoob and will monitor any developments.

As a matter of course we continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to follow due process in all cases and meet its international and domestic human rights commitments, including in the case of juveniles. Those with concerns about treatment in detention should contact the relevant authorities as well as the appropriate Bahraini human rights oversight body.

Wayne David:

[\[153140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make urgent representations to the Government of Bahrain for the immediate and unconditional release of (a) Hussein Ayoob and (b) Mohammed Rashid who have been detained since 7 February 2021.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the detention of Mohammed Rashid and Hussein Ayoob, and are monitoring developments. We continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to follow due process in all cases and meet its international and domestic human rights commitments.

■ **Jagtar Singh Johal**

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[152547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether consular access to Mr Jagtar Singh Johal was (a) requested by the UK High Commission and (b) granted by the Indian authorities during the 10 days in which Mr Johal was incarcerated in Delhi Special Cell in January 2021.

Nigel Adams:

Consular staff from the British High Commission in Delhi visited Mr Johal in police custody on Friday 8 January following his transfer to Delhi Special Cell on 7 January. Permission for a further consular visit was granted by the Ministry of External Affairs on Friday 15 January but a visit could not be conducted before Mr Johal was returned

to Tihar jail on 16 January. Permission was then sought and granted for a consular call with Mr Johal which took place on Wednesday 20 January.

■ **Kurds: Military Aid**

Robert Halfon:

[\[153201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the long-term effect on (a) UK foreign policy and (b) bilateral relations with the Kurdistan Region of the 1991 decision to initiate a safe haven and no-fly zone over the Kurdistan Region.

James Cleverly:

UNSCR 688, and the subsequent initiation of no-fly zones over the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) represented a historic moment for Iraqi Kurds, and for the UK-KRI partnership. The no-fly zones provided a crucial security umbrella to protect the Kurdish people, and to promote stability in the region.

In the years since, we have further strengthened our relationship with the KRI. Many of their interests and values align with our own: a belief in diversity, tolerance, and publicly stated commitment to preventing extremism are some examples. The UK will continue to play its part in supporting the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to build a more peaceful, more prosperous future.

■ **Maldives: Politics and Government**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[153254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have (i) met and (ii) exchanged correspondence with external legal counsel to the Government of the Maldives in each of the last 24 months.

Nigel Adams:

Neither the Foreign Secretary nor any FCDO officials have met with or exchanged correspondence with the external legal team for the Maldives in relation to their International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) proceedings in the past 24 months.

■ **Margarita Simonyan**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[152570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to add Margarita Simonyan to the UK Sanctions list.

Nigel Adams:

The UK takes the issue of disinformation very seriously. We know that certain states routinely use disinformation as a foreign policy tool and we all have our doubts about the objectivity of the reporting of RT, including through their UK television channel, which remains a tool of propaganda for the Russian State. The UK remains

committed to the protection and promotion of human rights in Russia, including via the use of sanctions, however it would be inappropriate to speculate on future listings.

■ Overseas Aid

Sarah Champion:

[\[152540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his Department's 10 largest bilateral Official Development Assistance programmes (a) were in financial year 2020-21 and (b) will be in financial year 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

(a) Please refer to annex B in the latest DFID annual report (DFID Annual Report and Accounts 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) which shows the indicative budget allocation of bilateral spend by organisational unit. Final outturn for financial year will 2020-21 will be published in our annual report later this year.

(b) The Foreign Secretary has set out seven core priorities for the UK's aid budget in the overarching pursuit of poverty reduction: climate and biodiversity; Covid and global health security; girls' education; science and research; defending open societies and resolving conflict; humanitarian assistance; and promoting trade and economic growth. We are working through our internal business planning process which will allocate the ODA budget across these priorities and geographies. No decisions have yet been made on individual country or sectoral budget allocations for 2020/21.

Sarah Champion:

[\[152541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance was spent in total in (a) the Sahel, (b) the Western Balkans, (c) Ukraine, (d) the Caucasus, (e) sub-Saharan Africa, (f) South Asia, (g) Central Asia, (h) Middle East and North Africa, (i) the Caribbean, (j) Central America, and (k) South America in 2020.

Nigel Adams:

Detail on UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in 2020 is not currently available.

In April, FCDO will publish "SID: Provisional UK Aid Spend 2020". This publication will contain provisional bilateral ODA totals for FCDO by SID region - Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe and Pacific.

In the Autumn, FCDO will publish "SID: Final UK Aid Spend 2020". This publication will contain detailed breakdowns as well as activity level dataset. This dataset will enable the UK ODA spend to be separated into the categories set out in the question - (a) to (k).

Sarah Champion: [\[152542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance will be spent in total in (a) Africa, (b) Asia, (c) Europe and (d) the Pacific in 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign Secretary has set out seven core priorities for the UK's aid budget in the overarching pursuit of poverty reduction: climate and biodiversity; COVID-19 and global health security; girls' education; science and research; defending open societies and resolving conflict; humanitarian assistance; and promoting trade and economic growth. We are working through our internal business planning process which will allocate the ODA budget across these priorities and geographies. No decisions have yet been made on individual country or sectoral budget allocations for 2020/21.

Sarah Champion: [\[152543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much his Department has committed to spend on (a) the Commonwealth Development Corporation, (b) the Global Fund, (c) European Union international development spending, (d) the GAVI Alliance, (e) Official Development Assistance (ODA)-eligible in-country refugee costs, (f) ODA-eligible climate changed related work, in 2021-22.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary has set out seven core priorities for the UK's aid budget in the overarching pursuit of poverty reduction: climate and biodiversity; COVID-19 and global health security; girls' education; science and research; defending open societies and resolving conflict; humanitarian assistance; and promoting trade and economic growth. We are working through our internal business planning process which will allocate the ODA budget across these priorities and geographies.

No decisions have yet been made on budget allocations for 2021/22.

Sarah Champion: [\[153257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of UK's total Official Development Assistance spending was spent in each sector in 2020.

Nigel Adams:

Detail on UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in 2020 is not currently available.

In the Autumn, FCDO will publish "SID: Final UK Aid Spend 2020". This publication will contain detailed breakdowns including UK bilateral ODA by sector.

Sarah Champion: [\[153258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the UK's total Official Development Assistance

spending on (a) least developed countries, (b) lower middle income countries and (c) upper middle income countries in 2020.

Nigel Adams:

Detail on UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in 2020 is not currently available.

In April, the OECD will publish provisional Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries bilateral ODA by World Bank income group for 2020. The published table will show a UK total by these income groups. When published it will be found in this part of the OECD website: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/>

In the Autumn, FCDO will publish "SID: Final UK Aid Spend 2020". This publication will contain detailed breakdowns including finalised UK bilateral ODA by OECD DAC Income Group.

Sarah Champion:

[153259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how UK Official Development Assistance relating to conflict and stabilisation will be administered in 2021.

James Cleverly:

Conflict and Stabilisation funding for 2021 will be administered through both the cross government Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, through a combination of multilateral and bilateral funding. No decisions on allocations for 2021/22 have been made yet.

Sarah Champion:

[153260]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take to ensure that reductions to the aid budget are co-ordinated in a strategic manner (i) at regional level and (ii) by his Department in Whitehall.

Nigel Adams:

The Prime Minister has set an ambitious agenda to increase UK impact overseas through closer integration of cross-Government activity. This includes all UK Missions working to a single, whole-of-government set of objectives for which the Head of Mission (HoM) is fully accountable.

The Foreign Secretary set out to the House of Commons on 26 November how a new strategic approach will allow us to drive greater impact from our £10 billion of ODA spending next year, notwithstanding the difficult financial pressures faced. Budgets will be allocated based on this strategy as well as considerations of need including levels of poverty, ability of countries to fund themselves and to ensure that every pound we spend on ODA goes as far as possible and has greatest impact the UK could help achieve - previous PQ response

Country Plans are being reviewed at the regional level by Geographic Boards comprising FCDO and XHMG officials, and subject to Ministerial approval, to ensure strategic coherence - new language.

■ Overseas Aid: Education

Hilary Benn:

[\[152408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to increase the UK's financial support for education in the upcoming replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister and President Kenyatta of Kenya will co-host the *Global Education Summit: Financing the Global Partnership for Education* (GPE) in London in July 2021. The UK is GPE's largest bilateral donor. No decision has yet been taken on the UK's next contribution to GPE and details will follow in due course.

As co-hosts of the Summit we are using all the means at our disposal to help the Global Partnership for Education secure its five-year financing target of up to \$5 billion (2021-2026), in line with our commitment to stand up for the right of every girl around the world to gain 12 years of quality education.

■ Overseas Aid: Environment Protection

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[151782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many green energy and climate-related projects that were under consideration for Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding are no longer under consideration as a result of the decision to reduce the ODA budget; what type of project they were and in which countries they were located.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: The Foreign Secretary has completed the cross-government review of how Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be allocated against the government's priorities for 2021, including on climate and biodiversity. This review has ensured that UK ODA is focused on our strategic priorities, spent where it will have the maximum impact, has greater coherence and delivers most value for money.

However our international climate finance is protected, and we remain committed to doubling our International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion over the next five years.

No decisions on individual budgets have been taken yet by Ministers.

■ Palestinians: Radicalism

Wayne David:

[\[153142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2020 to Question 126811, on Palestinians:

Radicalism, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) possible timeline for the Palestinian Authority's revision of educational textbooks and (b) the potential effect of those revisions on affairs in that region.

James Cleverly:

We understand that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has already updated textbooks for grades 1-6 and hopes to update the remaining textbooks as soon as possible. The independent review of the content in Palestinian textbooks led by our European partners will include a sample of these textbooks introduced for school year 2020-21. We expect the study to be complete in the near future and will study its findings carefully. The UK will continue to engage with the PA on their plans to revise the remaining textbooks for grades seven and above.

■ **Palestinians: Recognition of States**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[151691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Palestinian Authority joining the Rome Statute in 2015, whether the Government recognises Palestine as a sovereign state.

James Cleverly:

The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time of our choosing, and when it best serves the objective of peace.

■ **Palestinians: Textbooks**

Wayne David:

[\[153141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with their EU counterparts on the Georg Eckert Institute review of Palestinian textbooks; and when the findings of that review will be published.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains in close dialogue with our European partners regarding the ongoing review of Palestinian textbooks, including urging them to complete the review as soon as possible. We understand the EU are now moving towards the final reporting stage of the study and we expect the review to be completed in the near future. The UK has repeatedly lobbied the EU to push for publication, but this is ultimately a decision for the EU.

■ **Russia: LGBT People**

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[151655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Russian counterpart on (a) the recent abduction of two gay Chechen men in Western Russia by uniformed Chechen security officials and (b) the wider treatment of LGBT people in Russia.

Wendy Morton:

We remain deeply concerned about the continuing persecution of LGBT people in Chechnya. Persecution for being LGBT, anywhere in the world, is abhorrent. As we state in our Travel Advice, there are credible reports of arrest, torture and extrajudicial killing of LGBT people in Chechnya. In December 2018 the UK was one of 16 countries to invoke the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism, requiring an independent OSCE investigation. The OSCE Moscow Mechanism's independent 2018 report confirmed allegations of serious human rights violations in Chechnya against LGBT people and other groups including unlawful detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings. We continue to urge Russia to implement the recommendations made in the Moscow Mechanism report and to end the climate of impunity for human rights abusers in Chechnya.

On 10 December 2020, we announced designations under our autonomous Global Human Rights sanctions regime, including those responsible for the ongoing torture and murder of LGBT people in Chechnya. We continue to raise our concerns about the persecution of LGBT people in Chechnya with the Russian Government at all levels. On 17 November 2020, I raised this with my counterpart, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Titov.

■ Schengen Agreement**Alberto Costa:****[152566]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has for extending the time limit for visa free travel for UK citizens within the Schengen Area.

Wendy Morton:

The Government discussed arrangements with the EU for British Citizens travelling to the Schengen Area. Regrettably, the EU consistently maintained that British Citizens will be treated as third-country nationals under the Schengen Borders Code from 1 January 2021. This means that British Citizens are able to travel visa-free for short stays for up to 90 days in a rolling 180-day period. This is the standard length of stay that EU offers to nationals of eligible third countries that offer visa-free travel for EU citizens, in line with existing EU legislation.

British Citizens planning to stay longer will need permission from the relevant Member State(s). This may require applying for a visa and/or permit. Information about travel to Europe is available on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-1-january-2021>

The UK's Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU confirms that both the UK and EU currently provide for visa-free travel for short-term visits for each other's nationals in accordance with their respective laws. The detail of those arrangements is set by domestic law. The Government does not typically enter into bilateral agreements on visa-free travel. The UK keeps its visa system under regular review, and the new points-based immigration system has been developed in the national

interest. The Government also keeps arrangements and advice for British Citizens travelling abroad under regular review.

■ **Selahattin Demirtaş**

Patrick Grady:

[\[151751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart regarding the European Court of Human Rights judgment ordering the release of Selahattin Demirtaş.

Wendy Morton:

We regularly raise human rights issues with the Turkish authorities. I did so in December 2020 with my Turkish counterpart. We remain concerned about the four-year imprisonment of Selahattin Demirtaş, former co-chair of the People's Democratic Party (HDP), in Turkey. With our international partners, we call on Turkey to meet its obligations as a founding member of the Council of Europe and release Demirtaş from his extended pre-trial detention. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will supervise the implementation of the judgment in *Demirtaş (No.2) v Turkey*, a process in which the United Kingdom actively participates. Working with our international partners, we will continue to encourage Turkey, including at Ministerial level, to act in line with the conventions of the Council of Europe and to make greater progress on wider human rights reforms.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[151778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart regarding the imprisonment of Selahattin Demirtaş.

Wendy Morton:

We regularly raise human rights issues with the Turkish authorities. I did so in December 2020 with my Turkish counterpart. We remain concerned about the four-year imprisonment of Selahattin Demirtaş, former co-chair of the People's Democratic Party (HDP), in Turkey. With our international partners, we call on Turkey to meet its obligations as a founding member of the Council of Europe and release Demirtaş from his extended pre-trial detention. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will supervise the implementation of the judgment in *Demirtaş (No.2) v Turkey*, a process in which the United Kingdom actively participates. Working with our international partners, we will continue to encourage Turkey, including at Ministerial level, to act in line with the conventions of the Council of Europe and to make greater progress on wider human rights reforms.

■ **South Sudan: Elections**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[152675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the UK's diplomatic efforts to support nation building in South Sudan; and if he will make representations to (a) the

international community and (b) his south Sudanese counterpart on supporting timely and transparent elections in that country.

James Duddridge:

Despite significant delays to implementation of the 2018 Agreement, including a nine month delay in forming the Transitional Government of National Unity, the UK welcomes recent progress, notably finalising state governor appointments. Alongside our Troika partners (US and Norway), we continue to encourage South Sudan's leaders, including President Kiir and First Vice-President Machar, to expedite implementation, including setting the conditions for elections, ensuring a lasting end to violence and addressing the grave humanitarian crisis. As I made clear during a visit to South Sudan in October 2020, all parties must work together to create the conditions needed for elections to take place, including political progress and improvements to the security situation. More recently, the Foreign Secretary and I discussed stability issues including South Sudan with President Kenyatta on 20 January, given the important role of regional partners in supporting delivery of the 2018 Agreement. The UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan discusses these issues regularly with international and regional partners, including IGAD, Sudan, and with President Museveni in December 2020.

■ **Ukraine: Coronavirus**

Catherine West:

[\[153324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is offering Ukraine to (a) help it tackle and (b) facilitate a recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

Ukraine and the UK face a shared struggle against COVID-19. We recognise the importance of supporting Ukraine, given the additional challenges it faces as a result of Russian aggression. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have provided support to maximise the effectiveness of government public communications on COVID-19, legislative assistance to the Ministry of Health, and adapted our humanitarian aid to respond to acute needs in the East. We are also working with civil society organisations to enhance oversight of Covid-19 procurement, ensuring that public funds are used to maximum effect to secure PPE, medicines, and now vaccines. UK programme support in financial year 2021/2 will be adapted to ensure that Covid-19 recovery is assisted by our work supporting Ukraine's defence, economic development, governance reforms and humanitarian needs.

The UK has committed £548 million to the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) - the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines, of which the UK is one of the largest bilateral donors. Our commitment will contribute to the supply of at least 1.3 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 for up to 92 low and middle-income countries, including Ukraine, with their delivery to start shortly.

■ USA: Trade Unions

John Spellar:

[\[153114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with new US Administration on advancing trade union rights in international fora and agreements.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government supports the promotion of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) fundamental principles and rights at work in Free Trade Agreements, which includes freedom of association, and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. We continue to be active members of the ILO, and maintain our own high levels of employment rights. To date, the UK Government has not raised the issue of Trade Union rights in international fora with the new US Administration.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Mary Glendon:

[\[151707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans for (a) national public-health campaigns to increase knowledge and awareness of the impact of drinking and (b) developing and promoting tailored solutions for harm prevention and resilience-building to reduce alcohol harm among the over-50s.

Mary Glendon:

[\[151708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the (a) outcomes, and (b) recommendations of the Drink Wise, Age Well programme.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) launched the Better Health campaign in July 2020 to support people, particularly middle-aged adults, to lead healthier lifestyles. Within the campaign, the Drink Free Days App is one of the support tools provided. PHE's 'Drinkline' is also a free, confidential national alcohol helpline for people worried about their own or someone else's drinking.

PHE continues to plan social marketing activity across a range of health-related behaviours. Plans will be developed with consideration to a number of factors including the existing circumstances relating to COVID-19, the relative economic payback of campaigns on a specific behaviour, the severity and scale of the risk attached to each behaviour and the strength of the evidence base that marketing can help change behaviours. The Department will consider the recommendations made in Drink Wise, Age Well report.

■ Cardiovascular System: Coronavirus

Conor McGinn: [151758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional financial support he is providing to the NHS to tackle the adverse effects of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) detection and (b) treatment of heart and circulatory conditions.

Jo Churchill:

The recently announced Spending Review included funding of £1 billion for all health conditions to address backlogs, tackle long waiting lists and facilitating up to one million extra checks, scans and additional operations.

The NHS Long Term Plan also includes work to raise awareness of the symptoms of heart failure and to ensure early and rapid access to diagnostic tests and treatment. This remains a priority for NHS England and NHS Improvement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Care Homes: Birmingham

Preet Kaur Gill: [78815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of (a) private and (b) local authority run care homes have benefited from weekly testing for care home staff in Birmingham.

Helen Whately:

We do not hold the data in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Newcastle upon Tyne

Chi Onwurah: [151706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 5 February 2021 to Question 126867 on Coronavirus: Newcastle upon Tyne, what the evidential basis is for deciding an incident has taken place in a setting; and to what extent an incident reflects the likelihood of transmission having occurred.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

There are epidemiological definitions for COVID-19 outbreaks and clusters in particular settings, such as domestic or institutional settings. The definitions are used to inform local alerts and action and to provide consistency in local responses. The definitions are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-epidemiological-definitions-of-outbreaks-and-clusters/covid-19-epidemiological-definitions-of-outbreaks-and-clusters-in-particular-settings>

Information on possible clusters is reported daily to local authorities and Public Health England Health Protection Teams to undertake a risk assessment to determine the likelihood of transmission having occurred at the postcode setting for the alert. A locally led outbreak investigation will gather data and information to determine

whether controls measures are required to mitigate the risk of transmission at that setting. These investigations include consideration of gathering further data and evidence to assess how transmission may have occurred within the setting. In certain circumstances, an epidemiological study will be used to produce statistical measures of transmission such as the number of new cases among contacts of a case. Where community transmission rates are high, individuals may have been exposed through a number of different ways, making it difficult to say with certainty that specific settings are associated with transmission.

■ **Coronavirus: Retail Trade**

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[148813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that specialist running shops are included in the first wave of retail businesses allowed to reopen when the January 2021 covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government keeps its restrictions, including those relating to specialist running shops, under continual review and will make changes if the data and science supports it.

■ **Coronavirus: Slough**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[105515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the results of covid-19 tests administered in Slough are received within 24 hours.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 October 2020]: NHS Test and Trace has been working to improve and expand the testing across the United Kingdom, including in Slough. The testing offer in Slough currently includes a regional test site and a local test site, as well as several locations that regularly host mobile testing units.

National data shows that between 28 January and 3 February 2021, over 97% of PCR test results from in-person sites were returned the day after the test was taken. National turnaround time data is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962477/Test_and_Trace_Week37.pdf.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[117266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the role of Clinical Commissioning Groups will be in the nationwide roll out of a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The NHS has a tried and tested track record for delivering vaccination programmes and is working with existing partners across the healthcare system to ensure the Covid-19 vaccine can be deployed safely and effectively. Deployment planning is being led by local integrated care system/sustainability and transformation partnerships, with clinical commissioning groups playing a key role in the planning with partners across their system.

In particular, local systems are best placed to reach out to our diverse communities and avoid inequalities in access, and every system should have a plan for full coverage for health inclusion groups. Regional teams working with local systems have identified local health inclusion groups that will require access to the vaccine, within eligible patient cohorts. Locally commissioned arrangements to reach these groups may include local NHS Community & Mental Health Trust providers, PCNs or partnership activity with statutory and voluntary services. Working with Primary Care Networks and NHJS regional teams, Clinical Commissioning Group have also played an important role selecting local vaccination sites. CCGs are also co-ordinating arrangements for all health and care staff to receive their vaccination locally.

Afzal Khan:[\[138499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) people over the age of 80 and (b) frontline health and social care staff have received the first dose of a covid-19 vaccine as at 15 January 2021.

Afzal Khan:[\[138502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) people over the age of 80 and (b) frontline health and social care staff have received the second dose of a covid-19 vaccine as at 15 January 2021.

Afzal Khan:[\[138505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people over the age of 80 have received the (a) first dose and (b) second dose of the (i) Pfizer-BioNTech covid-19 vaccine and (ii) Oxford/AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine as at 15 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Since 24 December 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement has published weekly United Kingdom-wide data. In January 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement began to publish daily statistics by age and region, with more detailed information provided weekly. This includes the overall number of people who have been vaccinated by dose, including those aged 80 years old and above and National Health Service trust healthcare workers.

Further data is available at the following links:

www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/

Dr Dan Poulter:

[140035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support elderly people to book appointments for covid-19 vaccination (a) online, (b) on the phone and (c) by other means.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: Prior to booking an appointment, a letter, email or text will be sent to those who are eligible in line with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's advice on prioritisation.

In the letter, email or text, these individuals will be invited to book an appointment online via the national booking system. For those, including the elderly and other groups who may struggle with making bookings online, it is possible for bookings to be made on someone else's behalf. Additionally, appointments can also be booked over the phone by calling 119. Follow up calls may be made by the NHS Immunisation Management Service for those who have received a letter but not booked an appointment to see if any further help and support is required.

Jim Shannon:

[145791]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage take-up of the covid-19 vaccine among the clinically extremely vulnerable groups.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government wrote to all clinically extremely vulnerable individuals on 7 January, providing information about the COVID-19 vaccination process and notifying these individuals that they are receiving priority access to vaccination against COVID-19 before the general population and in line with the priority ordering set by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. The letter also explained that the National Health Service would be in contact with more information on when and how they would be invited to get the vaccine, and has also been made available in a wide variety of accessible formats on GOV.UK.

To counter any hesitancy regarding the vaccines, the Rapid Response Unit in the Cabinet Office has produced social media content on their safety and efficacy.

To improve our understanding of vaccine hesitancy, the Cabinet Office is working with over 90 healthcare provider networks, faith groups, influencers and experts from a range of communities.

John McDonnell:

[146760]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, by what date he is planning for all care home staff in England to have been vaccinated; and how many of those staff have been vaccinated to date.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 4 February 2021]: We offered the first dose of vaccine to everyone in the first four priority groups, including all staff in care homes for older adults by 15

February. Everyone will receive the second dose within 12 weeks of their first. The second dose completes the course and is important for longer term protection.

NHS England now publish weekly data on the vaccination of staff in older adult care homes, which is available at the following link:

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

Jonathan Ashworth:

[146892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish statistics on the uptake of the covid-19 vaccine by care home staff.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 4 February 2021]: We are working with the vaccination programme in NHS England to monitor progress on the vaccination of staff. NHS England now publish weekly data on the vaccination of staff in older adult care homes which is available at the following link:

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

Justin Madders:

[147889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care home (a) residents and (b) staff in England have received the (i) first and (ii) second dose of the covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are working with the vaccination programme in NHS England to monitor progress. NHS England now publish weekly data on the vaccination of residents and staff in older adult care homes, which is available at the following link:

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

■ Food: Consumption

Craig Whittaker:

[153176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the consumption of foods that are designated high in fat, salt or sugar over the last 18 months.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England monitors the diet and nutritional status of the population through the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS). The NDNS reports on the contribution of different food groups to consumption of fat, salt and sugar. For foods designated high in fat, sugar or salt, trend data is only available for certain high sugar foods. For children and adults aged 19-64 years old, data shows a reduction in the average consumption of sugar-sweetened soft drinks between 2014-2016 and 2016-2019 but no statistically significant changes for sugar or chocolate confectionery over this period. The most recent report was published in December 2020 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ndns-results-from-years-9-to-11-2016-to-2017-and-2018-to-2019>

Craig Whittaker: [153177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the proportion of foods that are high in fat, salt or sugar that are consumed (a) in home and (b) out of home over the last 18 months.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has made no such assessment.

■ **General Practitioners: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Jon Trickett: [151618]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GPs per 1,000 patients there were in Yorkshire and the Humber region in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Jon Trickett: [151619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP surgeries with opening hours after 6pm there were in Yorkshire and the Humber region in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not held in the format requested. Data is collected at clinical commissioning group, sustainability and transformation partnership and National Health Service commissioning region level.

■ **Health: Disadvantaged**

Munira Wilson: [151866]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to create a cross-departmental strategy on tackling health inequalities.

Jo Churchill:

We are considering the reduction of health inequalities as we further develop work on ensuring the equality of opportunity. This will complement the following existing measures led by the Department to tackle inequalities in people's access, outcomes and experiences of health services:

- Our national obesity strategy, 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy>

- NHS health checks

- The tobacco control plan 'Towards a smoke-free generation, a tobacco control plan for England' and the 'Tobacco control plan: delivery plan 2017 to 2022' are available at the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towards-a-smoke-free-generation-tobacco-control-plan-for-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tobacco-control-plan-delivery-plan-2017-to-2022>

- The diabetes prevention programme

Munira Wilson: [151867]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there is an inter-ministerial group with a remit of reducing health inequalities.

Jo Churchill:

There is no inter-ministerial group for reducing health inequalities. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly engages with Cabinet colleagues on matters of common concern.

■ Heart Diseases: Coronavirus

Conor McGinn: [151760]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the time period required to clear the backlog of cases of (a) heart surgery and (b) other procedures delayed or postponed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

NHS England has advised it is too early to make an estimate of the time required to clear the backlog of cases.

■ Multiple Sclerosis: Health Services

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [149188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the access of multiple sclerosis patients to critical healthcare professional support; and what long-term plan he has in place to ensure that MS patients are able to access treatment and support conveniently.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 9 February 2021]: While no specific assessment has been made, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Health Service in England has maintained access to urgent and emergency care, including for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). For non-urgent care, providers have offered remote consultations using video, telephone, email and text message services as a priority where appropriate.

On 23 December 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement outlined priorities for the remainder of 2020-2021 and into 2021-2022, including maximising the NHS's capacity to treat non-COVID-19 patients. This capacity includes services for people with neurological diseases, including MS - for example, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. In the longer term, NHS systems should

also continue to implement the guidance set out in the Progressive Neurological Conditions RightCare Toolkit, which was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the MS Trust and the MS Society.

■ **NHS Direct and NHS 111: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Jon Trickett:

[\[151620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS Direct calls were unanswered in Yorkshire and the Humber region in 2010; and how many NHS 111 calls were unanswered in Yorkshire and the Humber region in 2020.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ **NHS: Waiting Lists**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[153165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the capacity of the NHS to tackle the backlog of patients on long waiting lists after the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

As well as continuing to treat COVID-19 patients, hospitals across the country are systematically prioritising and treating patients according to clinical need and preparing to accelerate routine elective services. Local systems are also planning for the potential return of additional patients who may not have sought treatment during the pandemic but have subsequently come forward and will appear on waiting lists during the year ahead.

The National Health Service will be supported by the £1 billion of funding recently announced in the Spending Review 2020, which will help address backlogs and tackle long waiting lists and facilitate up to one million extra checks, scans and additional operations. This is part of a £3 billion, one-year package for 2021/22 to support the NHS in tackling the impact of COVID-19.

■ **Nurses: Vacancies**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[151595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it the policy of the Government to contact NHS nurses currently on maternity leave to request their assistance in filling vacancies.

Helen Whately:

The family leave guidance published by NHS Employers in October 2020 sets out the options an employer could consider should a member of staff who is currently on family leave, maternity, adoption, or shared parental leave, indicate that they would like to return to work early or for a period of time to support the National Health Service during the pandemic.

Employers will need to carry out a risk assessment and provide appropriate facilities in accordance with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 for any employee returning from a period of maternity leave, in particular mothers who are breastfeeding.

■ **Pregnancy: Coronavirus**

Munira Wilson: [\[151865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to monitor the number of confirmed covid-19 cases in women who are pregnant.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department does not monitor or hold information. Through the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation, the Department is funding the United Kingdom Obstetric Surveillance System to determine the incidence of hospitalisation with pandemic COVID-19 infection in pregnancy and assess the outcomes of pandemic COVID-19 in pregnancy for mother and infant.

■ **Protective Clothing: Procurement**

Daisy Cooper: [\[153385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2020 to Question 119401, on Protective Clothing: Procurement, if he will publish the number of PS9230 Type IIR face masks ordered from Purple Surgical on Contract Reference PSIIR20200516 of 11 May 2020 at the agreed total cost of £33,600,000.

Daisy Cooper: [\[153386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 December to Question 119401, if he will publish the number of 3M Aura 9332+ Respirator with Valve masks ordered from Purple Surgical on 28 April 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The contract award notices and contracts awarded to Purple Surgical have been published. Information concerning pricing and the precise amounts of personal protective equipment ordered has been redacted as this is considered commercially sensitive.

■ **Surgery: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Jon Trickett: [\[151616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many operations were cancelled in Yorkshire and the Humber region in (a) 2010 and (b) 2020.

Edward Argar:

Data is only collected for those cancelled at the last minute for non-clinical reasons. Last minute means on the day the patient was due to arrive, after the patient has arrived in hospital or on the day of the operation or surgery. In 2010 there were 6,983

operations cancelled at the last minute for non-clinical reasons in the Yorkshire and Humber region, and 216 of these were not treated within a further 28 days from the cancellation.

Information is not available for 2020 because the collection of data on cancelled operations has been paused due to COVID-19 and the need to release capacity across the National Health Service to support the response.

■ Take-away Food: Consumption

Craig Whittaker:

[153178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his (a) obesity strategy and (b) plans for the restriction of advertising and promotion of foods that are high in fat, salt or sugar of the increased consumption of take-away food during the covid-19 outbreak.

Craig Whittaker:

[153179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including out of home food in his (a) obesity strategy and (b) plans for the restrictions of advertising and promotion of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Jo Churchill:

There has been no central assessment of the levels of consumption of take-away food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We carefully consider all views and potential impacts of our measures to reduce obesity. This includes feedback from a wide range of experts and stakeholders on specific policy proposals and in response to our public consultations. The final impact assessment on mandating calorie labelling of food and drink in the out-of-home sector is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903712/Calorie_Labelling_-_Impact_Assessment.pdf

The final impact assessments on the proposals to restrict the promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) by location and by volume is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restricting-promotions-of-food-and-drink-that-is-high-in-fat-sugar-and-salt>

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

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

An evidence note was published alongside the consultation on the proposal to introduce a total restriction of online advertising for HFSS products. This builds on the

impact assessment that accompanied the 2019 consultation. This is available at the following link:

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

We will publish the final impact assessment on further advertising restrictions on TV and online alongside the full response to the consultation shortly.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Coronavirus

Patrick Grady: [151752]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to help ensure that asylum seekers arriving at the UK border from red list countries can (a) quarantine effectively and (b) proceed with their asylum claim during the covid-19 pandemic.

Patrick Grady: [151753]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to seek to recoup the cost of hotel quarantine from asylum seekers arriving at the UK border from red list countries during the covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seekers are not going to be denied entry to the UK from red-list countries and their asylum claims will be processed as usual.

The Home Office have a statutory duty to accommodate any asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are provided with free, fully furnished accommodation while their applications for asylum are considered. The Accommodation providers recognise the challenge of managing COVID 19 within our accommodation estate and are working closely with Public Health England (PHE) on how their guidance on social distancing and self-isolation is properly applied, while ensuring that people can continue to access essential services.

The accommodation is provided for free to those asylum seekers in receipt of asylum support and we do not recoup costs.

Patrick Grady: [151754]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to deny entry to the UK to asylum seekers arriving at the UK border from red list countries during the covid-19 pandemic.

Patrick Grady:

[151755]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of asylum seekers from countries on the red list who have arrived at the UK border since March 2020.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seekers are not going to be denied entry to the UK from red-list countries and their asylum claims will be processed as usual.

We have a legal obligation to provide asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute with accommodation, and as such the Home Office will continue to provide accommodation in which asylum seekers can self-isolate to stop to spread of Covid.

The Home Office publishes data on asylum applications in the [Immigration Statistics quarterly release](#). Data on the number of asylum applications in each quarter, broken down by nationality is published in table Asy_D01 of the [asylum detailed datasets](#). The latest data are to the end of September 2020, with data to the end of December 2020 due to be published on 25th February 2021. Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the [asylum and resettlement summary tables](#). The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum.

The published data does not show the country from which the asylum seeker left when they began their journey (or through which country or countries the asylum seeker subsequently travelled) in order to reach the UK, or when they arrived in the UK. Some asylum seekers may have been in the UK (or another country) for some time before claiming asylum. An individual with a particular nationality may not have actually been in that country for a significant length of time prior to claiming asylum. It is therefore not possible to say from the available data whether or not the individual has recently travelled from a 'red list' country.

■ Asylum: Military Bases

Liz Saville Roberts:

[152595]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the value is of the contracts awarded to Clearsprings Ready Homes Ltd for running the temporary accommodation site for asylum seekers at (a) Penally camp in Pembrokeshire and (b) Napier barracks in Kent.

Chris Philp:

We do not publish the costs of our accommodation & support contracts as they are considered commercially sensitive.

The use of MoD sites lessens our reliance on hotels and provides savings for the taxpayer of approximately 50 per cent.

We are working to reduce the cost of the asylum system, which is under significant pressure, and are considering a number of accommodation options while we fix the broken asylum system to make it firmer and fairer.

■ Biometric Residence Permits

Anne McLaughlin: [\[152562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on refugees of delays in the delivery of a biometrics residence permit after gaining a positive decision.

Anne McLaughlin: [\[152563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UKVI applicants have waited longer than the estimated 10 days to receive their biometrics residence permit after a positive decision in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Anne McLaughlin: [\[152565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many complaints her Department has received on the time taken to produce biometrics residence permits in the last three years.

Kevin Foster:

While a delay in receiving the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) may make accessing public services more difficult for all customers, since 20 January 2021 the standard pre-delivery email to customers has included their BRP number and guidance on how to use the online right to work and right to rent services to prove their entitlements. We are also investigating the possibility of including National Insurance Numbers in the same message to further assist customers.

Data relating to correspondence performance is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-november-2020>

We are currently unable to break this down into complaints specifically related to BRP delays.

UKVI does not hold figures relating to the number of customers who have waited longer than 10 working days to receive their BRP after a positive decision between 2018 and 2020.

However, it does have service level agreements with its production provider the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and its secure delivery provider FedEx which took over the contract in February 2020. Prior to this, DX held the contract.

The DVLA has a target of producing 90% of BRPs within 24 hours of receiving the production request and 100% within 48 hours. It achieved the following:

FINANCIAL YEAR	24 HOUR TARGET	48 HOUR TARGET	OUTSIDE OF 48 HOURS
2018/19	96.8%	99.4%	0.6%
2019/20	93.9%	100.00	0
2020/21 (to 5/2/21)	72.4%	97.4%	2.6%

FedEx and DX both had a target to attempt first delivery for 99% of BRPs within 48 working hours of collection of the BRP from DVLA.

DX consistently met this target during the years it had responsibility for the contract. For financial year 2020 to end December 2020 FedEx were achieving 94.4%. UKVI is working closely with FedEx to improve this performance and an improvement plan is in place to achieve this.

■ Home Office: Amazon Web Services

Chi Onwurah:

[152523]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2021 to Question 149752 on Home Office: Amazon Web Services, what steps her Department has taken to ensure diversity of supply for cloud services without measuring the levels of existing supply.

Kit Malthouse:

We have technical governance processes that determine which hosting platform is most appropriate for the system/service in question. This balances best fit for the service and looks at other technical and deliverability attributes which affect the choice. Our implementation policy for cloud requires us to be as portable as is feasible.

■ Home Office: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[152608]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much Official Development Assistance her Department was allocated in (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21; and how much it will be allocated in 2021-212.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office allocations of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for 2019-20, have been published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-aid-tackling-global-challenges-in-the-national-interest/official-development-assistance-oda-allocation-by-department>

As set out in the table, in 2019-20 the ODA allocation for the Home Office was £409m.

Outturn information of 2019 calendar year ODA spend are available in the Statistics of International Development publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

The Government has committed to publishing departmental allocations of ODA for 2020/21 in due course. Outturn information of 2020 calendar year ODA spend will be published later this year, as normal, in the Statistics of International Development publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

The Foreign Secretary recently published departmental ODA allocations for 2021-22, including The Home Office's allocation, in a Written Ministerial Statement available online here:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-01-26/hcws735>.

■ Identity Cards

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[152615]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many outstanding applications for UK residence cards are awaiting processing as at 10 February 2021.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office Migration Statistics do not capture the number of outstanding cases.

The Home Office does though publish data on the total number of decisions made on EEA applications, including UK residence cards. This can be found in our published statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2020/how-many-people-continue-their-stay-in-the-uk-or-apply-to-stay-permanently>

■ Immigration: Coronavirus

Florence Eshalomi:

[152680]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that foreign nationals who reside in the UK and are in the process of applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain are not unfairly penalised in their application if they do not meet the requirement to live in the UK for more than 180 days in a given one year period if they are currently abroad but cannot afford to return to the UK due to the financial cost of the new covid-19 quarantine health measures that will come in to force on Monday 15 February.

Kevin Foster:

For Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), applicants must meet continuous residence requirements and are generally only allowed to be out of the UK for a maximum of 180 days in a 12-month period.

However, absences beyond 180 days can be allowed if there are serious or compelling reasons. Examples in current guidance include reference to a pandemic, and certain extended absences due to Covid-19 could fall within this definition. Each case would be considered on its own facts.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Colum Eastwood:

[152674]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to extend the period for EU Settlement Scheme applications for people resident in Northern Ireland; and whether the Government plans to include EU Settlement Scheme applications in a request for an extension to the grace period for the Northern Ireland Protocol as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kevin Foster:

There are no plans to extend the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.

We have continued to receive and process thousands of applications a day to the scheme throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 5 million applications received and more than 4.6 million applications concluded by 31 January 2021.

Support for applicants who need it has remained available, including from the network of 72 organisations across the UK now grant-funded by the Home Office to help vulnerable people apply to the scheme.

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, the Government has made clear, where a person has reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme by EU citizens and their family members resident in the UK by the end of the transition period, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

Published guidance for EUSS applicants on the impact of COVID-19 is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-eu-settlement-scheme-guidance-for-applicants>.

■ NHS: Migrant Workers

Drew Hendry:

[153304]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether time within the UK built up under the NHS visa extension can be used for meeting time threshold requirements for Indefinite Leave to Remain applications.

Kevin Foster:

In April last year the Government introduced the automatic visa extension for those working for the NHS and independent healthcare providers. This scheme extended the visas of eligible workers for 12 months.

The majority of those who have benefitted from this scheme are on visas which have a route to settlement, such as Skilled Worker and its predecessor Tier 2 (General).

For those on a route to settlement, this period of 12 months will count towards the time they need to complete to qualify.

■ Offenders: Deportation

Mr Simon Clarke:

[151832]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regard to the Answer of 9 February to Question 149327, why the information requested is only be available at disproportionate cost when it has previously been supplied for the period up to March 2019 in response to Freedom of Information request reference 54393 dated 29 July 2019.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not available from published statistics.

I note the Honourable Member references previous questions, but they are not identical. As such the information requested is not available in a reportable format and would require a manual check of individual records which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity.

Section 32 of the UK Borders Act 2007 provides a statutory duty to deport a foreign national if they have been convicted of an offence in the UK and sentenced to a period of imprisonment of at least 12 months. This is subject to several exceptions, including where to do so would be a breach of a person's ECHR rights or the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention.

Where a decision is made to deport, and representations are raised against that decision, an FNO is likely to be granted a right of appeal. This may be exercised in or out of country depending on the circumstances of the case.

The Home Office publishes data on Returns in the ' [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release\(opens in a new tab\)](#) '. Data on the number of Returns from the UK by return type (including enforced returns) are published in table Ret_01 of the Returns ' [summary tables\(opens in a new tab\)](#) '.

The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns which are enforced either following a criminal conviction or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. Information on those deported is not separately available and therefore the published statistics refer to all enforced returns.

The MoJ publishes data on Appeals in the following statistical quarterly release, [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2020\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2020(opens in a new tab)).

This Government's priority is keeping the people of this country safe and we are clear that foreign criminals should be deported from the UK wherever it is legal and practical to do so.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Giles Watling:****[912372]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support local authorities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

The Government has allocated over £8 billion directly to councils since the start of the pandemic.

In addition, local authorities are expected to receive over £3 billion of support in 2021-22, for both additional expenditure pressures and loss of income.

This takes the total support committed to councils in England to tackle the impacts of COVID-19 to over £11 billion.

Mr Laurence Robertson:**[912388]**

If he will amend planning guidance to ensure that a full assessment of the capacity of the existing local drainage system is carried out before work can begin on developments; and if he will make a statement.

Eddie Hughes:

Our existing guidance is clear that if there are concerns about the capacity of wastewater infrastructure that is needed for drainage, applicants can be asked to provide information about how the development would be drained and wastewater dealt with. Where it is found that additional sewerage infrastructure is needed, developers can be required to fund this.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[912397]**

What steps he is taking to ensure that all residential buildings with unsafe cladding are remediated.

Christopher Pincher:

Almost 95 per cent of all high-rise buildings identified at the beginning of last year with unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding have now been remediated or have works underway.

The Government has announced a further £3.5 billion for the remediation of unsafe cladding on high rise buildings of 18 metres and above, in addition to the £1.6 billion we have already provided. Through an additional package we will also now provide a generous financing scheme to allow buildings of 11-18 metres in height to access finance for remediation of unsafe cladding. Leaseholders will pay no more than £50 per month towards this.

■ Building Safety Fund

Thangam Debbonaire:

[153285]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the building safety fund registration statistics, how many of the buildings that have been approved for funding had completed remediation works when they applied.

Christopher Pincher:

The Building Safety fund is designed to remove financial barriers where building owners do not have the means to fund remediation quickly. Where work was completed or underway before 11 March 2020, resident safety has already been prioritised so these buildings are not eligible for funding. Data on registrations for the Building Safety Fund are published here: www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics

Thangam Debbonaire:

[153291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the announcement of 10 February 2021, Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention, whether the new scheme for buildings between 11 and 18 metres will cover fire safety issues beyond cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has rightly targeted funding at the removal of dangerous cladding to make homes safer, quicker – the costs for remediating this are high, and the risks posed by it are also high.

Lower-rise buildings between 11 and 18 metres, with a lower risk to safety, will gain new protection from the costs of cladding removal through a generous new financing scheme.

Between 11 and 18 metres the risk profile of buildings is different to taller buildings and will not always require the same level of remediation when risks are identified. However, we want to make sure the residents and leaseholders in these buildings also have peace of mind and financial certainty. Therefore, our financing scheme for these buildings will give them the confidence that remediation of dangerous cladding can take place, and leaseholders will not be asked to pay more than £50 a month towards it.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Thangam Debbonaire:

[153292]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the (a) average and (b) maximum cost of remediating buildings between 11 and 18m with dangerous cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

To give residents in lower-rise buildings of 11-18 metres peace of mind, we are establishing a generous scheme to ensure that cladding removal on these buildings

can take place where required, whilst ensuring that no leaseholder in these buildings will have to pay more than £50 per month towards this remediation.

We will release further details of the finance scheme for 11-18 metres buildings.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[912413\]](#)

What steps he is taking to protect leaseholders from the costs of remediating buildings from unsafe cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

We have made available an unprecedented £5 billion investment in building safety, including £3.5 billion announced last week. This will fund the cost of replaying unsafe cladding in all buildings 18 metres and over.

Lower-rise buildings will gain new protection from the costs of cladding removal through a Government-backed financing arrangement, and no leaseholder will ever pay more than £50 a month towards the removal of unsafe cladding.

■ Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

Apsana Begum:

[\[912398\]](#)

What steps he is taking to protect leaseholders from the costs of remediating dangerous buildings.

Christopher Pincher:

We have announced that an additional £3.5 billion in funding will be provided by the Government to remediate unsafe cladding, bringing the total investment to building safety to an unprecedented £5 billion. We are also establishing a generous financing scheme which will allow buildings between 11 and 18 metres in height to access finance for the remediation of dangerous cladding. Leaseholders will pay no more than £50 per month.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

Judith Cummins:

[\[912406\]](#)

What discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the funding allocated to local authorities to make discretionary payments to people needing to self-isolate as a result of covid-19.

Luke Hall:

MHCLG Ministers and officials have regular engagement with counterparts in the Department for Health and Social Care, as well as with other government departments and with local authorities, on all matters relating to local authorities' finances. We have worked closely with the Department for Health and Social Care on the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Derek Twigg:**[\[151623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that all future new build houses have electric car charging points installed during construction.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government consulted in 2019 on options to amend the building regulations to require electric vehicle chargepoints in residential and non-residential buildings. We will publish a response, which will set out our plans for the new requirements coming into effect.

■ High Rise Flats: Construction**Stephen Doughty:**[\[152539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 10 February 2021 on Building Safety, whether the new levy on developers will be applied across the UK; and how revenues derived from that levy will be apportioned to the devolved administrations.

Christopher Pincher:

We will be introducing a levy on developers, helping to ensure the industry take on collective responsibility for historical building safety defects. The proposed levy will be targeted and apply when developers seek permission to start building work on certain high-rise buildings in England. It will be implemented through the forthcoming Building Safety Bill.

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation**Stephen Timms:**[\[152401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to support leaseholders in blocks with a B1 EWS1 certificate; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The EWS1 process is not a Government or regulatory requirement. Whether an EWS1 is needed is determined by lenders and the professionals valuing a building.

The Government has announced a globally unprecedented investment in building safety. Hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be protected from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes as part of this Government's five-point plan to provide reassurance to homeowners and build confidence in the housing market.

To protect leaseholders in blocks where cladding needs to be replaced, we are providing an additional £3.5 billion to provide certainty that leaseholders in high rise residential buildings will face no cost for cladding remediation works, plus a generous financing scheme to ensure all leaseholders in medium and high rise blocks face no costs or very low costs if cladding remediation is needed. This builds on steps

already taken to support leaseholders, including £1.6 billion of funding to remediate unsafe cladding, the £30 million waking watch fund to help end excessive costs and new legislation in the Building Safety Bill which will ensure homes are made and kept safer in future.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[153121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government's proposed loan scheme for the removal of unsafe cladding on buildings 18 meters or over, which (a) public bodies or (b) limited companies will be responsible for any matters relating to debt accrued under that scheme.

Christopher Pincher:

We have announced a multi-billion investment to protect hundreds of thousands of leaseholders from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes. We will be publishing more details on how these schemes will work.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[153122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 10 February 2021, Official Report, Column 329 on Building Safety, whether the money raised from the proposed developer levy is in addition to the £3.5 million announced for the removal of cladding on buildings over 18 metres in height.

Christopher Pincher:

We announced on 10 February 2021 plans to introduce a developer levy at Gateway 2 of the new Building Safety Regime. This will help to ensure that the industry takes collective responsibility for historical building safety defects. We will be setting out details of the levy and it will be implemented through the forthcoming Building Safety Bill.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[153123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made on the financial effect on Council and Housing Associations of the costs of (a) removing cladding and (b) other fire safety building safety work not funded by the Government.

Christopher Pincher:

Section 11 of the Building Safety Bill: Impact Assessment provides estimates of the average costs per building for addressing safety remediation in high rise (18 metres and above) buildings. These estimates consider all necessary remediation, which goes beyond façade remediation. Social sector building owners have been able to access the £400m Social Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund, which supports the removal and replacement of non-compliant ACM cladding on buildings over 18 metres. We have also launched a fund of £1 billion to cover the costs of remediating unsafe non-ACM cladding on residential buildings over 18 metres tall - and whilst this is focused on private sector leaseholders, it is available to social landlords facing affordability issues, and will also cover the costs of leaseholders in social housing. On

10 February we announced a multi-billion pound investment to protect hundreds of thousands of leaseholders from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes. We are also establishing a generous scheme to ensure, where required, cladding removal can take place on buildings between 11 and 18 metres. As part of this financing scheme, leaseholder payments towards remediation costs will be capped at a maximum £50 per month.

Hilary Benn:

[153124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of unsafe cladding on the value of flats bought under the Help to Buy scheme for those seeking to (a) sell and (b) staircase ownership on those properties.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has announced a globally unprecedented investment in building safety. Hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be protected from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes as part of this Government's five-point plan to provide reassurance to homeowners and build confidence to the housing market.

Information on the number of Help to Buy equity loan properties with ACM cladding can be found in the NAO's report entitled *Investigation into remediating dangerous cladding on high-rise buildings*, which is available at <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Investigation-into-remediating-dangerous-cladding-on-high-rise-buildings.pdf>. There are many factors that influence the value of a property and we are not able to confirm whether a reduced value is affected by cladding or not. The redemption value of all Help to Buy: Equity Loans is the market value of the property at the time.

■ Homelessness: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[153269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to reduce the number of homeless rough sleepers in (a) Coventry and (b) England in (i) each of the last 10 years and (ii) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Eddie Hughes:

This Government has taken unprecedented steps to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic. This work has not stopped, and through Everyone In, by November 2020 we had supported around 33,000 people with nearly 10,000 in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.

This additional support builds on the package of winter support announced last year. This includes a £10 million Cold Weather Fund for all local authorities to bring forward COVID-secure accommodation this winter and to keep vulnerable people safe. This sits alongside the Protect programme, which provides targeted support to local authorities with higher numbers of rough sleepers to meet the specific challenges they face.

We have also been in close contact with councils to develop plans for the coming months, supported by the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, which aims to ensure that as few people as possible return to the streets. This includes bringing forward more than 3,000 new homes this year for rough sleepers, backed by £150 million,.

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

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

Coventry has received £1,354,795 to support rough sleepers including those accommodated during the pandemic during cold weather. This includes funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative, funding for interim support and accommodation for those supported during the pandemic and cold weather funding.

Coventry also received £1,039,542 for wider homelessness work, with £300,987 Homelessness Reduction Grant and £738,555 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant allocated to fund homelessness services.

In 2020/21, Coventry received £2,307,543 Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) funding to provide an additional 32 units of long-term accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. Coventry were also part of a partnership bid submitted by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to provide a further 25 units of long-term accommodation of which 5 will be delivered in Coventry.

WMCA are also part of our Housing First pilots and the funding allocation across the combined authority is up to £9.6 million over three years between 2018/19 to 2021/22.

■ Housing: Insulation

Stephen Doughty:

[152538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 10 February 2021 on Building Safety, whether the guidance agreed with UK financial lenders and RICS on EWS1 forms will be applicable across the whole UK; and when that new guidance will come into effect.

Christopher Pincher:

I understand that the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) is reviewing the responses to the public consultation on its new draft EWS1 guidance and that the RICS will be publishing its new guidance for surveyors and valuers soon.

Justin Madders:[\[152553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral statement of 10 February 2021 on Building Safety, what estimate he has made of the number of leaseholders who will be covered by the loan scheme.

Christopher Pincher:

With reference to the oral statement of 10 February 2021 on Building Safety, we will publish details of the finance scheme which will contain estimates of the number of leaseholders covered by it.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[153161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to ensure that leaseholders do not pay for the (a) remediation of non-cladding fire safety issues in buildings above 18 metres in height and (b) removal of cladding and remediation of non-cladding fire safety issues in buildings below 18 metres in height.

Christopher Pincher:

This is a globally unprecedented investment in building safety and hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be protected from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes. The Government has rightly targeted funding at the removal of dangerous cladding to make homes safer, quicker – the costs for remediating this are high, and the risks posed by it are also high.

Our approach prioritises action on buildings 18 metres and above, where risk to multiple households is greater when fire does spread. This is in line with longstanding expert advice on which buildings are at the highest risk.

We have gone further, and through an additional package we will provide a financing scheme for the remediation of dangerous cladding for to support remediation of buildings of between 11 and 18 metres in height. As part of this financing scheme, leaseholder payments towards remediation costs will be capped at a maximum £50 per month.

Andrew Gwynne:[\[153162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care on the mental health of leaseholders affected by fire safety issues in residential buildings.

Christopher Pincher:

We recognise the difficult situation which many leaseholders have found themselves in, and the emotional strain which this has placed on many.

I continue to engage with Cabinet colleagues on these important issues, including those from DHSC.

As a result, where building owners have failed to step up, the Government has stepped in. On 10 February, the Secretary of State announced a comprehensive five-point plan which will provide for the removal of dangerous cladding in both high-rise buildings of 18 metres and above and medium-rise buildings of 11-18 metres. For high-rise buildings there will be £3.5 billion of grant funding in addition to the £1.6 billion already provided by Government, and for medium-rise buildings a generous financing scheme for cladding removal under which no leaseholder will have to pay more than £50 per month. There will also be a levy and tax on developers, recognising that the industry that caused this legacy of unsafe cladding must make a contribution to setting things right.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[153253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his announcement of 11 February 2021, Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention, whether funding has been re-allocated from other Departmental spending priorities to support the policies on fire and building safety announced on 11 February 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government announced an additional £3.5 billion to provide certainty that leaseholders in high rise residential buildings will face no cost for cladding remediation works, plus a generous financing scheme to ensure all leaseholders in medium and high rise blocks face no costs or very low costs if cladding remediation is needed. To ensure the industry contributes towards these costs, the Government will introduce a “Gateway 2” developer levy that will be implemented through the Building Safety Bill and a new tax will be introduced for the United Kingdom’s residential property development sector in 2022 which will raise at least £2 billion over a decade to help pay for cladding remediation costs.

We will be providing further details of the grant, the loan, the levy and the tax.

■ Housing: Wales

Stephen Doughty:

[\[153251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he first discussed the proposed developers levy with the Welsh Government and how that levy will apply to Wales.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[153252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the proposed Gateway 2 developer levy.

Christopher Pincher:

The proposed gateway 2 developer levy will apply only when developers seek permission to develop certain high-rise buildings in England. It will not apply to Wales. Housing and building safety are devolved matters, with each of the four nations responsible for developing and enforcing their own regulations.

■ Leasehold: Fire Prevention**Stephen Hammond:**[\[912389\]](#)

What steps he is taking to support leaseholders in buildings under 18 metres in height that require fire safety remediation works.

Sam Tarry:[\[912390\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure the remediation of residential buildings with unsafe cladding that are under 18 metres in height.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has announced a generous financing scheme which will mean that buildings of 11-18 metres in height will be able to access finance for the remediation of unsafe cladding, with a commitment that leaseholders will not need to pay more than £50 a month towards this. By providing this financing scheme we are ensuring that money is available for remediation, accelerating the process and making homes safer as quickly as possible.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Wolverhampton**Stuart Anderson:**[\[148003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made on plans to relocate civil servants from his Department to Wolverhampton.

Christopher Pincher:

As we build back better, we are going to revitalise town and city centres and make them great places to live and work, driving investment and new jobs. Wolverhampton is a wonderful city with a proud history and bright future. MHCLG is committed to moving civil service roles out of London and more details of our plans will be announced shortly.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Written Questions**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[153286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to answer Question 141605 tabled by the hon. Member for Weaver Vale on 21 January 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

The question UIN141605 tabled by the hon. Member for Weaver Vale was answered on 27 January. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-21/141605> .

Public Health: Finance**Debbie Abrahams:****[912402]**

What discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the provision of public health grants for 2021-22.

Luke Hall:

The Department of Health and Social Care distributes the public health grant annually to local authorities in England. MHCLG Ministers and officials regularly engage with counterparts in DHSC, Treasury and local authorities on matters relating to local authorities' finances.

Social Rented Housing: Carbon Emissions**Cat Smith:****[912409]**

What support he is providing to social housing providers to help meet the net zero emissions target by 2050.

Eddie Hughes:

We are providing a range of support to social housing providers on net zero, including technical support for planning improvements, funding supporting innovative approaches to retrofit, and capital funding to deploy low carbon heat at scale. Support is being provided through several schemes, including the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Green Homes Grant Vouchers and Local Authority Delivery, the Whole House Retrofit Innovation Programme and the Energy Company Obligation. We are also reviewing the Decent Homes Standard.

Travellers: Caravan Sites**Andy Slaughter:****[152429]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to mitigate the potential effect on Gypsies and Travellers of the Home Office proposals outlined in the consultation, Strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments with regard to proposals to (a) criminalise trespass and (b) seize homes.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government remains committed to tackling unauthorised encampments. The Home Office will be publishing a full Government response to the consultation on strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. The Home Office have considered all suggestions carefully, and will take account of the potential effect on settled and nomadic communities, before taking a decision on how to proceed.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund**John McNally:**[\[912411\]](#)

What progress he has made on the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Luke Hall:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK.

The November 2020 Spending Review set out the main strategic elements of the UKSPF in the Heads of Terms.

The Government will publish a UK-wide investment framework in 2021 and confirm multiyear funding profiles at the next Spending Review.

■ Woodhouse Colliery**Matthew Pennycook:**[\[153320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the environmental effect of opening a new coal mine at the Woodhouse Colliery near Whitehaven; and what comparative assessment he has made of the environmental impacts of that mine and continuing to import coking coal for UK steel production.

Christopher Pincher:

In the decision of 6 January, the Secretary of State decided not to call in the planning application for the proposed West Cumbria Coal mine. In that decision, the Secretary of State carefully considered this case against his published policy on calling in planning applications, as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 26 October 2012. Further representations to MHCLG when received are carefully considered.

■ Woodhouse Colliery: Iron and Steel**Matthew Pennycook:**[\[152594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made on the suitability of the coal that would be mined from the Woodhouse Colliery near Whitehaven for use in primary steel manufacturing in the UK.

Christopher Pincher:

The planning application for the proposed West Cumbria coalmine seeks permission for the winning and working of coking coal for use in steel manufacture only.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Overseas Aid****Anna McMorrin:****[153343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how much Official Development Assistance his Department (a) was allocated in (i) 2019-20 and (ii) 2020-21 and (b) will be allocated in 2021-22.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade's (DIT) final allocations for Official Development Assistance (ODA), as per the Department's Supplementary Estimate were as following:

a) i) 2019-20 £5.4m**ii) 2020-21** £8.7m.**b) 2021-22 allocations** : £0m

[These figures include ODA received via the Joint Funds Unit as well as directly from the (former) Department for International Development.]

JUSTICE**■ Deed Poll****Sarah Champion:****[153261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which organisation has oversight of deed poll name changes; and whether records are stored of enrolled and non-enrolled deed poll name changes.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice is the department which oversees the Regulations governing changes of name by enrolled deed and the law on non-enrolled deeds, commonly referred to as deed polls.

Applications for an enrolled deed confirming a person's change of name are submitted to the Queen's Bench Division of the Royal Courts of Justice. Upon being issued, the name change is published as a notice in the London Gazette and a record is stored at the Royal Courts of Justice, before being transferred to the National Archives after a period of 5 years.

Name changes made by an unenrolled deed are executed privately; no record of their occurrence is publicly available, or held by the Government, unless the person is required by law to notify the police of such a change.

■ Family Courts

Jess Phillips:

[\[153268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps family courts take to ensure that children's wishes are central to decisions made on their lives.

Alex Chalk:

Section 1 of the Children Act 1989 requires that the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration in all decisions made about them. In their consideration, the court must have regard to the factors set out at 1(3) of the Children Act 1989, referred to as the 'welfare checklist'. These include the ascertainable wishes and feeling of the child, commensurate with their age and level of understanding, and any harm which he has suffered or is at risk of suffering.

In addition, for every public law case, the child is appointed a CAFCASS Guardian who specifically represent the interests and wishes of the child involved. In complex private law cases, CAFCASS undertakes direct work with the child when directed to do so by the court, for cases that continue after the first hearing. This includes speaking with children to ascertain their wishes and feelings to produce a Section 7 welfare report into the child's welfare needs.

The Domestic Abuse Bill rightly recognises children as victims of domestic abuse and it is important that their voices are heard in family court proceedings.

In response to the Ministry of Justice's Harm Panel report, the Government committed to exploring how to enhance the voice of the child in private law proceedings to ensure children's wishes and views are central to proceedings concerning them. This will be done through a series of private law reform pilots, including the Integrated Domestic Abuse Court, and we intend to launch these pilots later this year.

■ Guardianship

Jess Phillips:

[\[153267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what oversight there is to ensure court and children's guardians carry out their role effectively and safely.

Alex Chalk:

The work of children's guardians employed by Cafcass is internally assessed in line with its quality assurance and impact framework. Cafcass has a number of internal case supervision and quality assurance processes, which are a top priority for the organisation, particularly in relation to the quality and impact of work and its added value for the child.

There is a rolling area quality review programme which looks at the quality of service provided by Cafcass within a specific service area. This programme includes feedback from children. Cafcass has also developed and implemented a series of Performance Boards across the country to share learning, good practice and develop improvement plans. These boards bring together members of the management team

to review practice, continue to build on existing strengths and commit to an annual improvement programme.

Externally, the Ministry of Justice monitors the work of Cafcass as an arm's length body through a proportionate system of oversight in line with the Cabinet Office's 'Partnerships with arm's length bodies: code of good practice'. This includes reviewing Key Performance Indicators and quality data on a regular basis, along with quarterly holding to account meetings with senior Cafcass executives.

Cafcass's services are subject to inspections by Ofsted and received an overall judgement of outstanding at its last inspection, with a finding that "a rigorous, strength-based performance framework supports the delivery of good and outstanding services nationally and locally". Children's guardians provided by Cafcass are all qualified social workers registered with Social Work England, the specialist regulator.

■ Guardianship: Domestic Abuse

Jess Phillips:

[153266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training court and children's guardians are required to undertake on identifying, understanding and responding to domestic abuse.

Alex Chalk:

Children's guardians provided by Cafcass are all qualified social workers with at least three years' post-qualifying experience. All Cafcass practitioners receive training in assessing domestic abuse and have access to learning packages and programmes developed in collaboration with organisations with specialist knowledge of domestic abuse, including a learning package on coercive and controlling behaviours.

Cafcass has a domestic abuse practice pathway which brings together the range of tools practitioners use for identifying domestic abuse, assessing its impact, and making recommendations to the court about programmes to address perpetrator behaviour. Cafcass has recently reviewed the pathway, working alongside partners including organisations that work with parents with lived experience of the family courts, and will roll out updated training for all its staff in the next year. This training will take account of recommendations from Cafcass's Learning and Improvement Board, which draws on the findings of the MoJ Expert Panel on Harm in the Family Courts.

■ Legal Aid Scheme

Karl Turner:

[R] [151693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish a list of (a) criminal legal aid providers and (b) civil legal aid providers as of March 2020.

Alex Chalk:

A list of current contracted legal aid providers is published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/directory-of-legal-aid-providers>.

As at March 2020, there were 1,500 firms who held a civil legal aid contract, and 1,150 who held a criminal legal aid contract.

The details of those providers are attached.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 151693 answer v4.xlsx]

■ Prison Sentences

Sir Christopher Chope:

[153109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 148677, how many and what proportion of people serving an IPP sentence who have previously been released are in custody following recall; and how many people in custody following recall have been in custody for more than one year.

Lucy Frazer:

As at 31 December 2020, there were 1,338 people serving an IPP sentence in custody following recall. This is approximately 28% of all offenders who have been released on an IPP licence. On 31 December 2020, 812 recalled IPP offenders were known to be still in custody more than a year after their recall.

These figures have been drawn from the Public Protection Unit Database held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. As with any large-scale recording systems, the figures are subject to possible errors with data migration and processing.

The power to recall is a vital public protection measure and all individuals on licensed supervision in the community are liable to recall to prison if they fail to comply with the conditions of their licence in such a way as to indicate that their risk may no longer be effectively managed in the community. It falls to the independent Parole Board to determine whether it is safe to re-release offenders serving an IPP sentence following recall. Consequently, where an offender has spent more than one year in custody following recall, it is because the Parole Board has judged that their risk is too high for them to be safely managed afresh on licence in the community.

Our primary responsibility is to protect the public; however, HMPPS remains committed to safely reducing the number of prisoners serving IPP sentences in custody.

■ Prisoners: Self-harm

Conor McGinn:

[151761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department has allocated additional funding available to preventative services to help reduce incidences of self-harm in prisons during the covid-19 outbreak; and whether his Department provides specific support to women in prisons at risk of self harm.

Lucy Frazer:

We are under no illusions about the impact of the measures which were put in place to protect lives during the Covid-19 pandemic and we have made prisoners' wellbeing

our priority. We have produced a range of products to support governors in devising and implementing local safety and welfare plans designed to mitigate risks and promote wellbeing. We have developed new guidance for staff on understanding and supporting someone who is self-harming. We have enabled continued family contact through more than 1,600 secure mobile phones and secure video calls. We continue to work closely with the Samaritans who are providing support for Listeners – selected prisoners trained to provide emotional support to their fellow prisoners and who continue to offer their phone service for emotional support.

We are delivering more in-cell activity and are continuing to improve our offer to support prison residents during this period. For example, distraction packs, supplementary food packs and additional educational materials have been provided, as well as £5 PIN credit per prisoner per week.

We recognise that the level of self-harm in the women's estate is too high and are determined to reduce this. A Women's Self-Harm Task Force was set up in April 2020 in response to our increasing concerns about the level of self-harm in the Women's estate. We know that many of the drivers (risks and triggers) and protective factors linked to women's risk of self-harm in prisons have been impacted by Covid-19 and the restricted regimes that have been put in place to control the spread of infection.

The Task Force has led work to introduce a number of specific interventions to counteract the impact of Covid-19 on self-harm in the Women's estate. This work has seen the introduction of bespoke well-being checks, increased credit to enable phone calls and increased access to Purple Visits (video calls with family and friends).

We have prioritised the roll out of the revised version of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) multi-disciplinary case management system used in prisons to support people at risk of suicide and self-harm. We will also be implementing the Offender Management in Custody model in the female estate in April. This will provide each woman in the female estate with a dedicated key worker who will be able to better support them and identify concerns at an early stage so that women can receive the right support at the right time.

Conor McGinn:

[151762]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions has he had with the Chancellor of Exchequer on the adequacy of current levels of financial support for the prevention of women's self-harm in prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

We recognise that the level of self-harm in the women's estate is too high and are determined to reduce this. A Women's Self-Harm Task Force was set up in April 2020 in response to our increasing concerns about the level of self-harm in the Women's estate. We know that many of the drivers (risks and triggers) and protective factors linked to women's risk of self-harm in prisons have been impacted by Covid-19 and the restricted regimes that have been put in place to control the spread of infection.

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We have also produced a range of products to support Governors in devising and implementing local safety and welfare plans designed to mitigate risks and promote wellbeing. We have developed new guidance for staff on understanding and supporting someone who is self-harming. We continue to make the Samaritans phone service available and are working with the Samaritans to ensure that the Listener peer support scheme continues to function effectively wherever possible.

There has been further investment to support the wellbeing of women offenders in custody, including investment into increased phone credit for women and bespoke well-being checks. Further work has also been done to increase the number of video calls that prisoners have with family and friends.

Crucially, we have also invested £5m in alternatives to prison, including new women's centres which help people address issues such as alcohol or drug addiction which leads them to crime.

■ Residential Women's Centres

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many residential women's centres his Department plans to develop; and where those centres will be sited.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether residential women's centres will be (a) run and (b) managed by voluntary organisations with expertise in providing services to women.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if residential women's centres will be used exclusively for women released from prison to support resettlement.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[151643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many beds each planned residential women's centre will provide.

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[152427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the evidential basis is for residential women's centres leading to a reduction in the level of crime.

Lucy Frazer:

The Female Offender Strategy (2018) set out the ambition to see fewer women in custody, especially on short sentences. We know that many women at risk of short custodial sentences have particularly complex needs and prolific offending histories compared to women supervised in the community. Our Strategy therefore committed to developing a residential women's centre (RWC) pilot in at least five sites across England and Wales, as a robust alternative to custody, providing safe accommodation and intensive rehabilitative support as part of a community sentence.

Learning from existing providers of intensive residential support options, both at the point of sentencing and on release, indicates that this form of provision is effective in reducing reoffending. The RWC pilot will enable us to test models of safe accommodation and holistic support for women to address the underlying causes of their offending, and will enable us to develop an evidence base about what could be effective, sustainable and scalable models.

On 5 May 2020 we announced that the first RWC will be located in Wales. Subsequently we have advised the Welsh Government, local MPs, PCCs and other partners that we have shortlisted sites in South Wales, and we anticipate one of those sites could be a potential location for the first pilot RWC. As yet we have not identified sites for the four RWCs in England.

We anticipate that each RWC will have 12 beds. RWCs will also provide support, very similar to that offered by a women's centre, with interventions to support women address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour. We anticipate it will offer interventions to meet the needs of residents, ex-residents and women in the local community who have been referred to the RWC by their offender manager.

We expect the RWCs will work with key partners and providers of women-specific services in their local area and draw on the expertise of those who currently work with women with complex needs and women with lived experience. The RWC will be led by the NPS but will employ women with experience of working with complex needs women to lead the interventions hub and to engage with local providers and partners.

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS SPONSOR BODY

■ **Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[151715\]](#)

To ask the Right hon. Member for East Hampshire, representing the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body, what assessment the body has made of the viability of Church House as a temporary replacement for the Palace of Westminster while it undergoes essential repairs.

Damian Hinds:

The Sponsor Body, working closely with the Delivery Authority, has recently carried out a Strategic Review for how the restoration programme should be carried out. The Sponsor Body looked at all viable options as part of the Strategic Review, including consideration of Church House. The Strategic Review will be published in due course.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[151882\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for East Hampshire, representing the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body, what the costs are for the (a) business planning and (b) other preliminary works for the Restoration and Renewal Programme before the full works programme begins.

Damian Hinds:

The Sponsor Body is currently finalising the remaining phase 1 expenditure limit, to be agreed by the Commissions of both Houses.

The Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission will review the annual estimate in the context of the limit agreed by the Commissions of both Houses. The annual Estimate will be discussed in a public hearing in March 2021. The Estimates Commission will seek the views of the Treasury before laying the Estimate before the House of Commons.

Current costs and expenditure are published as Quarterly Reports, available on the Restoration and Renewal website:

www.restorationandrenewal.uk/resources/transparency/the-programme.

Mr Richard Holden:[\[151884\]](#)

To ask the right hon. Member for East Hampshire, representing the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body, how many staff are employed on the Restoration and Renewal programme; and what the average cost, including employer national insurance and pension contributions, is of those members of staff.

Damian Hinds:

The Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body is the single client accountable to Parliament and oversees a Delivery Authority which carries out the work.

The Sponsor Body was established in shadow form in July 2018 and became a statutory organisation separate from Parliament on 8 April 2020 and has been engaged in a period of recruitment since then. The staffing is a mixture of directly employed staff, contractors and people seconded from the Houses. As of 31 January 2021, there are 15 directly employed staff in the Sponsor Body, mainly at a senior level and the average costs per employee is £103,633, including National Insurance and Pension.

The Delivery Authority was set up as a company limited by guarantee on 16 April 2020, and the Sponsor Body is the sole guarantor. The staffing is a mixture of directly employed staff, contractors and people seconded from the Houses. As of 31 January 2021, there are 55 directly employed staff in the Delivery Authority, mainly at a senior

level and the average costs per employee is £86,810, including National Insurance and Pension.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Exhaust Emissions

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[153274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government (a) is undertaking internationally and (b) will take at COP26 to achieve net zero-emission aviation by 2050.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises that international action is essential given the global nature of both the aviation sector and of climate change. The UK therefore takes a leading role in the work of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to reduce emissions from international aviation. For example, we are committed to implementing the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and negotiating for ICAO to agree a long-term emissions reduction goal for international aviation by its 41st Assembly in 2022.

Our COP26 presidency provides the UK with a unique opportunity to increase global ambition to decarbonise all sectors, including aviation. The government is working to deliver an ambitious set of initiatives that increase global ambition on aviation decarbonisation, showcase the latest in innovation and technology, and encourage the use of sustainable aviation fuels.

In addition, we are taking strides domestically to ensure aviation plays its part in delivering the UK's net zero commitments: we recently established the Jet Zero Council to bring the sector together to drive decarbonisation and will shortly publish a consultation on how the sector can reach net zero.

■ Blue Badge Scheme: Theft

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[153335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made trends in the level Blue Badge theft from vehicles; and what steps he is taking to tackle that theft.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department of Transport works closely with local authorities to improve the consistency of local enforcement to tackle fraud and misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme, including the use of powers to tackle abuse provided in the Disabled Persons Parking Badges Act 2013, such as the power to retain and cancel badges found to be stolen.

■ Bridges: Greater London**Sarah Olney:** [\[153331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many bridges in the London region are substandard; and what assessment he has made of the economic effect of the reduced carrying capacity of those bridges.

Rachel Maclean:

Ownership of bridges in London is varied and owners include Transport for London, Network Rail and individual London Boroughs. Local transport infrastructure maintenance is a devolved matter. Therefore, it is the owners' responsibility to ensure that their asset is maintained to the appropriate standard. The Department does not hold specific information on the condition of each individual structure. As such, the Department does not assess the economic effect of any reduced carrying capacity on London bridges.

■ Buses and Taxis: Air Conditioning**Sir Mike Penning:** [\[152434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to promote the use of non-recirculation mode for air conditioning in buses and taxis during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

We published advice in our safer transport guidance for transport operators recommending that transport operators should ensure a fresh air supply is consistently flowing through vehicles. To achieve this, operators should consider that recirculating air systems may require adjustments to increase fresh air flow. Government guidance for drivers, operators and owners of taxis and private hire vehicles also states that the recirculated air option for the car's ventilation system should not be used when carrying passengers.

■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions**Lilian Greenwood:** [\[152504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he estimates the 800 zero-emission buses, for which funding was announced in the 2020 Spending Review, will be (a) ordered and (b) in use.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[152505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many zero-emission buses his Department plans to provide funding for in the financial years (a) 2021-22, (b) 2022-23 and (c) 2023-24.

Rachel Maclean:

As set out in the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution and the Spending Review 2020, the Government will invest £120 million in 2021-22 to start the delivery of the 4,000 zero emission buses announced by the Prime Minister last year.

Together with existing funding for the All Electric Bus Town or City, Government funding for 2021/22 could support the purchase of 800 zero emission buses and the infrastructure needed to support them.

Further details on how funding in 2021-22 will be distributed will be announced in the spring.

■ Cabotage

Tracy Brabin:

[\[152600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of cabotage rules on the number of UK based music concert haulage vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport's assessment is that the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement will allow for the vast majority of haulage operations that were being undertaken by UK hauliers before the end of the transition period. The agreement does introduce some limits, and UK hauliers will only be allowed to undertake two movements within the EU before returning to the UK. These rules will apply to specialist hauliers, such as hauliers who carry equipment for musicians and other performers.

Alternative arrangements for specialist hauliers were discussed in detail as part of negotiations, including specific proposals for liberalised access, but the EU was unable to agree more flexible arrangements.

■ Cycling and Walking: Finance

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[153225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the extent to which the objectives of the 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy to (a) increase cycling and walking activity and (b) reduce the rate of cycling casualties by 2020 have been met; and if he will publish comparative data on those matters for each year since 2017.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government will report in detail on this matter in due course once the relevant statistics for 2020 are available.

In the meantime, the Government published its first report on the progress towards meeting the objectives of the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) in February 2020. The report highlights the delivery of actions, outputs and outcomes since 2016/17 with accompanying statistical analysis.

In 2019 people in England made an average of 332 walking stages, which is an 11% increase since 2015. This follows a reweighting of the data due to a methodological change to the National Travel Survey in 2016. In 2019, people in England cycled an

estimated total of 964 million stages, an increase of 17% since 2013 (the CWIS baseline).

Adjusting for changes in severity reporting, total pedal cyclists killed or seriously injured per billion miles cycled in 2019 was 1,280 with levels falling since 2012.

■ **Department for Transport: Coronavirus**

Liam Byrne:

[153133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) policies and (b) grant and funding programmes his Department has introduced to provide support to individuals and organisations in response to the covid-19 outbreak; and what funding has been allocated to each of those programmes in the 2020-21 financial year.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

My department has introduced vital measures to ensure the continued safe operation of key modes of public transport throughout the pandemic. Details of the measures and costs associated have been published in the NAO's online tracker of the Government's interventions on Covid-19. This is available online at <https://www.nao.org.uk/covid-19/cost-tracker/>

■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

Jonathan Edwards:

[151659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on public safety of the increased charging of electrical vehicles as the number of EVs in the UK increases.

Rachel Maclean:

The safety of electric vehicles and their charging is very important to the Government and kept under regular review. The safety of charging events is primarily determined by the design and installation of electric chargepoints. There is a wide pool of regulations and standards, as well as enforcement mechanisms, covering this. The Department regularly engages with the bodies who enforce those regulations to ensure safety outcomes for the general public.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Rural Areas**

Jonathan Edwards:

[151658]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that there are adequate charging facilities for electric vehicles in rural areas.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has committed £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll out of charging infrastructure on motorways and major A roads, in homes and businesses and on-street.

This funding includes the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme, available to all UK local authorities to fund public chargepoints for those without access to private

parking. More than 105 local authorities have taken advantage of the fund so far, and the Government recently announced the Scheme would continue in to 2021/22 with a budget of £20m.

The Government is also developing proposals for £90m of committed funding for local EV charging infrastructure to support the roll out of larger, on-street charging schemes and rapid hubs in England. Details of the scheme will be announced in due course.

Small businesses and those in leasehold and rented accommodation are set to benefit from up to £50 million to install electric vehicle chargepoints. The Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme, which provides up to £350 towards a chargepoint, will continue in 2021/22 and will be expanded to target people in rented and leasehold accommodation. At the same time, the Workplace Charging Scheme will be opened up to small to medium enterprises and the charity sector, providing a boost as staff return to work. The changes will also mean that small accommodation businesses, such as B&Bs can benefit from the funding, boosting rural areas, and tackling 'range anxiety' associated with long journeys.

■ Eurostar: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[152591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take to support Eurostar during the covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Ministers and officials, working with other Government Departments, have engaged extensively with Eurostar since March 2020 in relation to their financial situation and to help the company access Government support schemes where it is eligible and appropriate.

We continue to engage, at both official and Ministerial level, with Eurostar and the French government regarding Eurostar's financial situation and any potential support proposals.

■ Freight: Offices

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[151636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice he is issuing to UK haulage firms on setting up EU offices following the introduction of new haulage restrictions in the EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement; what estimate he has made of the costs to those firms of doing so; and what Government support he plans to make available to companies which do so.

Rachel Maclean:

The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) will allow for the vast majority of haulage operations that were being undertaken by UK hauliers before the end of the transition period.

The Department is in regular contact with the road haulage industry to explain and provide guidance on the provisions of the TCA. For certain specialist tour operators, the Department is also working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to support the creative industries sector.

It is, however, not a matter for the Department for Transport to provide assistance or guidance to businesses to establish offices outside the UK.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Gavin Newlands:

[\[153281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the (a) total costs incurred to date and (b) total expenditure required for land and property acquisition in relation to Phase 1 of High Speed Two.

Andrew Stephenson:

- a) The costs incurred to date for land and property acquisition is £2,345 million. Within this £1,202 million is for Compulsory Purchase, £287 million for Schemes, £624 million through Private Agreement, and £232 million for Statutory Blight.
- b) The final amount of compensation payable will be dependent on a number of factors including the take-up of discretionary schemes. HS2 Ltd is currently tracking to deliver its programme of acquisitions within the funding envelope agreed with the Department.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Compensation

Gavin Newlands:

[\[153279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many claimants have been compensated by HS2 Ltd in relation to land and property interests affected by the route of Phase 1 of High Speed Two; and how many claimants' cases are estimated to be outstanding.

Andrew Stephenson:

- For Blight claims, 222 claimants have been compensated.
- For Phase One non-statutory Schemes, 345 parties have been paid (Need to sell/ Exceptional Hardship/ Rural Support Zone)
- For Phase 1 Access Licences, 1,552 claimants have received compensation
- For Phase One Compulsory Purchase Order Claims, 1,002 claimants have received compensation, from 2,742 total separate payments.

Until the final number of notices have been served, and the claims received, the final number is not possible to forecast.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Compulsory Purchase

Gavin Newlands:

[\[153280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Compulsory Purchase Notices have been issued in relation to Phase 1 of High Speed Two; and what estimate he has made of the number that are still required for completion of Phase 1.

Andrew Stephenson:

As of 31 January 2021, the Secretary of State for Transport has executed General Vesting Declarations (GVD) for permanent acquisition of 362 pieces of land or properties, by serving 4,060 notices on the interests in that land or those properties.

HS2 Ltd has 66.5 square kilometres (plus 2.2 square kilometres of subsoil) within act limits; reviewing and forecasting land requirements is an on-going process whilst design and construction plans continue.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Land

Gavin Newlands:

[\[153278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what area of land has been acquired to date by HS2 Ltd for purposes connected to Phase 1 of High Speed Two; and what estimate has been made of the area of land that remains required to be acquired by HS2 Ltd for the same purpose.

Andrew Stephenson:

The High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 identifies an area of 66.5 square kilometres plus 2.2 square kilometres of subsoil which may be acquired or possessed for the purposes of building the railway from London to Birmingham. As at the end of January 2021, 26.45 square kilometres have been acquired under permanent acquisition powers, and 26.76 square kilometres are currently being occupied under temporary possession powers. Reviewing and forecasting land requirements is an on-going process whilst design and construction planning continues.

■ Infrastructure: Planning

Caroline Lucas:

[\[153173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects relating to his Department, in respect of how many of those projects the Planning Inspectorate's Examining Authority recommended that he should withhold consent; and how many times his Department rejected those recommendations in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019, (f) 2020 and (g) 2021.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Since 2015, the Examining Authority has recommended withholding consent from five Development Consent Orders for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in the transport sector; in all five cases, the Secretary of State rejected those

recommendations. The Secretary of State made one of these decisions in 2016, three in 2020, and one in 2021.

■ Jamaica: Aviation

Matthew Pennycook:

[153318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to recommence direct flights to Jamaica on health and compassionate grounds.

Robert Courts:

The operation of specific routes is a commercial decision for airlines. The Government remains committed to working with industry to ensure a return to international travel when it is safe to do so.

The UK has introduced further border controls to add another level of protection against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus and reduce the risk of a new and dangerous strain being imported into the UK. The travel measures announced in January include the requirement for pre-departure tests, travel bans, and government-approved managed quarantine for arrivals from red list countries. Further information is available on Gov.uk.

We keep all our measures under constant review, and they will remain in place as long as is required in order to protect public health and reduce transmission of the virus and to reduce the risk of new variants.

Anyone wishing to travel should always check the latest travel advice from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

■ Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Conditions of Employment

Ian Mearns:

[152499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with officials of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the (a) conclusions and (b) recommendations of the World Maritime University's report, A culture of adjustment, evaluating the implementation of the current maritime regulatory framework on rest and work hours (EVREST), published in November 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) welcomes the World Maritime University's report which provides evidence for concerns the United Kingdom has raised about the risk of fatigue on board ships at the International Maritime Organization over the last ten years. The MCA is considering its response to the recommendations, including how they might be implemented (or where measures are already in place, implementation may be improved) within the United Kingdom, within the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control and internationally (at the International Maritime Organization and International Labour Organization).

■ Merchant Shipping: Conditions of Employment

Ian Mearns:

[152501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to review the adequacy of the enforcement of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Hours of Work) Regulations 2018 for seafarers working on internationally registered merchant ships in UK (a) waters and (b) ports; and if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of those regulations in preventing seafarer fatigue.

Robert Courts:

The Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Hours of Work) Regulations 2018 implement minimum standards for hours of rest in accordance with the International Maritime Organization's Convention on Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, 1978 as amended and the International Labour Organization's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. As such, they provide a framework for enforcement, but they are not sufficient on their own effectively to prevent fatigue which can be affected by a number of factors, including time spent at sea, the type of work, quality of sleep and even the comfort of the ship.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency therefore seeks to promote education about prevention, recognition and mitigation of fatigue through guidance on human factors and safe working practices.

■ Merchant Shipping: Travel Restrictions

Ian Mearns:

[152503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the new covid-19 travel restrictions and requirements on people arriving in the UK announced by the Government in February 2021, what assessment he has made of the effect of those new restrictions and requirements on international seafarers arriving, on schedule, on a merchant ship in a UK port and requiring transit to their home country in line with their contract of employment.

Robert Courts:

The UK Government's border health measures are part of our strategy to tackle Variants of Concern, and to protect both the progress we have made in bringing cases down and the effectiveness of our vaccination programme

Therefore, on top of the travel ban for all on non-residents coming from the 33 countries on the red list, all UK/Irish residents arriving from the 33 red-list countries must now quarantine in a government assigned hotel for 10 days from arrival, or longer if they test positive during their stay. There is currently not an exemption for seafarers who arrive in the UK having travelled through a 'red list' country in the 10 days before arrival.

Since the start of the pandemic, the UK has provided exemptions for seafarers from the need to self-isolate where it has been safe to do so. We have also taken a global

lead in efforts to protect the welfare of all seafarers, regardless of their nationality or the flag of the vessel they serve on.

If non-UK or Irish resident seafarers have not been in a red list country in the 10 days before arrival in the UK, they will be exempt from the requirement to quarantine at a private address.

Full details on quarantining can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-quarantine-when-you-arrive-in-england>

■ Public Transport: Hygiene

Sir Mike Penning:

[152432]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps are being taken to promote the availability of hand sanitiser in buses, taxis and other modes of public transport.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has outlined, through guidance to operators, ways they can help reduce the spread of Covid-19 on the public transport network and boost confidence in the traveling public. These measures include increasing cleaning particularly in high touch areas, encouraging good hand hygiene and providing hand sanitiser at building entry/exit points.

Hand sanitiser points are available at most of the busiest stations. Hand sanitiser points have also been maintained across the 300 most used train stations, as well as 1000 units across the London Tube and Surface Transport network.

■ Railways: Concessions

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[152404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring the Rail Delivery Group to extend the period of use of railcards in response to the travelling time lost as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department recognises that railcard holders have been unable to use their cards whilst travel restrictions are in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and railcard holders have not been able to benefit to the fullest extent over recent months. However, many passengers are able to recover the cost of their railcard in a single trip over the period of validity of their railcard. Having carefully considered the situation, we currently have no plans to require the Rail Delivery Group to extend the period of use of railcards.

■ Railways: Coronavirus

John Spellar:

[153115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of changes to (a) volumes and (b) patterns of (i) intercity and (ii) commuter rail travel as the UK emerges from the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department continues to actively work to understand the impact of coronavirus on rail demand, including close working with industry. As part of this we are ensuring that we use a range of rail demand scenarios based on a series of factors that could drive rail demand over the short and long term to influence decisions. These scenarios consider the impact of Coronavirus on levels of passenger demand, including on commuting and long-distance travel.

Given the considerable uncertainty that the pandemic has caused, these scenarios cannot be used as forecasts. However, they do reflect some of the possible impacts of the pandemic on future rail demand.

■ Railways: Key Workers

Bill Esterson:

[152515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to introduce a railcard for essential workers for the duration of the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

There are currently no plans to introduce a railcard for essential workers. It is clear this year that the industry, commuters and society are all facing unusual pressures due to COVID-19.

■ Railways: Skilled Workers

John Spellar:

[153119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) (i) age profile and (ii) adequacy of the supply of skilled workers and (b) potential merits of policies to maintain a skilled workforce in the rail industry.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

My Department is aware of analysis from the National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) indicating that a significant proportion of the rail industry workforce is aged over 50. Some of this analysis was included as part of the Williams Rail Review evidence collation and published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-rail-sector-in-numbers>.

We are considering this and other issues affecting the supply of skilled workers over the next decade, and will set out details in due course.

■ Shipping: Conditions of Employment

Ian Mearns:

[\[152500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on trends in the levels of seafarers' hours of work and rest; and what steps he is taking at (a) domestic and (b) international level to help tackle seafarer fatigue in the shipping industry.

Robert Courts:

There have been no formal assessments of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on trends in the levels of seafarers' hours of work and rest. The Department of Transport is aware of the pressures that many seafarers are under, as an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is evidence, including from the Seafarers' Happiness Index, compiled by The Mission to Seafarers, that this is resulting in increased levels of stress and fatigue.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) requires shipowners to report significant extensions to seafarer employment agreements for seafarers on UK ships and assesses the mitigating measures put in place, including increased hours of rest. MCA surveyors and inspectors continue to carry out flag State surveys and port State control inspections where the risk of COVID-19 transmission permits, including checking for compliance with minimum hours of rest.

The UK led the way internationally in designating seafarers as key workers. This helped to facilitate repatriation and ensure access ashore for their wellbeing where compatible with local restrictions. The UK has also supported international initiatives such as the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on *International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains* which was adopted on 1 December 2020. The UK has also supported the International Maritime Organization's adoption of the industry protocols for safe crew changes.

■ Shipping: Crew

Grahame Morris:

[\[152477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change; and whether it is still his policy to classify seafarers as key workers in the context of crew changeovers at UK sea and airports.

Robert Courts:

As the first state to declare seafarers as keyworkers we welcome the Neptune Declaration. We remain committed to working domestically and internationally to protect the mental health and wellbeing of crew of all nationalities, and to find solutions to facilitate transit and transfer across all countries during the pandemic.

Grahame Morris:

[\[152478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many flights have been chartered by the shipping industry (a) to and (b) from UK airports in each month since 20 March 2020 to date to facilitate crew changeovers on merchant ships docked at UK ports.

Robert Courts:

The chartering of flights is normally a commercial decision and we do not capture this data. There is no existing regulatory requirement for companies to provide this data and it would not be possible to compare what activity was caused by factors due to the pandemic and what activity is considered normal.

Ian Mearns:

[\[152502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to monitor international covid-19 vaccination programmes in countries that supply seafarer labour to the UK shipping industry.

Robert Courts:

Vaccination programmes are still nascent in many of our major seafarer supply markets. We will take account of information emerging from other countries concerning their vaccination programmes, when this data is made available by verified sources.

■ **Taxis: Disability**

Sam Tarry:

[\[152672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce mandatory disability equality training for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government wants disabled people to be able to travel easily and confidently and considers that ensuring taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers complete effective disability awareness training is an important step in making this a reality.

In our response to the Chair of the Task and Finish Group on Taxi and PHV Licensing in 2019, we committed to mandate the completion by drivers of such training when Parliamentary time allowed. This remains our position.

In the meantime, we expect local licencing authorities to use their existing powers to ensure that all taxi and PHV drivers have the knowledge and skills necessary to assist every passenger.

■ **Taxis: Key Workers**

Peter Gibson:

[\[152651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of classifying taxi drivers as key workers.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Office of National Statistics (ONS) define “Critical worker” occupations. Transport workers currently defined as “critical workers” include those who keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response and EU transition; those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass; and those constructing or supporting the operation of critical transport and border infrastructure through which supply chains pass.

The government is committed to keeping taxi drivers safe, and has published safety guidance specifically for owners, operators and drivers of taxis and private hire vehicles (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-taxis-and-phvs>).

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[152428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's timeframe is for the publication of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

Rachel Maclean:

We are working to produce a bold and ambitious plan to decarbonise transport and expect to publish it in Spring 2021.

TREASURY**■ Buildings: Insulation****Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[153293\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the announcement of 10 February 2021, Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention, what the Barnett consequentialities are from that announcement of funding.

Steve Barclay:

The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government made an oral statement to the House of Commons on building safety on 10 February 2021.

The devolved administrations will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula at future fiscal events and spending reviews, except where new departmental spending is funded by an England-only levy. The devolved administrations can implement their own levies should they choose to do so.

■ Business: Coronavirus**Lucy Powell:**[\[151725\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the amount of interest accrued by businesses (a) in total, (b) in deferred VAT payments and (c) in deferred corporation tax payments as a result of covid-19 business support measures.

Jesse Norman:

No interest has been accrued as a result of COVID-19 related tax payment deferral schemes.

As part of its measures to support businesses through COVID-19, the Government announced on 20 March 2020 that businesses may defer VAT payments, interest free, to help with their cash flow at a difficult time. No interest has been accrued by taxpayers in respect of VAT due between 20 March and 30 June 2020.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/hmrc/vat-deferral.

There was not an option to defer corporation tax payments, and therefore there was no interest accrued on such payments.

■ Business: Energy**Tim Farron:****[152447]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses received support under the Government's Enhanced Capital Allowance Scheme, which ended on 1 February 2021.

Jesse Norman:

In 2018-19 (the latest year available), approximately 4,700 companies claimed enhanced capital allowances for energy saving equipment and environmentally beneficial equipment.

Although any claims for these allowances can be identified within the current version of the company tax return, the level of such claims in all tax returns is likely to be affected by the Annual Investment Allowance which businesses may claim to obtain tax relief for these types of investments. This is another type of 100 percent capital allowance but which is subject to a cap which has been temporarily set at £1 million since 2019.

■ Child Trust Fund: Learning Disability**Henry Smith:****[153196]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review ease of access arrangements to Child Trust Fund accounts for 18 year olds with learning disabilities.

John Glen:

All 18 year olds can access the funds from a Child Trust Fund as they would any other account, whether or not they have learning disabilities.

Where the young adult does not have the mental capacity to provide instructions to the account manager, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland makes provision for another person to provide instructions on their behalf.

A cross-government working group comprising representatives from MOJ, HMT, HMRC and DWP has been established to look at the issues raised in relation to accessing matured Child Trust Funds (CTFs) in the light of the Mental Capacity Act.

■ Companies: Loans

Andrea Leadsom:

[\[151705\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is (a) a regulatory requirement or (b) a bank decision that a company goes into forbearance automatically if it has four quarters of capital repayment holiday on its bank loan.

John Glen:

Most business lending - including lending to incorporated entities - is unregulated. The Government is committed to regulating only where there is a clear case for doing so, in order to avoid putting additional costs on lenders that would ultimately lead to higher costs for business customers.

Payment holidays are a form of forbearance and, where the credit is regulated, firms will need to have appropriate policies and procedures in place to treat customers in default or arrears difficulties with appropriate forbearance and due consideration.

The specific type of forbearance offered, including a capital repayment holiday, is a decision made by the lender, as well as how long the forbearance is provided before additional forbearance or litigation action is taken. A lender may choose to review the forbearance offered at a certain point in time to see how successful the forbearance has been.

Furthermore, regulators have also set out their expectations of financial services firms and information for businesses and consumers in the context of COVID-19, to ensure markets continue to function well.

■ COP26 Private Finance Hub

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[151779\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the terms of reference are for the COP26 Private Finance Hub.

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

Seema Malhotra:

[\[152533\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a targeted extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the (a)

aviation sector and (b) other sectors in the event that those sectors are subject to covid-19 restrictions after April 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry as a result of COVID-19, and firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the substantial package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills. The aerospace sector and its aviation customers are being supported with almost £11 billion made available through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and grants for research and development. This includes £8 billion of UK Export Finance Guarantees.

The Chancellor has always been clear that the Government would keep the situation under review, adapting its approach as the context evolved. The Government will set out the next phase of the plan to tackle the virus and support jobs at Budget.

Chris Stephens:

[\[152573\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to provide emergency support for (a) AdLib and Blue Dog staff and (b) other workers who are eligible for furlough and who have been denied payments.

Jesse Norman:

Legislation imposes a duty on HMRC to keep the taxpayer data they hold confidential. This means HMRC do not disclose information about any action they take in respect of a particular taxpayer, except in very limited circumstances, prescribed by law.

Employers can apply for the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme (CJRS) if they meet the eligibility criteria. It is for the employer to decide whether to offer furlough to an employee. Apart from enforcement of National Minimum wage obligations, which HMRC carry out on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, HMRC do not have a role in regulating the relationship between employers and employees.

Employees can contact ACAS if they have concerns that they have not been able to resolve with their employer.

Employees who have concerns that they have been furloughed and asked to work or have not been paid, can report suspected fraud to HMRC on GOV.UK.

Employees not eligible for the scheme may have access to a range of other support measures made available by the Government.

Sarah Olney:

[\[152601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will issue guidelines to encourage employers in non-essential sectors to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to furlough those employees who have caring responsibilities for children who are at home as a result of school closures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

Employees who are unable to work, including from home, or who are working reduced hours because they have caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus (COVID-19), can be furloughed. This includes employees caring for children who are at home as a result of school and childcare facilities closing.

It is for the employer to decide whether to offer to furlough an employee.

Information on the conditions under which an employee can be put on furlough has been communicated extensively through GOV.UK guidance updates, stakeholder emails, digital media advertising, and other communications products.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Liam Byrne:****[153129]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) policies and (b) grant and funding programmes his Department has introduced to provide support to individuals and organisations in response to the covid-19 outbreak; and what funding has been allocated to each of those programmes in the 2020-21 financial year.

Kemi Badenoch:

Since March the Government's priority has been to save lives and protect jobs, businesses, and livelihoods. To support workers and businesses across all sectors the Government has provided an unprecedented package of support worth more than £280 billion.

As of 5 January, England entered nationwide restrictions to manage a new variant of Coronavirus. With these restrictions, businesses in retail, hospitality and leisure facing forced closure in England are eligible for a one-off grant worth up to £9,000 to help them through to spring. This is on top of the existing Local Restriction Support Grant (Closed) which will continue to offer businesses support of up to £3,000 for each month they closed.

Local authorities are being provided with a top up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) worth £500 million, bringing the total value of ARG to over £1.6 billion. This grant ensures local authorities can support, on a discretionary basis, businesses not eligible for other grants but still affected by restrictions. Business grant policy remains a fully devolved area, with the Devolved Administrations receiving their share of this funding through the Barnett formula in the usual way.

Businesses across the UK can continue to apply for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), which as of mid-December had supported 9.9 million jobs at the cost of over £45 billion, and its extension until the end of April 2021 will give many businesses and workers much-needed security. The Government has also extended the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) until the end of April 2021, with a boosted package of support providing the self-employed with grants covering 80% of average trading profits. So far SEISS has seen 2.7 million self-employed workers make claims under the scheme totaling £13.7 billion.

Businesses needing access to liquidity can also apply for guaranteed loans through various loan schemes, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, until the end of March 2021. Over 1.4 million small and medium sized companies have received government-backed loans, worth over £68 billion.

This support comes on top of billions of pounds' worth of business rates reliefs, tax deferrals, and other labour market schemes.

■ **Directors: Coronavirus**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[153382\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to progress a directors' income support scheme package for directors of limited companies.

Jesse Norman:

The Government always welcomes constructive proposals from stakeholders to improve the design of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), including the suggestion for a Directors Income Support Scheme (DISS) from the Federation of Small Businesses, ForgottenLtd, Re Legal Consulting Ltd, and ACCA UK. This proposal aims to provide a new system for company directors, based on reported profits. The Government has considered this proposal in detail.

The DISS, as currently framed, is intrinsically reliant on self-certification. As the Government cannot readily verify this information, an effect of this reliance on self-certification is to open the scheme up to an unacceptable level of fraud by organised criminal groups and others who would seek to exploit the scheme. The Government cannot expose the tax system to these risks but continues to engage with the FSB regarding these concerns.

■ **Gaming: VAT**

Alex Sobel:

[\[153360\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will include adult gaming centres in the VAT reductions available to the hospitality industry.

Mick Whitley:

[\[153375\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of extending the VAT cut for the hospitality and leisure industries on levels of job retention in (a) the gambling industry and (b) adult gaming centres.

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.

■ Hospitality Industry and Leisure: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[152592\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of extending the length of time of the operation of the (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, (b) business rates relief scheme and (c) the five per cent VAT rate for the hospitality and leisure sectors.

Jesse Norman:

In order to support businesses retaining their employees and protect the UK economy, the Chancellor has already extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) until the end of April 2021. As of 13 December, the CJRS has helped 1.2 million employers across the UK to furlough 9.9 million jobs, protecting people's livelihoods with £46.4 billion having been paid out in grants. The Government has also provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, worth over £10 billion, as well as cutting VAT on hospitality and tourism from twenty per cent to five per cent.

The Government is considering options for COVID-19 support measures for 2021-22, and will outline these at the Budget.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[153111\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will defer the payment of NICs and PAYE for hospitality businesses to the end of 2021 to help support them in the context of covid-19 restrictions.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has delivered support to the hospitality sector through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which has been extended until April; Government-backed finance through loan schemes and 'Pay as You Grow' long-term repayment options; a temporary VAT cut; a VAT deferral and the VAT New Payment Scheme to spread the deferred VAT; the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme; a 12-month business rates holiday; and a moratorium on evictions to protect commercial tenants. In January, the Chancellor announced further grant funding for businesses affected by restrictions.

Businesses affected by the pandemic have access to the CJRS to cover their furloughed employees' wages. There were 1.65 million accommodation and food services sector employees furloughed at the peak on 10 April. Provisional figures

show that the number of employees furloughed for this sector stood at 1.04 million at 31 December. In line with normal practice for benefits or grants that replace income, individuals pay Income Tax and National Insurance on any payments received through this scheme as they are a replacement for income. Employers also continue to pay employer National Insurance Contributions on wages.

If any business is experiencing temporary financial difficulties and they need more time to pay their tax, they can contact HMRC on the COVID-19 dedicated helpline to agree a Time to Pay (TTP) arrangement to spread their tax payments. These arrangements are bespoke and flexible, covering all taxes, and are based on how much the business can afford to pay. TTPs have proven effective at supporting businesses through temporary difficulties, with 90% of taxpayers making agreed instalments and paying off their debt as agreed in the TTP arrangement.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Non-domestic Rates**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[153110\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the business rates holiday for hospitality businesses to 1 April 2022.

Jesse Norman:

This year the Government has provided an unprecedented business rates holiday for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties due to the direct adverse effects of COVID-19, worth over £10 billion, and has frozen the business rates multiplier for all businesses for 2021-22.

The Government has provided various schemes to support firms, including wholesalers, including Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans, Bounce Back Loans, grants and VAT deferrals.

The Budget will set out the next phase of the Government's plans to tackle the virus, protect jobs and support business.

■ **Housing: Insulation**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[152537\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government's oral statement of 10 February 2021 on Building Safety, what the Barnett consequential will be for the (a) Welsh Government and (b) other devolved administrations.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government made an oral statement to the House of Commons on building safety on 10 February 2021.

The devolved administrations will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula at future fiscal events and spending reviews, except where new departmental

spending is funded by an England-only levy. The devolved administrations can implement their own levies should they choose to do so.

■ Infrastructure: Finance

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[152528\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the next National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline as part of the National Infrastructure Strategy.

Jesse Norman:

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority has committed to publishing regular National Infrastructure and Construction Pipelines. The last Pipeline, published in response to COVID-19, set out planned procurements with an estimated contract value of up to £37bn across the 2020/21 financial year. As stated in the National Infrastructure Strategy, the next iteration of the National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline will be published in 2021 and will set out future planned investments and procurements.

■ Infrastructure: North of England

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[151718\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the level of funding allocated to the North of England from the National Infrastructure Strategy on the economy.

Kemi Badenoch:

The National Infrastructure Strategy set out the government's plan to transform the UK's infrastructure to help level up the country and put the UK on the path to net zero emissions by 2050.

The Strategy announced record levels of public investment in strategic roads, digital infrastructure and flood defences, alongside measures to encourage and increase private investment, such as the creation of a new infrastructure bank for the UK.

The Strategy includes different kinds of funding commitment, from individual projects like HS2, to overarching programmes, such as £5bn for the rollout of gigabit capable broadband. A number of programmes will be administered by delivery agencies like the Environment Agency and Highways England who will allocate funding to individual projects.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority will publish the next iteration of its annual National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline in 2021, as stated in the NIS, and this will list future planned investments and procurements across infrastructure and construction.

The National Infrastructure Strategy also included a timeline of upcoming Government publications which indicated where future action can be expected.

■ Languages: Schools

Kim Johnson:

[\[153416\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to provide specific financial support for language schools which have not been included in the list of eligible business for covid-19 support to date.

Steve Barclay:

The Government understands the many areas of difficulty for businesses caused by the COVID-19 disruption and has introduced a number of measures to support businesses through this challenging period.

The Government is making sure that people and businesses have access to the support they need as quickly as possible. The Government has supported businesses through the COVID-19 crisis through an unprecedented support package, including grants for smaller businesses, government-backed loans, and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to protect jobs.

An additional £500 million has been made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), announced by the Chancellor on 5 January. This builds on the £1.1 billion already allocated following the second lockdown in November 2020.

This further grant funding is designed to support businesses that are severely impacted by the new Covid-19 restrictions. Local authorities have discretion to use this funding to support businesses in the way they see fit, and to determine which businesses are.

I encourage English Language Schools to make full use of the extensive support available.

■ Leisure: VAT

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[152652\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the reduced 5 per cent VAT rate on admission charges to attractions beyond 31 March 2021.

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. 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.

■ Libya: Freezing of Assets

Ian Paisley: [\[152525\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much interest has been generated from frozen Libyan assets held in the UK in each of the last 10 years.

John Glen:

The Treasury does not hold information on the total interest that has accrued on Libyan frozen assets.

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) undertakes an annual frozen asset review requiring all persons or institutions that hold or control frozen funds in the UK to report to OFSI. OFSI's published Annual Review provides an aggregate figure for the value of Libyan frozen funds held by UK institutions.

However, there is no requirement for banks to report interest separately in the annual returns on frozen assets they provide to OFSI.

■ National Library of Wales: Finance

Ben Lake: [\[153341\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147960, on the funding of Public Libraries whether there was a 100 per cent Barnett consequential in respect of the National Library of Wales under the provisions of the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Ben Lake: [\[153342\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147960 on National Library of Wales: Finance, whether there was a 100 per cent Barnett consequential in respect of the National Library of Wales under the provisions of the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Kemi Badenoch:

In the "Statement of funding policy" published in November 2015, the comparability factor for Central Libraries was 100%. However, where UK government programmes provide services across the UK, the comparability factor should in principle be 0%. As it is absolutely clear that the legal extent of the British Library is the United Kingdom, it is right that the comparability factor for Central Libraries should be 0%.

■ Off-payroll Working: Coronavirus

Mr Laurence Robertson: [\[151599\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will delay the introduction of the IR35 changes to 1 April 2022 following the effects on business of the covid-19 pandemic.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has been clear that the reform of the off-payroll working rules will be introduced on 6 April 2021. Organisations should continue to prepare for the

implementation of the reform. Since the reform was delayed in April 2020, Parliament has passed legislation enacting the reform from April 2021.

Many organisations have already undertaken significant preparations to ensure they are ready for the reform and HMRC are committed to supporting organisations and individuals in the run up to, and beyond the reform being implemented. HMRC are providing webinars, workshops and one-to-one calls as well as publishing updated guidance and factsheets in order to enable organisations to prepare.

■ **Post Offices: Cash Dispensing**

Marion Fellows:

[\[152567\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Community Access to Cash Pilots operating in Post Office branches.

John Glen:

The Community Access to Cash Pilots are an industry-led initiative taking place in nine locations across the UK. These pilots are to trial and test sustainable solutions for ensuring that communities can conveniently withdraw and deposit cash, and identify ways basic banking services can be better delivered, that could be adopted in other locations.

The pilots include 3 'banking hubs' in dedicated retail spaces on the high street, which combine the cash-transaction facilities of a Post Office with access to community banking services offered by the key retail banks. The locations for these trialling this service are Ampthill in Bedfordshire, Rochford in Essex and Cambuslang near Glasgow.

The Government welcomes these initiatives and looks forward to the outcomes of these pilots.

■ **Pre-school Education: Finance**

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[153312\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will announce a long term funding settlement for maintained nursery schools in Budget 2021.

Steve Barclay:

The Government is providing approximately £60 million in supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools this year (2020-21), and we are re-confirming that funding, nationally, in 2021-22.

This is on top of the £44 million the Government is providing for early years education in 2021-22 to increase the hourly rate paid to childcare providers for the government's free hours offers. Prior to this, SR19 confirmed an additional £66 million increase to EY funding.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[151644\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether eligible individuals will receive a Self-Employment Income Support Scheme payment for February 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the importance of supporting the self-employed during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) provides generous support to self-employed individuals who meet the eligibility criteria.

As part of the Winter Economy Plan, the Government announced a six-month extension to the SEISS, in the form of a third and fourth grant.

The third SEISS grant covered the period from November 2020 to January 2021, with the claims window closing on 29 January. As of 31 December, it received claims from 1.9 million individuals, totalling £5.4bn.

The fourth SEISS grant will provide a lump sum to cover the period from February to the end of April 2021. Further details on the SEISS, including the fourth grant, will be announced on 3 March.

Patrick Grady: [\[153283\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward the next grant for the Self-employment Income Support Scheme to assist people who require support now.

Drew Hendry: [\[153300\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on business cash flow management of the waiting period for the announcement of payment amounts and dates of the fourth Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to supporting the self-employed population during the COVID-19 pandemic through a substantial package of support.

The three Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grants combined provided up to £21,570 of support for each individual, placing the SEISS among the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world. As of 31 December, about 2.7 million individuals have made claims totalling over £18.9 billion so far across all three grants.

The claims window for the third grant closed on 29 January 2021. The Government committed on 24 September 2020 that there would be a fourth grant; details of which will be announced alongside other economic updates at Budget in March.

The SEISS is not intended to provide a month-by-month replacement of income. Due to the volatility of self-employed income and the lack of granular data that HMRC hold on self-employed trading profits, precise mapping of income replacement month by

month is not possible. Instead, the SEISS provides a lump sum payment to support eligible self-employed individuals whose businesses have been affected by coronavirus.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a substantial package of support for the self-employed. In addition to the SEISS, individuals may also have access to other elements of the package, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, mortgage holidays, self-isolation support payments and other business support grants.

■ **Small Businesses: Coronavirus**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[152580\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on SMEs of the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

Throughout this crisis, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods, while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK. To do this, the Government has spent over £280 billion to put in place an economic package of support which will provide businesses and individuals with certainty over the coming months.

In order to ensure that any decisions continue to meet the evolving challenges presented by Covid-19, the Government is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups and other Government departments to understand the impacts of COVID-19 and specific challenges facing UK businesses – including SMEs. That is why, in response to the latest national lockdown in January, the Chancellor announced £4.6 billion of further support to businesses on top of the measures adopted at our previous economic responses.

The Treasury remains committed to ensuring we take the right action at the right time to support individuals and businesses in every region and nation of the United Kingdom. We will continue to take a flexible approach and keep all restrictions and policies under review.

■ **Terrorism: Northern Ireland**

Carla Lockhart:

[\[153422\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many requests his Department has received from the Finance Minister in Northern Ireland to meet to discuss the funding of a pension for victims of the troubles in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months.

Steve Barclay:

I am responding to this PQ as the Minister responsible for leading the Treasury's interests in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I regularly engage with my counterpart in the Northern Ireland Executive on a wide range of issues as part of the ongoing collaboration between our Governments.

I am aware of the issues surrounding the Victims Payment Scheme. It is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive to provide funding for victims of the Troubles and they are funded to do so. The UK Government will continue to engage with the Executive on its delivery of schemes designed to support victims of the Troubles.

■ Treasury: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[152607]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much Official Development Assistance his Department was allocated in (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21; and how much it will be allocated in 2021-212.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury has published departmental allocations of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for 2019-20, here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-aid-tackling-global-challenges-in-the-national-interest/official-development-assistance-oda-allocation-by-department>

In this table, HM Treasury is included in the group "Other departments". In 2019-20, HMT's ODA allocation was £81m.

Outturn information of 2019 calendar year ODA spend are available in the Statistics of International Development publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

The Government will publish departmental allocations of ODA for 2020/21 in due course. Outturn information of 2020 calendar year ODA spend will be published later this year, as normal, in the Statistics of International Development publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

The Foreign Secretary recently published departmental ODA allocations for 2021-22, including HM Treasury's allocation, in a Written Ministerial Statement available online here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-01-26/hcws735>.

■ UK Trade with EU: VAT

Tulip Siddiq:

[153316]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the economic effect on British importers of VAT charges on imported goods from the EU.

Jesse Norman:

VAT has historically been charged on goods imported into the UK from the EU. What has changed since 1 January 2021 is the way in which that VAT is collected.

As with all tax measures, where new changes have been introduced, the Government includes its assessment of the impacts of the changes in Tax Information and Impact

Notes. Notes for measures recently legislated for in the Taxation (Post-transition Period) Act were published alongside that legislation.

■ VAT: Coronavirus

Ian Murray:

[\[151663\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the temporary VAT reduction for the (a) hospitality sector and (b) other sectors that are most financially affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

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.

■ Vulture Funds: Mortgages

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[152579\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to (a) ensure vulture funds treat customers fairly; and (b) prevent the creation of mortgage prisoners through the sale of loan books to unregulated entities.

John Glen:

The FCA have advised that borrowers with inactive lenders, such as UK Asset Resolution (UKAR), are no less protected, when the legal title holder is regulated, than those with active lenders. The Government is also open to extending the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) regulatory perimeter, but is yet to see evidence to suggest that there are borrowers that are currently being harmed by the current regulatory regime and that would therefore be helped by extending the FCA's remit.

All sales of UKAR loans have included robust, non-negotiable protections to ensure the continued fair treatment of customers. These have included: adherence to the FCA's Treating Customers Fairly (TCF) principles; its Mortgages and Home Finance: Conduct of Business (MCOB) rules; recourse to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS); and restrictions to the changes the buyer can make to standard variable rates (SVRs) for at least 12 months after the transfer of ownership. There have also been no changes to the terms and conditions of the loans which have been sold, and sales of UKAR loans have also not negatively impacted the ability of affected customers to re-mortgage elsewhere.

The Government has worked with the FCA to provide switching options for consumers with inactive lenders and will continue to support these customers where they would see genuine benefit from switching.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Tracy Brabin:

[\[153328\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a Government-backed scheme to support consumers and wedding business in the absence of available insurance cover.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the essential role of the insurance industry in providing the cover businesses need to operate. We are working closely with the insurers, the trade bodies and regulators to understand what more the industry can do to help individuals and businesses in their time of need, and how the insurance market delivers the support firms need as the economy reopens.

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has worked closely with the weddings sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and has responded with a substantial package of business support, which we keep under regular review.

WALES

■ Electric Vehicles: Wales

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[151661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he is having with the Secretary of State for Transport on providing additional charging facilities for electric vehicles in Wales.

David T C Davies:

The 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution published in November last year confirmed, among other things, a funding package for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Though this policy area is generally devolved to the Welsh Government, a number of schemes such as the On-Street Residential Charging Scheme, Electric Vehicle Home Charging Scheme and Workplace Charging Scheme apply to Wales. A total of £275m was committed for these schemes.

Investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure is an important part of the UK Government's plan to accelerate the transition to zero emission vehicles.

The UK Government has committed to investing £582m in Plug-in Vehicle Grants to incentivise take-up of zero or ultra-low emission vehicles, and nearly £500m to be spent in the next four years on the development and mass-scale production of

electric vehicle batteries and other strategic technologies as part of its commitment to a £1 billion Automotive Transformation Fund.

The UK Government intends to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 and for all cars and vans to be 100% zero emission at the tailpipe from 2035.

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on an electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy.

I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport about a wide range of matters, including the decarbonisation of transport.

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[151662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what plans his Office has to assist the Welsh Government with the rollout of electric vehicle infrastructure in Wales.

David T C Davies:

The 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution published in November last year confirmed, among other things, a funding package for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Though this policy area is generally devolved to the Welsh Government, a number of schemes such as the On-Street Residential Charging Scheme, Electric Vehicle Home Charging Scheme and Workplace Charging Scheme apply to Wales.

A total of £275m was committed for these schemes, which will supplement and support the Welsh Government's efforts in this area. The Welsh Government is currently consulting on a strategy for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Officials from the Wales Office and Office for Low Emission Vehicles have had a number of discussions with the Welsh Government about electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Wales.

■ Universal Credit: Wales

Ruth Jones:

[\[152640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effects on levels of child poverty in (a) Newport West and (b) Wales of removing the £20 uplift to universal credit.

Ruth Jones:

[\[152641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effects on levels of fuel poverty in (a) Newport West and (b) Wales of removing the £20 uplift to universal credit.

Ruth Jones:

[\[152642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effects on levels of food poverty in (a) Newport West and (b) Wales of removing the £20 uplift to universal credit.

Simon Hart:

Since the start of the pandemic this Government has introduced a range of temporary emergency measures to help the hardest hit, including the Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and the temporary £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit standard allowance.

The Chancellor has confirmed the Universal Credit uplift until March 2021. As the Government has done throughout this pandemic, it will continue to assess how best to support low-income families, which is why we will look at the economic and health context before making any decisions.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Children: Day Care****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[147072\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of providing tailored support to the wraparound childcare sector during the covid-19 outbreak to help tackle gender inequality.

Sarah Olney:[\[148867\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of tailored support for the wraparound childcare sector during the covid-19 outbreak to improve measures to tackle gender inequality.

Kemi Badenoch:

Wraparound childcare is a Department for Education policy, therefore the Minister for Women and Equalities would not be best-placed to lead discussions on this issue with the Chancellor. The Equality Hub provides evidence and expertise to support cross-government work on economic and social recovery, working closely with the COVID-19 Taskforce and the relevant delivery departments. This includes working with the Department for Education to highlight the pressures faced by those balancing work with childcare, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as we know that the majority of these pressures fall on women.

■ Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[152632\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities will publish its report to the Prime Minister, due to be published in February 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities aims to provide its full report to the Prime Minister by the end of this month. The Commission then intends to publish its results on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) in due course.

■ **Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus****Marsha De Cordova:**[\[152631\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when the second quarterly report to the Prime Minister and Health Secretary on progress to understand and tackle covid-19 disparities experienced by people from an ethnic minority background will be published.

Kemi Badenoch:

I will very shortly be publishing my second quarterly progress report to the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Bereavement Support Payment: Publicity****Tommy Sheppard:**[\[153294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness of bereavement support payment in order to increase uptake of that benefit.

Guy Opperman:

Bereavement Support Payments (BSP) can provide vital support for those who are eligible to receive them and our communications are directly targeted at this group. The department staff, including those in Jobcentres, are trained to ensure correct support is offered to all customers and can assist with the process of applying for BSP as we appreciate applications are made at a difficult time.

We also produced a step by step guide to help bereaved people understand what to do after a death. It provides information on where to get help, which agencies to approach and which benefits they may be able to claim; while also signposting them to GOV.UK for the latest information. We have improved the information available on GOV.UK about BSP and Funeral Expenses Payment and are continually exploring ways to join up Bereavement Services and the Cross-Government Tell Us Once service.

We continue to promote BSP to relevant external stakeholders through regular meetings, newsletters and ministerial engagement.

■ **Children: Maintenance****Hywel Williams:**[\[151632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the Child Maintenance Service formula is calculated using the gross income of recipients; and what

assessment she has made of the potential merits of using the net income of recipients to make that calculation.

Guy Opperman:

The former Child Support Agency (CSA) was consistently criticised for the complexity of its calculation process and the formation of the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) in 2012 sought to address this by moving from an assessment on a net income basis to a gross income basis.

CMS assessments are based initially on gross income information received directly from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Taking information directly from HMRC allows us to capture a wide range of income types received by paying parents. Basing the assessment on gross income data has enabled the Child Maintenance Service to significantly speed up the set-up of new cases which can be key to securing regular payments.

■ **Cold Weather Payments: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Ian Murray:

[\[152473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made with regards to extending the cold weather payments to people on furlough to help with fuel bills.

Guy Opperman:

People on low incomes, including those who are furloughed, are able to apply for Universal Credit (UC), which is one of the qualifying benefits for Cold Weather Payments (CWP). If they qualify for UC and meet the additional eligibility criteria for CWP, they will be paid automatically.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Social Security Benefits**

Chris Stephens:

[\[152571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure workers eligible for furlough who have been denied payments are eligible for social security support; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Stephens:

[\[152572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support workers eligible for furlough during the covid-19 outbreak who have been denied payments; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

It would not be for the Department for Work and Pensions to comment on why workers eligible for furlough have been denied payments.

Those who are out of work or who are on a low income can claim Universal Credit and/or New Style JSA or ESA, if they are entitled.

Help to Claim is available online, over the phone and face to face through local Citizens Advice offices.

■ Disinfectants

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[151627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it his policy to ensure that all workplaces provide (a) disinfectant products with comprehensive labelling, with the word 'active' and list the active substances, (b) hazard and precautionary statements, (c) the name and address of the manufacturer of the disinfectant products provided, (d) information on contact time, (e) an authorisation number/CE mark depending on the registration scheme and (f) a statement to read instructions before use.

Mims Davies:

Disinfectant products containing hazardous substances must be labelled in accordance with the comprehensive labelling requirements in the retained Regulation (EC) 1272/2008 on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP Regulation), and where the product has been Authorised under the retained Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 (Biocidal Products Regulation or BPR) there are additional labelling requirements arising from that regulation.

■ Employment and Support Allowance: Coronavirus

Drew Hendry:

[\[153301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what equalities impact assessment her Department has undertaken on the decision not to extend the £20 uplift to universal credit to employment support allowance.

Drew Hendry:

[\[153303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the decision not to extend to uplift to universal credit to legacy benefits on the comparative healthcare outcomes for individuals living with disabilities.

Justin Tomlinson:

The £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit was announced by the Chancellor as a temporary measure in March 2020 to support those facing the most financial disruption as a result of the public health emergency. This measure remains in place until March 2021. As the Government has done throughout this crisis, it will continue to assess how best to support people, which is why we will look at the economic and health context before making any decisions.

There are no plans to extend a benefit increase to legacy benefits. Claimants on legacy benefits can make a claim for UC if they believe that they will be better off. Claimants should check carefully their eligibility and entitlements under UC before applying as legacy benefits will end when claimants submit their claim and they will not be able to return to them in the future. For this reason, prospective claimants are signposted to independent benefits calculators on GOV.UK.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Seema Malhotra: [\[141985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of applications to the Kickstart programme from (a) employers and (b) Kickstart gateway organisations have been approved in each month since applications opened.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 27 January 2021]: As of 04/02/2021 (a) over 550 Employer applications, and (b) over Gateway 1,650 applications have been approved for funding from the Department of Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme.

Data on the precise date applications were approved has not been fully quality assured. As such we have given cumulative figures.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly.

Dan Jarvis: [\[152532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to extend eligibility for the Kickstart Scheme to include sole traders.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme is open to employers of all sizes.

Sole traders can apply to Kickstart through an organisation offering the 'Gateway Plus' model, which enables young people to be placed on the Gateway's PAYE system for the duration of their placement; there are a number of organisations that will offer this model.

Sarah Olney: [\[153330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support the work provided by gateways in the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to PQ [145148](#).

■ Personal Independence Payment: Coronavirus

Drew Hendry: [\[153302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of applying a backdated uplift to personal independence payment in line with the increase in universal credit to the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

Universal Credit is an income related benefit unlike the disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which is an extra costs benefits. PIP is not means-tested, non-contributory and thus paid regardless of any income or savings.

PIP is also tax-free and worth up to £151.40 a week. PIP was not subject to the benefits freeze and was most recently uprated by 1.7 per cent from 6 April 2020. Following the Secretary of State's most recent statutory review of the rates of PIP, it is due to be uprated again from 12 April 2021, subsequent to the recent approval of the Social Security Up-rating Order 2021 by both Houses of Parliament.

PIP can be paid in addition to other financial support that those with a health condition or disability may be eligible for, such as Employment and Support Allowance, UC (thereby taking advantage of the UC increase), additional amounts and premiums paid within the income-related benefits, Carer's Allowance or financial and practical help from the NHS or Local Authorities.

■ **Poverty: Coventry**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[151733\]](#)

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 child poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

We are committed to supporting the lowest-paid families through the pandemic and beyond to ensure that nobody is left behind. That's why we've targeted our support to those most in need by raising the living wage, spending hundreds of billions to safeguard jobs, boosting welfare support by billions and introducing the £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme to help children and families stay warm and well-fed during the coldest months.

■ **Taxi and Private Hire Driver Support Fund: Universal Credit**

Neil Gray:

[\[140113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that recipients of the Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Driver Support Fund do not have their universal credit payments reduced.

Patrick Grady:

[\[140156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of amending the rules for universal credit to ensure that payments received from the Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Driver Support Fund are fully disregarded so as not to result in deductions to benefit entitlement.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: The eligibility criteria for the Scottish Government's new £1,500 grant for private hire and taxi drivers is a matter for the Scottish Government not the UK government. While DWP was not consulted in advance about the eligibility criteria, it is our understanding that the grant is intended to assist with fixed costs and expenses, including license plate fees, rental fees and

insurance payments for taxis not on the road. Legislation already provides that Covid-19 related grants which are intended to cover loss of business income and to aid business recovery will be disregarded for Universal Credit purposes for 12 months.

■ Universal Credit

Wendy Chamberlain:

[151857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to relation to the Minister for Welfare Delivery's correspondence of 21 December 2020 to the Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee on automating the identification of affected claimants following the Johnson case at the Court of Appeal, what the cost is of the automated fix; and whether the automated fix will require a full rebuild of the universal credit system.

Will Quince:

No estimates have been made for the cost of an automated approach and there are no plans for this as each instance can be complex.

The Universal Credit (Earned Income) Amendment Regulations 2020 were laid in October 2020, so for cases affected by this issue, monthly earnings can be reallocated to another assessment period. To support this, we have designed a tool which interacts with the Universal Credit Service to allow the redistribution of earnings where appropriate, with guidance having been issued to staff to ensure that where an issue is identified, the correct remedial action is taken.

Automated identification of affected claimants is expected to be implemented in early 2021. This will allow us to proactively correct Universal Credit awards before they are paid without the claimant needing to raise the issue.

■ Universal Credit: South East

Apsana Begum:

[153405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long her Department's South East region has taken on average to process changes of circumstances with regards to housing on universal credit claims since 14 January 2021.

Will Quince:

The Department does not record this information.

■ Universal Credit: West Yorkshire

Tracy Brabin:

[151792]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in the (a) Batley and Spen and (b) West Yorkshire are in receipt of the £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit.

Will Quince:

The latest available statistics on the number of households with Universal Credit in payment, by parliamentary constituency and other geographical breakdowns, is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Departmental Contingent Liability Notification (UKAEA Fusion Liabilities)

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation (Amanda Solloway):

[\[HCWS783\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the details of an amendment to the Contingent Liability for the fusion activities of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, here on referred to as UKAEA.

UKAEA operate experimental fusion reactors at Culham, Oxfordshire. Under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965, UKAEA are required to meet any third-party liabilities arising from an onsite incident resulting in exposure to ionising radiation.

A remote and unquantified contingent liability is in place which provides cover for such liabilities **above** £2.25m. UKAEA's captive insurer previously provided cover for such liabilities **up to** £2.25 million. This was wound up in 2019 as it did not provide good value for money to the taxpayer. Commercial arrangements to replace the captive insurer and cover nuclear liabilities – either in part or in full – would not provide good value for money. The best value for money for taxpayers would be to amend the existing remote unquantified contingent liability held by BEIS to include **all** costs arising from exposure to ionising radiation due to the fusion activities of UKAEA.

This contingent liability will remain remote and unquantified. There is no expiry date so will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to be good value for money for the taxpayer.

The Government will be subject to a new contingent liability for all liabilities from UKAEA fusion activities that lead to exposure to ionising radiation, and I will be laying a Departmental Minute today containing a description of the liability undertaken.

TRANSPORT

■ Contingencies Fund Advance

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS782\]](#)

I hereby give notice of the Department for Transport having drawn advances from the Contingencies Fund totalling £4,000,000,000 to enable expenditure on COVID-19 support packages to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act. The schemes include:

Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements with the Train Operating Companies; the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant; safeguarding critical ferry freight routes; and supporting regional transport networks such as Transport for London and light rail networks.

Parliamentary approval for additional resource of £4,000,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department for Transport. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £4,000,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation (Anticipation and Adjustments) Bill.